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Mauritian Overseas Gazette

Truth
&
Trust

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At the service of the Mauritian Diaspora

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A totally independent platform

Views expressed by contributors are their own

Island in the Sun

Christmas and New Year in Mauritius

Mauritius is being run down by some people who seem to take un *malin plaisir* in doing so

With an extra month's pay or pension allowance in the pocket, plus the abundant sunshine, Mauritians have very little to complain about. As for the Covid-19 and its variants it's a pestilence which is causing problems throughout the planet. Mauritius has its fair share of this pestilence and the country is managing as best as it can.

Those who have taken the vaccines feel confident although these injections are not supposed to offer total immunity from contamination. The vaccines offer them reduced risk of contamination by people who carry the virus. There is a campaign in Mauritius by a clique who discourages people to get vaccinated and the incidence of deaths among this clique is reported to be high. And of course it's the fault of the government when deaths occur, according to this clique and a *media déchainé* giving this paradise island a bad name. Forgive them Lord for they know not what they are doing, do we say during this season of goodwill.

Mauritius has its quantum of *Gillets Jaunes* style protest marches from numerous activists who have been *sur le terrain* soon after the last general election, two years ago. As far back as last year ago, one activist said on an international radio "we can-

not wait another four years to change the government."

These activists find support from the Parliamentary Opposition who accuses the Government of corruption and dictatorship. It is in such a fabricated atmosphere of distrust and dissatisfaction that Mauritius is facing the end of 2021 and the start of 2022. But, it is believed that there is also a general feeling from among the Silent Majority that the Government is delivering in spite of all the criticism of maladministration in respect of procurements of drugs and medical supplies in the face of the pandemic, a phenomenon which is destabilising governments worldwide. Mauritius has never before witnessed such co-operation between the private sector and the government. Businesses are investing massively in the country because they feel their investments are safe and productive. All this is being put in jeopardy by a hysterical media, a frustrated Opposition and some activists who have already started their electoral campaign for the next general election due in 2024. Under these circumstances, the eagerness of these elements to go to the polls can be understood.

Cyril Louis

Merry Christmas

Happy New Year



Picture: Peter Chellen

The MOG Experience

After editing Mauritius News in London, the first ever Mauritian newspaper published overseas, for 32 years from 1983 until the sale of the business in 2015, we decided to embark on another first: The Mauritian Overseas Gazette (MOG) published by the UK registered company Mauritius Publications Online Ltd.

As a matter of fact, MOG, the first publication with the overseas Mauritians in mind, was started in January this year (2021) as an experiment to gauge whether such a project is feasible, whether it can be made to last and whether it can be turned into a commercial venture. Well, we have proved that it is feasible since we have produced it online. We have proved that it can have a long life since we have produced 16 editions in the course of

2021.

Intended to be a monthly publication, i.e. 12 editions for 2021, we have managed to produce as many as 16 issues. In other words, the publication can come out more frequently than once a month. As for being a commercial venture, the Business Plan will indicate the direction to follow with the support of the professionals.

Peter Chellen

Is Corruption in the UK more prevalent than in third World Countries?

By Yvonne Goder-Persand (LLM)



There is these days a public outcry against corruption in every country of the world. It may be said that where there are people there is corruption. Why? Someone has said that corruption starts with the common man who is willing to bribe those in authority to get things done or done quickly. So who is guilty the corrupt officials or those who corrupt those officials. So who is responsible? Mauritians have saying that those who work in the sugar mill will take sugar home, "se qui travaille dans moulin pou mange di suc".

At the high level politicians find themselves in the public loop when they are accused of allegedly appropriate State property, mishandled public funds, of favouritism and nepotism. During the past four decades there have numerous instances of alleged corruption in Mauritius involving deals of all sorts.

Corruption is such a worldwide phenomenon that the United Nations Organisation has named a special date = 9 December - as The International Anti-Corruption Day. The Mauritius Post issued a commemorative 25c stamp with a special First Day Cover to mark the occasion and which is reproduced on Page 8.

In the article below, our contributor Yvonne Goder-Persand emanates the extends of frauds and corruption in the UK that begs the question: Is the whole world corrupt? **P.C.**

When you are born or living in the UK, you may become aware of several cases of fraud. You may simply hear some background noise about these cases and you may possibly not take much notice of them. Many victims of fraud only live the experience once they are 'deep in it', 'in the thick of it', or 'in the midst of it all'.

We have heard cases of American celebrities shockingly involved in the 'admissions scandal' of 2019. It was reported that over fifty people had been charged in this conspiracy.

The scandal involved parents paying an organiser William Singer to interfere with admission to the top US universities. It included increasing their exam results by bribing University officials. It even, went as far as bribing Psychologists to falsely diagnose children with learning disabilities. According to exam system if a child is diagnosed with learning difficulties he may be given extra time to obtain better results

In the UK, we have a similar growing problem. As most of us are aware, secondary schools admit students based on the locality where they live. Students who live nearer to the chosen school (catchment area), are more likely to be accepted.

School Admission Fraud

In 2016, an ITV News investigation revealed that almost 600 admission applications were rejected due to parents giving incorrect or false addresses. This sometimes consists of using a friend's or family address within the catchment area of the school they wish their child to attend. Some parents have even gone to as far as renting a flat or a room near the school for a period up to entrance acceptance.

Some local councils have even taken such parents to Court.

Similarly, we have had approximately 55 Prime

Ministers in the UK and 20 of them attended Eton College, a fee-charging, boys public school. 'Old Etonians' are Boris Johnson, David Cameron and the first Great Britain Prime Minister, Robert Walpole. Also, Prince William, Prince Harry, Princess Diana's brother, Charles Spencer, and Tom Parker Bowles (Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall's son with previous husband Andrew Parker Bowles), have all attended. One has to question whether there are fair opportunities in the UK.

Moving onto more complex fraud, we are all aware of covering our PINs (Personal Identifications Number) when using our credit and debit cards at cashpoints/ATMs (Automated Teller Machine). We are made aware of criminals installing small cameras above ATMs, or cards being cloned. This is, in fact, a Worldwide problem.

We also hear of horror stories of how elderly and the most vulnerable are targeted by cold calling. Many have been duped from their life savings. There are warnings in place currently concerning a spike since the pandemic in fraudulent and nuisance related telephone calls. It is estimated over 50% of landline calls are cold calling the most vulnerable. The UK lost control some time ago over calls impersonating the NHS, BT, offering scam repairs and selling white goods (refrigerators and washing machines). New call-blocking technology is trying to combat this crime.

Wine Scam targeting the elderly

An example that witnessed. I was working in small office of a market research company in Whitechapel, London. I had started working for several market research companies part-time from the age of 16 years whilst studying and trying to earn some extra cash. Having acquired many years' experience in various companies.

I picked up the best approaches from the older, best market researchers back in the early 2000's. The company I worked for used a small room as office

space with several other companies also using office rooms in the same building. I had become a little suspicious of one company on the same floor as us, a few doors away.

The building itself was made of several floors accommodating accountants, printers, solicitors and many other professions. It was hard to notice what other companies were up to. The dress code was relaxed with no specific requirements, I did, however, become a little suspicious of some young men, wearing 3-piece suits including waistcoats, ties, carrying briefcases when in fact they were not dealing with any client. It can be understood that some people may wish to dress up professionally but it was excessive.

We were quite near Aldgate, an area known for banking and these young men literally looked like they were in 'The Wolf of Wall Street'. A film that features Leonardo DiCaprio depicting corruption in Wall Street in America, known as the finance hub for bankers with the largest stock market exchange.

The young wolves would hover over in the ladies toilets, the shared kitchen, the hallways making business calls. When you approached them, they would oddly rush off. I also noticed all the offices had their room number and company name displayed except theirs.

Oddly, one day going to my office, I noticed a sign outside their room door instructing people not to even touch their office door that had been sello-taped like a murder scene under investigation. In fact, this company was called Wynn XS previously trading as Prime Trading 5 and involved in wine scam.

The scam involved cold calling elderly and vulnerable people to hand over their life savings to invest in prestigious fine wines. In fact they swindlers not investing in anything.

Shockingly, this was not a new concept. In 2013, a brother and sister Daniel and Dina Snelling were jailed for a £4.5 million fine wine scam targeting elderly. The scam went unnoticed for numerous years before the Met Police Fraud Team homed in.

UK Mauritian Fraudsters

Another example, was recently seen when UK Mauritians were convicted for targeting elderly compatriot Marie Lucienne Anodin. They moved into her house in Newham, east London, sold her property and pocketed the money. The story was reported in previous editions of the Mauritian Overseas Gazette. Again, this is not a new concept which is known as 'Cuckooing'. Cuckooing targets elderly and vulnerable by occupying their home. The name derives from cuckoos that take over other birds nests. The old people's property to live in or exploited for drugs, sex work, or even stealing the property for profitable gain.

Additionally, young vulnerable children and teenagers are targeted by gangs to participate in crimes known as 'County Line Gangs'. The gangs use the children in rural areas to avoid detection, making them deal drugs. Horrifically, local.gov.UK reports that 27,000 children in just England are identified members of County Line Gangs. The BBC reports an estimated 1,100 were recently arrested in a large

From Page 2

crackdown on these gangs. Meanwhile, law enforcement safeguarded 573 children of 1,138 vulnerable people from 904 'cuckooed' homes.

Mortgage Deposits Thefts

However, not only are the elderly and most vulnerable targeted. A cruel complex scam involves stealing mortgage deposits. The Guardian in 2019, reported Nikhil Dudeja and his wife lost £45,000 of their mortgage deposit for their first home together. Scammers were able to hack into their estate agents' emails, and created a fake email address to where to send the money. The victims using their Lloyd's banking app, innocently transferred the money to the fraudsters' account. The banks are hesitant to refund victims of this complex fraud as they willingly transferred this money over.

Likewise, newlyweds Ritchie and Sarah Tough lost their £45,000 mortgage deposit for their first home through computer hackers intercepting emails between them and their solicitors. The fraudsters monitor communications and just before a bank transfer, they interfere giving incorrect bank details. In this instance, Barclay's fraud team managed to recoup £22,000 but over half has been lost. It is absolutely important that you speak to someone in person or via a telephone call to double check their banks details sent to you through email or text. This includes estate agents and solicitors who appear professional and above board but are far from genuine.

Crash for Cash Scams

I have been investigating a peculiar corruption in the UK involving car accidents that are not your fault. Unlike, It's the 'Crash for Cash' scams that stage car accidents and fraudulently try to profit from insurance claims. The criminals maybe unknown to the victim, slamming their brakes to be hit from behind.

In the UK the person who hits the vehicle in front is responsible. He may work alongside other drivers to stage a crash. It is suggested that this is one of the reasons car insurance premiums have dramatically increased. The BBC estimates in May, 2021 that 170 000 claims were linked to this scam in just over a year. The Insurance Fraud Bureau (IFB) state parts of Birmingham is the key hotspot for this scam.

This scam is not getting proper recognition nor is investigated enough is when drivers are involved in non-fault accidents. An example, I have thoroughly looked into involves a case where a Polish National was driving a large white transit van, at 60 mph on the wrong side of the road in the countryside. This seems to be a growing problem of foreigners unfamiliar with driving in the UK and getting confused.

It is also another issue of foreigner drivers especially in other parts of Europe, using a loophole to insure their vehicles in other cheaper European countries.

A Mess For Everyone

In the events that follows, I consider to be a case of serious corruption. This case to most would seem straightforward and there is no debate which driver was at fault.

The driver 'not at fault' was insured by a company called Markerstudy Group also trading as Zenith. The brokers were Policywise Ltd also trading as Girls Drive Better ('the driver not at fault' is not female, they are brokers for both men and women) and the underwriters Close Brothers. There was no problem with the driver at fault's Polish insurance and they have been represented by a UK handling agents. The broker recommended a legal firm known as Garvins Law and also a company called Easi-Drive that provided a courtesy car for just over a month.

The car was completely written-off and the police seized the car and kindly stored the car until it was disposed of. Usually, a courtesy car is only provided until a car is fixed, this car was non-recoverable. Disgracefully, all these companies that were supposed to represent the driver not at fault, greedily cashed in.

In 2018, The Guardian investigated Easi-Drive and revealed cases where drivers not at fault with the other party accepting full liability.

<https://www.theguardian.com/money/2018/sep/14/why-am-i-now-liable-for-my-no-fault-accident-claim>. In this case, the driver not at fault was taken to Court by Easi-Drive to recover over £2,000 of the car they hired through them for a month. The Guardian states, there is a growing number of no-fault accident victims caught in a dispute between insurers as the other party at fault refuse to pay ridiculous car hire fees making the driver not at fault responsible. Easi-Drive is a CHC (Credit Hire Company) that focuses on no-fault claims. They also pay insurers and brokers large referral fees.

To cut a long story short, the driver not at fault has been in a legal mess for just over 4 years. It was revealed the UK handling agents Inter Europe acting for the Polish National's insurance PZU- Polish United Group of Insurances. A company known as Soter Professional Services collected £3,300 for just over a months car hire for Easi-Drive. The medical report was made by a company known as Speed Medical Examination Services that ironically has shares in Soter Professional Services. The report was fair but left some key aspects out. There was no contract or breakdown of costs for this months car hire of a Skoda vehicle with Easi-Drive. The car that was written-off in 2017 was a Vauxhall Corsa valued at £1,500. The months car hire is more than double the money obtained for the car.

After, Inter Europe had paid Easi-Drive, the value of the car

and these companies for the remaining car insurance premium they were chasing after, with them even contacting debt collectors to chase the driver not at fault at one point, they are somewhat uninterested in further paying out the real victim of all this mess. This being the driver not at fault that suffered severe injuries.

Even worse, the driver not at fault did not use Garvins Law but instructed their own legal providers. The third party insist that Garvins Law represented them without any signed legal document or any verbal instructions. To make matters more insulting Garvins Law are at the same registered address as Easi-Drive with some of the same directors. One could even argue, the third party paid for a biased medical report, as all these companies are linked.

Investigating this corruption, I have discovered hundreds of victims not at fault in the same legal mess. On the 09/06/21, Robert Leyland on Twitter @leyland379 write 'I am waiting for a claim in a RTI (Road Traffic Incident) that happened 11/11/2020 because the hire car easidrive I was given has slowed the process to a grinding halt they want £30,000, for 6 months hire of the other insurance company.'

Image: Speed Medical Examination Services Ltd organised medical report have significant control of Soter Professional Services that collected payment for Easi-Drive.

This corruption has been ongoing for several years. Gary Anderson, was complaining of dealing with several companies like Easi-Drive and Garvins Solicitors all the way back in 2016 when in an accident not at fault.

Image: Vauxhall Corsa Car accident in 2017. Driver not at fault and ongoing legal mess with Polish driver driving on wrong side of the road.

UK Mauritian Fraudsters again!

In a complicated ongoing fraud investigation, the <https://news.met.police.uk> reports on a Mauritian owned travel agency called 'Sun and Key Travel'.

The Mauritian company owners Bhajun encouraged family and friends to make fictitious claims of £268,766 to ATOL (Air Travel Organisers Licensing) that protects customers when travel agents fail to meet their obligations. The investigation spanning from 2018 has seen, several people convicted over this scam. The investigation ended with UK Mauritian Abdul Patel, the 13th person, recently convicted of conspiracy to defraud.

It is understood Third World Countries, also known as Developing and Undeveloped Countries, experience severe corruption problems owing to bad breakdown of poor Government. But the UK is supposed to be a developed country with a fair legal system. There has been recent allegations of secret Christmas parties involving several members of Parliament last year whilst the rest of us were warned to observe socially distancing to contain the lethal Coronavirus and its variants..

One has to ask oneself: Is corruption in the UK more prevalent than in Third World Countries?

Yvonne Goder-Persand (LLM)

News Headline from Le Mauricien

Global Trade Review : Bank One élue "Best Trade Finance Bank in Mauritius"

Editor's note: 20 years ago, at the turn of the Century, this bank was known as The Delphis Bank with assets of some 600 million rupees. The Bank's trading licence was removed by the Government of Mauritius and the Bank was sold to an individual ... for how much? The Bank was renamed the First City Bank before metamorphosing into Bank One!

The Delphis Bank did not go bust nor ceased operating, BUT many shareholders lost their shares. I lost my £1,000 worth of shares. I am happy to know that my £1,000 will have contributed to the prosperity of the Bank to make it in 2021 the "Best Trade Finance Bank in Mauritius"

The sale of the Delphis Bank to an individual was purely a political decision. It has been reported that this individual's shareholding was subsequently diluted to 10% from 39% to conform with banking regulations.

P. C.

Children's protection in vehicles

The Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) Regulations 2017 will be amended through the promulgation of the Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2021 so as to include child restraint devices, commonly referred to as baby car seats, as a restricted good, in order to control its conformity to standards and maximise the safety and security of children travelling in vehicles.

Under the amended Regulations, importers will have to produce a certificate of conformity attesting compliance with the specifications of, either Regulation No. 44 of the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations – Uniform provisions concerning the approval of restraining devices for child occupants of power-driven vehicles or the newer Regulation No. 129 of the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations – Uniform provisions concerning the approval of enhanced Child Restraint Systems used on board of motor vehicles.

The Regulations will come into operation in May 2022.

GIS

Minister Balgobin gives an overview of achievements and future projects of his Ministry

Access to digital technologies is one of the main preoccupations of Government and during the year 2021, a lot of progress has been achieved in terms of growth in the Information Technology and Communication sector, research, innovation, and digital development of governmental services, despite the difficulties brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Hon Deepak Balgobin

This was the gist of the message of the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation, Mr Deepak Balgobin, during a press conference on the achievements and future projects of his Ministry.

He enumerated the projects that have been accomplished during the course of the year. They include: digitalisation of Governmental services (MoRendezVous, MauPass, MoKloud, Certification Authority MauSign); launching of nanosatellite MIR-SAT1; promulgation of the Mauritius Emerging Technologies Council Bill and Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Act 2021; finalisation of the National Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Strategy 2022-2024; launching of 5G; and collaboration with Facebook/Meta and Tiktok.

As regards projects which will be launched soon, Minister Balgobin underlined that the E-Health project will soon become a reality. He added that in two months, the Ministry of Health and Wellness will launch an expression of Interest for the E-Health project. He also dwelt on the Smart Parking App which will be developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Land Transport and Light Rail so as to enable drivers to buy and use digital parking coupons. Furthermore, he added that next year the Fixed Penalties Payment app will also become a reality where citizens will be able to pay their fixed penalties online.

Other future projects include: the high-speed connectivity in secondary schools where all classes will be equipped with Wi-Fi; Tier IV Data Centre and Disaster Recovery Site; restructuring of several departments of the Ministry under a single agency namely the Mauritius Digital

Transformation Agency; and the Chatbot project which comprises two phases. In phase I, Chatbot will be accessible on the Government portal, and websites of Citizen Support Portal and Civil Status Office. Works are expected to be completed mid-February for Phase I and Phase 2 will start in 20 Ministries and departments and will last for 12 months.

Speaking about the Mauritius Post Ltd (MPL), he recalled that the MPL has signed, this year, a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives whose objective is to offer facilities to SMEs so as to enable them to boost their business. The MPL also offers money transfer services through RIA, he added.

Minister Balgobin also announced the restructuring of the MPL adding that next year, the organisation will be celebrating its 250 years of existence in Mauritius. He highlighted that the MPL will engage itself in new services such as Market Place E-Commerce.

He rejoiced that the country has a satisfactory performance at the international level as demonstrated by the different indices. Hence, Mauritius is ranked 52nd globally on the Global Innovation Index and 17th on the Global Cybersecurity Index. With all these digital developments, Mauritius is emerging as a Digital Hub in Africa, he stated. He highlighted that the country will be candidate for a seat for the African region at the ITU Council for the period 2023-2026.

GIS

Book Review by Prega Vencatsawmy

Dharmarajen Sabapathee

Tout donné, Tout repris
par Sedley Richard Assone

This book, **Dharmarajen Sabapathee Tout donné, Tout repris**, hot off the press, landed on my desk recently, together with others. Small format of 142 pages, it is published by Éditions de la Tour, founded by Sedley Richard Assone. Assone publishes an array of authors from all walks of life. He must be given full support for his kind gesture to encourage local talents to blossom.



In **Dharmarajen Sabapathee Tout donné, Tout repris**, Sedley charts the life of Dharmarajen Sabapathee (known as Rajen), from his birth in 1956 at Rue Sainte Anne, Stanley, Rose Hill (an area I know well) to his untimely death by a squad of 'tireurs d'élite' on January 21, 2000. The day was sacred to the Tamil community celebrating the Cavadee.



Rajen, a keen *barbellist*, was no ordinary body-builder. He was born to 'flex his muscles', to make bodybuilding his passion and his crusade in life. He was in employment as a physical instructor at Patten College in Rose Hill, a college which I incidentally attended.

As a *barbellist*, he had an impeccable *palmarès*: Mr Rose Hill participation in 1963, Runner-up in 1973 and took the title in December 1974. He was crowned Mr Indian Ocean in 1985.

The Mr Indian Ocean Title in 1985 was the *Cerise sur le Gâteau*. Ganee Jankerghan, owner of the Trojan Barbell Club of Rose Hill, provided him with a ticket to the UK to take part in the Mr Universe Contest. As a very big surprise he was ranked Number 7, a feat unsurpassed in the Indian Ocean area!

In the UK he participated in two contests, Mr London, and Mr Great Britain South East, which he should have won but it was believed that, as a result of unfair treatment, he came second.

Dharmarajen Sabapathee Tout donné, Tout repris digs into Sabapathee's life as a sportsman and his physical training activities, into his family circle, his political involvement, and the many legal cases involving drugs until his arrest and conviction in 1995. He was sent to the high security Phoenix Prison (La Bastille) from which he escaped. He was tracked down to the village of Chamarel, several miles away in the south, ambushed and shot down.

The book, with plenty of pictures, is well written. Sedley had combed newspapers archives for press coverage at the time of Sabapathee's death and material to put flesh on the story. The author had the tacit support of his family and others to write the biography.

Full transcripts of the Privy Council Number 1 of 1999 are reproduced on pages 58-78 of the book. Poignant and emotional testimonies from his mother and others from all walks of life are provided at the end of the book.



Sabapathee shot dead while on the run

Fraud Investigation involving UK Mauritians

Final person convicted in long-running travel fraud investigation

A man who used a travel company to make fraudulent financial claims about fictitious holidays he said had been cancelled after the failure of the travel agents has been convicted following a trial at Southwark Crown Court.

Abdul Patel, 59, of Bury Street, London N 9 - who posed as a customer of Star and Key Travel – was found guilty of conspiracy to defraud following the conclusion of a trial on Wednesday, 8 December.

Patel will be sentenced at the same court on 19 January 2022.

This was the last of three linked trials in relation to the fraud.

The court heard how Patel claimed to have booked a package holiday to Mauritius that he knew didn't exist through a company called Star and Key Travel. The holiday was supposed to take place between July and August 2014 but the company went bust in June 2014 – the holiday appeared to have been paid in full prior to the company folding.

After the company ceased trading, Patel submitted a claim through the Air Travel Organisers Licensing (ATOL) scheme administered by the Civil Aviation Authority, which offers protection to customers of travel agents who hold Air Travel Organisers Licences and cannot fulfil their obligations.

However, when the claim was submitted – part of a total of 23 claims totalling £268,766 that were put in following Star and Key Travel's collapse – suspicions were raised by a number of factors. These included a number of the claim forms being overwritten in pen on top of pencil, the surnames of people travelling all being different, the lack of full contact details for a lot of the claimants, and the lack of contact from the various claimants once their applications had been submitted.

The police were called in and quickly identified the key players in the travel firm; family members Mariam Bhajun and her sons Roshan and Mohun Bhajun. All three have been convicted for their role in running the scam.

It transpired that the Bhajuns – all of Mauritian descent – had created Star and Key Travel with the express purpose of committing fraud. They encouraged friends, family and associates to engage in the scheme and pretend to be their 'customers'. For example, Abdul Patel was their accountant.

The scam worked by the company withdrawing cash which was then paid into a customer's account. The customer then transferred the money back to the company electronically, therefore gaining the evidence of a transaction to submit with a claim. Once the money was back in the Star and Key Travel account the process was repeated and cash was withdrawn from the company and paid into another customer's account before being again transferred back to the company. This process was repeated on numerous occasions and provided the illusion that 23 very expensive holidays had been paid for in full and created an audit trail to support fraudulent claims against the ATOL scheme.

Once police obtained details of the company's bank account it was revealed that of the approximately £270,000 paid in, £260,000 had been withdrawn in cash – the vast majority of which could be traced to the

various accounts of the people who claimed to have 'paid for holidays'.

Detective Inspector Richard Ward from Holborn Police Station who led the investigation said:

"This was a complex fraud involving a number of people that was established with the sole purpose of defrauding the Air Travel Trust of significant sums of money.

"The painstaking work that has gone into this investigation cannot be done justice in words. But it is fair to say that thanks to the tenacity, dedication and diligence of my team of detectives and with the support of the Civil Aviation Authority, those who set out to commit this fraud have been held to account.

"In addition to the sentences handed down by the court, confiscation proceedings have taken place to ensure that there is no benefit from this crime and compensation could be paid to the Air Travel Trust for the fraudulent claims that had been paid out before this matter was reported to police."

At the conclusion of the case the Judge Nicola Howard QC commended both DI Ward and his colleague DC Andrea Gornell for the thorough and fair investigation that was carried out into the fraud.

List of those previously convicted for conspiracy to defraud:

- Roshan Parsad Bhajun – 51 (21.10.70) of Rathbone Place, W1 - found guilty and sentenced on 09.03.18 to five years' imprisonment;
- Patricia Lynch – 62 (06.12.59) of Stainby Road, Tottenham – pleaded guilty and sentenced on 28.08.18 to 16 months imprisonment, suspended for 24 months;
- Mohun Raj Bhajun – 52 (18.07.69) of Priory Avenue, E17 - found guilty and sentenced on 09.03.18 to five years' imprisonment; Confiscation order £224,483.28 – paid in full 28.06.2019;
- Mariam Bibi Bhajun – 73 (20.04.48) of Folkestone Road, E17 - found guilty and sentenced on 09.03.18 to 24 months' imprisonment, suspended for 24 months; Confiscation order £100,000 from which £48,566 was paid as compensation to the Air Travel Trust. Paid in full 04.07.2019.
- Da'Vanya Monique Duncan – 33 (05.11.88) of Maya Place, N11 - pleaded guilty and sentenced on 09.03.18 to 24 months' imprisonment, suspended for 24 months;
- Sandra Edwards – 58 (03.04.63) of Holly Street, E8 - pleaded guilty and sentenced on 09.03.18 to nine months' imprisonment, suspended for 24 months;
- Swastee Thomas – 48 (11.11.73) of Holbrook Close, EN1 - pleaded guilty and sentenced on 09.03.18 to eight months' imprisonment, suspended for 24 months;
- Claudette Cummings – 59 (29.09.62) of Maya Place, N11 – pleaded guilty and sentenced on 09.03.18 to 20 months' imprisonment, suspended for 24 months;
- Malik Hossein Kurrimboccus – 58 (18.10.63) of Glengarry Road, SE22 – found guilty and sentenced on 24.08.18 to 12 months' imprisonment, suspended for 24 months;
- Amandine Greneux – 43 (09.10.78) of Rathbone Place, W1 - found guilty and sentenced on 24.08.18 to 24 months' imprisonment, suspended for 24 months;
- Tianna Antoinette Regisford – 28 (12.08.93) of Golfe Road, Ilford – found guilty and sentenced on 24.08.18 to 18 months' imprisonment, suspended for 24 months;
- Lillieth Edwards – 60 (10.10.61) of Darwin Road, N22 - pleaded guilty and sentenced on 26.02.21 to six months' imprisonment, suspended for 24 months.

Source:

Finvestigation<https://news.met.police.uk/news/final-person-convic...>

Editor's note: How did the ringleader expect to get away with the so many people involved in such a scam. The chap was not as clever as he thought he was

Care-Co (Rodrigues). & the Trevor Huddleston Association for the Disabled (Rodrigues)

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Paul Draper

Christmas and New Year Greetings

from

Care-Co (Rodrigues) & the Trevor Huddleston Association for the Disabled (Rodrigues)



Hello,

December, and the usual focus for this month is preparing for the Festive Season ... like events, shopping, Christmas and New Year greetings, and the all-important Pay and Bonuses.

But for us all, again, it will **not** be a 'normal' Christmas, because of the Covid Pandemic, but life must go on as much as it can.

Here in Rodrigues we still have no reported cases of Covid on the island.

Although there were two repatriation flights a week ago, where all arrivals were tested and then taken to Quarantine Centres for 7 days, and then to be tested again.

On the past Repatriation flights some Covid positives were detected and about 6 passengers had to be transferred to the Hospital isolation unit.

This time, no communications have been given in this regard, so we assume that no positive cases were among those arrivals. We also have very little information if the borders between Rodrigues and the outside world will open and when.

There were a number of protests and public marches from mainly opposition groups that the quarantine period of 7 days was not enough and should be made to 14 days. In any case it is clear the present authorities in Rodrigues are making every effort to prevent the virus coming to Rodrigues.

Many of us have now had our 'booster' jabs,

and there is also a campaign to vaccinate 18 year olds. My booster jab resulted in me catching the local flu bug some days afterwards and then became a rather chronic chest infection, for which I am now on medication.

At some point our Airport will have to open for commercial flights, but we don't at this time know when that will be.

But life at Care-Co and the GPL Centre continues! Happily if not normally.

We regret that we will not be able to send out our illustrated Calendar again this year. We have no way of getting it printed and posted out. But we have been working on an email card and greeting and 'thank you' to all who take this letter and have expressed interest in the work here among the Disabled on Rodrigues.

The GPL Centre is closed at the moment for the end of year holidays, but the various Rodrigues Commissions for Education, for Social Security, and Youth and Sports... and others have arranged trips and excursions for the children. Last week they all went to visit the François Leguat Nature Reserve (with whom we have a link) and a tour of the Reserve and refreshments were provided by the Team there.

We expect a full complement of children back at the Centre in January.

At Care-Co we keep active making chainlink fencing, and equipment for beekeepers, although sadly our honey flow this year was poor and we managed almost no honey in

the hives, although the bees seemed busy. In this situation it seems we are not entirely alone, and the honey harvest from over the island seems to be very poor this year, from what we hear from the Beekeepers we meet.

Birgit and her team make every effort to stimulate sales for the products, and diligently take part in every local 'Solidarity Market' as well as running an active Facebook page (at least Birgit does) to keep in touch with people who might be interested in our handmade soap and other good local products.

But there is a big gap in what we normally earn from sales and what we are doing now. We are therefore very thankful to the National Social Inclusion Foundation and their staff for the CSR grants that help to pay wages for all those disabled workers who are employed at Care-Co.

We are also very thankful for Donations and gifts to the funds which also help to keep us going, and special thanks to Peter in the UK and also the British High Commission in Mauritius for especially generous help. And to all others, too numerous to mention, who have helped us in this situation.

So ... may we all here at the GPL Centre and Care-Co, Rodrigues, send you our very best greetings and wishes for a Happy Christmas and hopefully a successful and less stressful but safe and healthy New Year 2022.

Paul

Santa and Hotei

by Mylene From Japan



Children are always happy to see him. He's merry, has a happy disposition, is pot-bellied, and carries a sack full of goodies. Many people instantly think of Santa Claus, while in Japan many people think of Hotei.



Father Christmas with the goodies

You'd think that Father Christmas, a character from Western Christian culture, and Hotei, one of Japan's Seven Lucky Gods, would be worlds apart. True, there are striking differences between the two. Hotei doesn't dress in red, and he doesn't have a long white beard; in fact, he's bald, and his paunch is out for all to see, and even though he comes from Mahayana Buddhism via Chinese and Indian religions, we're familiar with him. Outside of Japan, we know him as, The Laughing Buddha. (However, he is not Buddha).



Empty-handed but laughing Hotei

If we look closely at these two individuals (Father Christmas and Hotei), certain similarities can't be ignored. Both are depicted as cheerful, portly, a symbol of happiness. Both are said to be based on real people. Santa is based on Saint Nicholas. Hotei is based on Budai, a Chinese monk who died in 916 A.D.

Both carry sacks. Saint Nick's is full of toys for children who have been good throughout the year, while the cloth bag of The Fat Buddha is limitless. It contains a hoard of treasures, including food and drink, which are offered to the poor and needy. He is the God of fortune, happiness, and abundance, and also the patron of children, fortune tellers, bartenders, and more recently, restaurateurs.

However, it is the love of children that is the strongest similarity between these two jolly good fellows.

Childhood is a magical time where the boundaries between fantasy and reality are blurred by the imagination. It's because of this blurriness that children are able to believe the unbelievable. They accept the idea that an old guy who is said to live in the North Pole rides in a sleigh pulled by nine reindeer called Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid Donner, Blitzen, and the red-nosed Rudolph. They think he comes down the chimney to deliver presents. On occasion, he may even stop for a sip of warm milk and a nibble of a cookie that has been left out for him.

The legendary Hotei, on the other hand, sails with six other Lucky Gods on a ship named, Takarabune. The vessel is full of treasures. It's said that if you put a picture of the Shichifukujin (Seven Lucky Gods) under your pillow on New Year's Eve, you'll have a whopping year filled with good fortune.

Believe and receive. Doubt and do without.

Fortunately, having a vivid imagination is a normal and healthy part of a child's development, which is great, because children have to believe in the power of these colourful personalities, not only as givers of gifts, but also as educators who can teach them about the spirit of giving, gratitude, and joy.

Our minds are not made of stone.

The Yule season is seen by many adults as a period of excess. A religious celebration that has been turned into a commercial windfall for big business. However, there is another way of looking at this. Spending together-time with children encourages good communication skills and positive behaviour. While exchanging gifts is a way of nurturing family ties and affection. It can create a strong bond with close friends, acquaintances, and business partners.

We can use this season to be altruistic, placing the needs of others ahead of our own. I'm sure Santa and Hotei would approve of that.

I wish you all a Very Happy Festive Season.

Mylene

Snow Lovers

Both Father Christmas and Hotei love Snow.

Snowdrift outside Mylene's home in Japan this month to welcome Hotei



Corruption! Corruption! Corruption!

This is the cry we hear these days on every rooftop throughout the world

Ki Bizin fer pou Fini Corruption?

Moderateurs:



Sedley Assonne



Zahirah Radha



Dev Sunnasy
100% Citoyens



Navin Beekarry
Directeur Général - ICAC
Invité, mais est-ce qu'il viendra?



Shakeel Mohamed
PTR

To Fote, To Tase

Debat:

Journée internationale de la lutte contre la Corruption

Date

Jeudi 9 décembre

Heure

17h00

f LIVE Citoyens.News | Sel Solution Revolution

Above is a poster from a group of 'moderateurs' to lead a public debate on corruption in Mauritius on the occasion of the International Anti-Corruption Day commemorated on 9 December.

Since the United Nations Organisation has deemed it fit to dedicate a Special Day to fight corruption it may assumed that it is a phenomenon that occurs on a worldwide scale. "Ki bizin fer pou fini corruption" UNO is asking the same question? If the moderators find the answer they may let the UNO know.

Who are as a matter of fact the corrupt people? Well, as we all know "l'enfer c'est les autres". You and I are, of course, the clean elements of society. There is a tendency to believe, especially in Mauritius, that corruption is found among those at the helm, namely among politicians and top civil servants. Traders who are putting up prices at will are not corrupt. Profiteers are not corrupt. Politicians, finding themselves on the Opposition benches find fault with those who are running the country, while the politicians *en herbe* join the bandwagon to cry wolf in the hope of making a name for themselves in preparation for the General Election, which cannot come too soon.

At the moment, all eyes are turned to the ruling party whose members have become the butt of the shooters. Someone has said that the main and most enjoyable pastime of Mauritians is politics. Everyone is a political expert in what is happening, and the greatest experts are found among the taxidrivers who are brainwashed by the phone-in sessions from numerous local radio stations during the time they are behind the wheel. It has been said that statistic-wise, in relation to its population, Mauritius has more publishing organs and radio stations than any other country in the world. Today, this has been multiplied a million-fold by the falcons among whom are many who deserted the country when the going was bad or for other reasons. Many have found factory work opportunities overseas

in the 1960s/1970s when they could not even obtain a few GCE passes at home to compete for jobs. Now, these frustrated elements are more concerned about what is happening in Mauritius that what is going on their countries of adoption.

At the moment, the main attack against corruption is against the ruling party especially as regards the procurement of the drugs to combat the pandemic. The Government is being criticised for being too slow or for moving too fast in the acquisition of medical supplies, Ministers are being accused of profiteering from allocation of contracts. Some officials who have a free hand in the acquisition of medical supplies are being investigated, not the minister.

It can be said, without any fear of contradiction, that there have been criticism of corruption among Ministers in every government that has been in power before. The old newspapers at the national library can provide information of scandals that occurred where past Ministers have overnight acquired wealth. The last case is that of a former PM arrested with an alleged hoard of Rs220m in his personal safe.

As regards the despair of the moderators pictured above, we can say that there is hope that one day corruption will come to an end on this planet. One of those flying asteroids from space will one day hit Earth as it did some million years ago, wiping out the dinosaurs. This is a possibility from which mankind cannot escape.

On the other hand, it has been proved that since its creation, Planet Earth has been inching closer and closer to the sun. One day, that is in a few million years Planet Earth will get so close to the sun that life will be impossible on earth. Man will disappear from earth. Only a few will have been able to escape to neighbouring planets ... to carry on corrupting. Corruption is in the nature of man. Those who will grasp power next will be corrupted as well. There is no escape.

K. Lingum

Ainsi va le monde, qui ose avoir la prétention de vouloir le corriger? said Jean Paul Satre.

Stamps of Mauritius

International Anti-Corruption Day - 9 December



First Day Cover issued by the Mauritius Post to mark the International Anti-Corruption Day

Commemoration of the International Anti-Corruption Day

Following the adoption of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) on 31 October 2003 in Merida, Mexico, the United Nations General Assembly designated 9 December as the International Corruption Day.

The International Anti-Corruption Day is commemorated on 9 December every year to raise worldwide awareness about corruption and reiterate the role of the Convention as an international instrument in combatting and preventing it across the globe. The Convention is the only legally binding universal anti-corruption instrument, making it a unique tool for developing a comprehensive response to the global problem. On 9 December 2003, Mauritius signed the Convention and ratified it on 15 December 2004.



The Prevention of Corrupt Act 2002

Mauritius is in compliance with the UNCAC in as much as it has enacted the relevant laws and set up the relevant institutions to combat corruption in accordance with the Convention.

The Republic of Mauritius is committed to the fight against corruption and other financial crimes. The Prevention of Corruption Act, enacted in 2002, led to the setting up of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) with the mandate to spearhead the fight against corruption and money laundering in Mauritius. Generally defined as the abuse of office for private gain, corruption is globally recognised as an evil that undermines economic and social development.

The Independent Commission Against Corruption

The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) was set up in 2002 and has as core functions to lead, implement and administer the prevention, education and enforcement elements of the national strategy to fight corruption. It investigates and prosecutes corruption as well as money laundering offences. With the enactment of the Declaration of Assets Act 2018, the ICAC has been mandated with additional powers, functions and responsibilities to receive, disclose, and monitor declaration of asset. Besides curbing corruption and money laundering through investigation and prosecution, ICAC lays much emphasis on corruption prevention and education. Such a strategy comprises the raising of public awareness against corruption, strengthening the public intolerance as well as strengthening the integrity of the systems. In that respect, a partnership approach is adopted with the community.

The ICAC has always commemorate the International Anti-Corruption Day in collaboration with different stakeholders in society, ranging from the public and private sectors, NGOs such as Transparency Mauritius, media, opinion leaders and the youth in the organisation of various events. Fighting corruption effectively is meant to develop a culture of integrity in the different aspects of our life. In these uncertain times, collective actions against corruption are more than ever crucial. Let us all stand against corruption.

Resist, Reject and Report ... Corruption

USA TODAY

A huge asteroid is about to fly past Earth. If you caught it, you'd be \$4.7 billion richer

by Jordan Mendoza

An asteroid over 1,000 feet will pass by Earth this weekend, and while it's not expected to hit our planet, it is estimated to be worth nearly \$5 billion.

The asteroid 4660 Nereus, discovered in 1982, is classified as a "potential hazardous asteroid" by NASA due to its size and how close it approaches Earth. At approximately 1,083 feet, it is 20 feet taller than the Eiffel Tower. There are less than 10,000 near-Earth objects the same size or bigger than 4660 Nereus, according to NASA.

The asteroid, which EarthSky reports travels through space at around 14,719 mph, orbits the sun every 664 days, and about once every decade, it gets relatively close to Earth. However, the asteroid will come the closest it's ever been to Earth since its discovery.

On Saturday, the asteroid will be around 2.4 million miles away from Earth, the closest it is projected to be until 2060, when it will be only 744,576 miles away from our planet, according to NASA.

Some people might wish it got a little closer.

Asterank, a database that monitors more than 600,000 asteroids, says 4660 Nereus is valued around \$4.71 billion. Its value is so high because it's packed full of nickel, iron and cobalt. For reference, only three sports franchises – the Dallas Cowboys, New York Yankees and New York Knicks – are valued to be more than the asteroid, according to Forbes.

What happens if an asteroid heads toward Earth?: NASA has a plan, and it involves a crash

Comet Leonard: The brightest comet of the year is approaching Earth. Here's how to see it.

While that may seem like a whole bunch of money to pocket, there are actually asteroids worth a lot more than 4660 Nereus. In Oct. 2020, a group of researchers said the asteroid 16 Psyche was estimated to be worth \$10,000 quadrillion – that's 15 more zeroes – worth more than the entire economy of Earth.

4660 Nereus is going to be one of several asteroids to zoom past Earth in the coming weeks. The asteroid 1994 PC1, estimated to be at least 3,600 feet and bigger than any building in the world, will come within 1.2 million miles of Earth on Jan. 18.

Asteroids Scare



Above picture shows but a pocket of the millions of asteroids, some as big as the Earth itself, that exist in space and the universe. Some fly by without colliding with our planet.

The big question is how long shall we be spared. NASA can send rockets to deviate them off their course, but this can be done one at a time. What about if they come raining down?

Perhaps this could be the answer to all the 'bullshine' that exists on earth, the killings, the bigotry and all! It's time for a new beginning! **K.Lingum**

International Headlines

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- RAF Typhoon shoots down enemy drone over Syria in first air-to-air combat since Falklands
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- North Shropshire byelection earthquake delivers unhappy Christmas for Boris Johnson
- Doctor Says Fully Vaccinated People Are Going to Test Positive with Omicron: 'Our New Normal'
- Ghislaine Maxwell trial: Epstein dated Norwegian heiress later linked to Trump while in relationship with socialite, court hears
- Study reveals the reverse cowgirl is Singapore's most favoured sex position
- AstraZeneca therapy works against Omicron; results mixed for Regeneron
- Masks and Omicron variant: Are cloth masks still effective? Should you double mask? Experts weigh in.
- Is omicron becoming the common cold? History and biology may have the answer...
- Teacher arrested after alleged video of her having sex with student
- New Zealand in uproar as Jacinda Ardern moves to extend travel ban
- The countries that have put Britain on their red list
- Donald Trump booed by supporters as he admits having COVID booster jab
- Man kidnapped and sexually assaulted seriously injured teenager after she fell down Tube station stairs
- Darkest days could be behind us as data hint that omicron cases may have peaked
- Covid latest news LIVE: Daily cases hit new record as France set to ban UK tourists and Ireland moves to shut pubs early
- 3 charts that show unpopular Boris Johnson is right now
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Booster Dose of Pfizer/BioNTech Vaccine Programme

The Ministry of Health and Wellness informs the public that the administration of a Booster Dose of Pfizer/BioNTech Vaccine will be carried out from Friday 17 to Thursday 23 December 2021 and will be administered in each regional hospital for healthcare personnel and high-risk patients:

- Dialysis
- Organ transplant
- Cancer
- Severe respiratory diseases,
- Trisomy
- On immuno suppressants (on high dose steroids, cyclosporine, methotrexate, etc)
- Pregnant women
- Obesity
- People Living with HIV who received their Second Dose of Covaxin, Covishield / Astra Zeneca, Sinopharm and Johnson & Johnson Vaccines 4 months ago.
- High risk patients should bring a most recent doctor's prescription along with them.
- Healthcare personnel should bring a proof of registration in the healthcare sector along with them.

The programme is as follows:

Friday 17 December 2021 To Thursday 23 December 2021 09 00 hrs–12 00 hrs for High risk patients & Healthcare personnel

- Dr A. G. Jeetoo Hospital (Civil Hospital), Port Louis
- SSRN Hospital (Le Nord Hospital), Pamplemousses
- Dr Bruno Cheong Hospital (Flacq Hospital), Flacq
- J. Nehru Hospital, Rose Belle
- Victoria Hospital (Candos Hospital), Quatre Bornes In addition,

First and Booster Doses of Johnson & Johnson Vaccine will be administered for Inpatients and Outpatients as follows:

Friday 17 December 2021 To Thursday 23 December 2021 12.30 hrs–1500 hrs

Inpatients & Outpatients

- Dr A. G. Jeetoo Hospital (Civil Hospital), Port Louis
- SSRN Hospital (Le Nord Hospital), Pamplemousses
- Dr Bruno Cheong Hospital (Flacq Hospital), Flacq
- Nehru Hospital, Rose Belle
- Victoria Hospital (Candos Hospital), Quatre Bornes

All those wishing to get vaccinated are kindly requested to bring their National Identity Card and their vaccination card along with them for the administration of the Booster Dose.

16 December 2021