

L'Union
fait
La Force



Mauritian Overseas Gazette

Truth
&
Trust



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*L'argent peut tout, Il fait tout, Il donne tout ... C'est la force qui gouverne le monde.
Topaz - Macel Pagnol*

Politics Local and International

Elections Time

2024 may certainly be termed Elections Year with general elections scheduled to take place in 64 countries, from Algeria to the US, including Mauritius of course, within those 12 months, according to the US publication TIME.



Trump's ear blast

With so many countries currently scheduled to be going to the polls, which country one may think The Economist considers to harbour the most dangerous politician. One may be forgiven for believing it to be any of the African countries, or even Russia or North Korea.

“The biggest danger to the world of 2024: Former President Donald Trump securing a second term,” wrote the Economist, before the former President’s ear-piercing experience, an experience that should unsettle any normal being. But the former President is no ordinary mortal, out of NO bravado he says the battle will be harder for his opponent for the White House job in the November contest. It is a fact that as a result of his near-missed immolation, he has been loaded with sympathy from his supporters.

Political leaders the world over have sent the Washington runner, messages of sympathy on his Van Gogh incident. Politicians, internationally, know that politics is a dangerous game and no one is safe in the arena. Even stand-by do become victims of a shooting. Among the sympathisers, the most genuine one was certainly Israel President Netanyahu. Yet, he should not worry, The US is endeared to Israel, whoever is the President. (The same goes for Britain and the EU. In their sight Netanyahu can do no wrong).

In a gun-toting country where even school boys carry guns in their satchels to tackle despised teachers, it’s not surprising that public figures are exposed to immolation or sacrifice on the altar of service. The shooting of John F. Kennedy comes to mind, he travelled in an open-top car, so confident was he. No, not Trump, he is much wiser, no open-top car for him.

The US, democracy personified, has a long history of political assassinations. According to some press reports Donald Trump remains a moving target as long as he is in the fray. On the other hand, there are those who hold the view, that Donald Trump, as gun-lobby champion, will have tasted a bit of the medicine. He may have nightmares about it, so close was he to the final dispatch. “A country gets the leader it deserves”, it may be said. Trump will be back if the Americans deserve him. Anyway, he is absolutely certain that he holds the Trump Card.

Pierre Louis

Political crisis in France

Le Pen est dans la Peine, but not *déplumée*

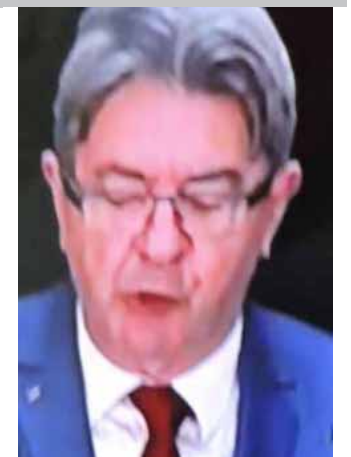


**M. Le Pen
We will be back**

In France, a coalition of the movement de la Gauche has managed to prevent the far right-right movement of Marine Le Pen, Rassemblement National, from obtaining a majority of seats at the French National Assembly at the second election ballot on Sunday, July 7. The Union de la Gauche has managed to win their bet. But that was over a week ago, and so far the coalition has not managed to agree on the appointment, from their rank, of a president of the National Assembly.

Marine Le Pen is confident that the l'Union de la Gauche will not hold power for long and will burst out soon enough for another legislative election to be held within a year. She contends that the coalition of the left is an alliance against nature and cannot last. It was an overwhelming victory for her party, the Rassemblement national (RN) at the first election on June 30, and still secured more votes than the other parties individually during the ballot on July 7.

Among the coalition of the Left, individually, the Nouveau Front populaire (NFP) of Melenchon. leads with 182 seats. The leader contends that he should be the President of the new National Assembly and be appointed as Prime Minister. This ranking is still going on at the time of writing (18/07/24)



**J.L. Melenchon,
Next French P.M.**

Election time in Mauritius

The next General Election, when will it be?

When will the next general election be held in Mauritius is everybody's guess, save perhaps the PM who is supposed to know. But then, even the PM may not know, because the materialisation of the next election depends on the materialisation of another event. Since the materialisation of that other event itself cannot be determined at this stage, the PM himself may not know when he will go to the people for another mandate.

For perhaps over a year now, there has been a lot of speculation as to when will the next general election be held in Mauritius.

As the present PM said in the House some time ago, no sooner a general election is over, Mauritians start speculating about the next one. Some impatient losers and dissatisfied parliamentary candidates want the next polls to be held as soon as possible.

Can one imagine the political situation in a country where this sort of rankling goes on for months and even years? Many unsuccessful candidates have adopted the bad-loser antics of Donald Trump that the election has been tricked and victory stolen from them.

In Mauritius, some unsuccessful candidates of certain constituencies appeal to the Supreme Court to annul the victory of the successful candidates. Some would even take their appeals to the Privy Council of England, the old mother country. For the whole duration of a mandate the country has to put up with such an unhealthy situation.

End of Five-year Mandate

And at last, the present five-year mandate of the present Assembly is drawing to an end! The Opposition in the House craving for power and to move to the other side of hemicycle are despairing that the PM is not willing to go to the people.

And the prospective candidates sur le terrain are busy organising themselves into groups, or political parties for the forthcoming consultation. Of course, they can and will do better. People of the Opposition (*from whatever political party*) are people of great vision and they know what is best for the country and for the people.

Such prospects demand electoral reforms for the PM to hold office for two terms of five years only. Some of them even say that the mandate should not exceed three years in stead of for five years, as is the practice.

Among their demands is the stipulation that the Constitution should fix the date of the following general election after a poll. It should not be left to the PM to decide when to hold an election.

There at the moment at least three prospective candidates on the ground with the top job in their colimator, plus the present PM himself and one from the parliamentary Opposition.

The PM apart, all the other contenders want the general election to be held soon, and why not now. The wait is too painful. To say that there is a feeling of desperation in the island of Mauritius for a public consultation is no exaggeration, but the PM would not budge an inch in his determination to go the people as and when he will deem it fit to do so.

A Man of his Word

The present mandate of five years will end in November 2024 when the National Assembly will be dissolved and all MPs will go home or

start their canvassing (kissing babies and all, as the African chap says somewhere else in this issue). It is said that according to the country's constitution the PM has another period of grace of three months to make up his mind to set the election date. Until then, the Ministers will have to carry on looking after their ministries.

The PM who insists to say, over and over, that he is a person of his word, has always made it known that his government will hold office to the end of its mandate of five years to November 2024.

However, Mauritian political observers who know a bit better than the PM himself have been speculating in the press and on private radio broadcasts that a snap election would be held in July, then in August and on and on.

The situation has been made a bit more confused with the occurrence of a by-election due in October. While the PM has been adamant that the by-election will be held as required by law, the experts have been saying that there will be no by-election because the General Election itself is in the offing. They argue that it will be a waste of public money to elect a new MP for a few months only.

When the by-election became due in February 2024 with the resignation of a MP Vikram Hurdoyal in the Constituency No 10, the general consensus was the PM would not hold the by-election for fear that it could be considered as a referendum to gauge the popularity of this Government.

Wait and See

So far, the PM has done what he said he would do. Against all expectations, the Nomination Day for submission of candidature for the by-election was July 7, and 16 candidates have registered for the contest.

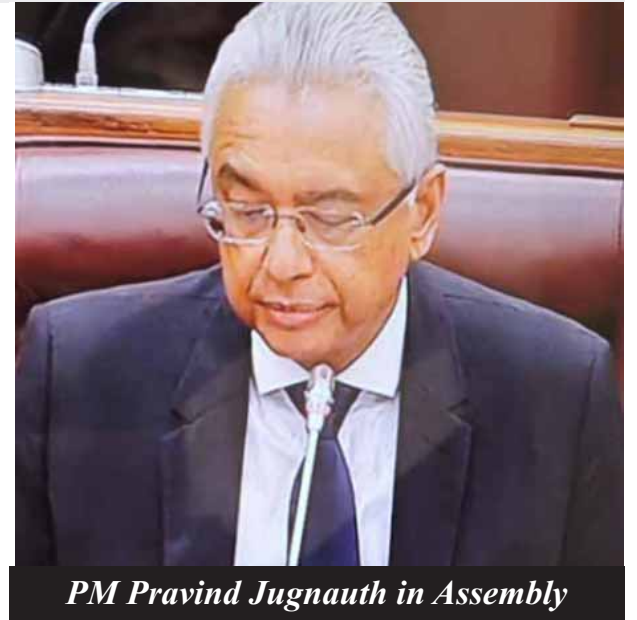
The by-election is scheduled to take place on October 7. However, the question in the mind of the usual 'contestateurs' remains whether it will actually be held.

Criticism has been levelled against the PM to hold a



*Former Minister and MP
Vikram Hurdoyal*

by-election at considerable expense to the State in the wake of the General Election. From the same quarters, fears were expressed at the time of the seat becoming vacant that the PM would not hold a by-election to avoid censure prior to the general election.



PM Pravind Jugnauth in Assembly

Even at this stage, there are doubters who still hold the view that the by-election will not be held on October 7, as announced in spite of the fact that 16 candidates have entered the fray.

So, now, just three months before the event, it's a matter of wait and see, to see whether the PM will stick to his gun. Will he hold the by-election on October 7 when the general election is at the door?

Intronisation of Adrien Duval as Speaker

A Question of Sonny and Daddy

On July 18, PM Pravind Jugnauth confirmed persistent rumours that PMSD member Adrien Duval would be appointed as the next Speaker of the National Assembly in replacement of Sooroojdev Phokeer who quit a job the week before.

This is now an indication that the PMSD will join forces with the MSM to fight the next general election.

The Opposition demonstrated in force against the appointment of their former bosom friend, Adrien Duval, by staging a vociferous disruption of the Assembly during the PM's announcement of the appointment and the installation ceremony itself. The ceremony had to be stopped and the Assembly session postponed.

The Opposition had made it known that they would support the appointment of Deputy Speaker Zahid Nazurally to the vacant position instead of the appointment of their former friend Duval whose PMSD party had abandoned them in their fight against the Government.

Actually, it is a question in the mind of many Mauritians as to why the PM has not appointed Deputy Speaker as Speaker. Mr Nazurally is a member of the Muvman Liberater, one of the three parties making the present Alliance Government. The answer will be forthcoming as times goes by.

It is a bit of an embarrassing situation for Hon Xavier Luc Duval, leader of the PMSD, who sits on the Opposition benches. How will he address sonny Adrien when he has to put up a PQ. "Mr Speaket, Sir, ..." he will have to say to sonny. Hopefully, the latter will nopt reply: "This question is not receivalbe, Daddy.

P.L.

Picked-up from the net

An African's Perception of Politicians



When I look at our leaders, who when they are seeking to serve us, when they are seeking our support they are humility personified, they kiss babies, they go to the shibins. They drink from dirty cups

they walk on foot, they smile with us, they take photos with everybody, they discard their security, They are humility personified

They speak the language, that we want to hear, they do the things that they think we want to see them do. They delude us, they cheat us and somehow, we accept that they are our leaders.

But immediately they get what they want, oh they have a reverse polyline conversion If they were Paul, they go back to being Saul, and we can no longer recognize them. When you ring them, their phones are picked by somebody called the PA whose only claim to fame that he is rude beyond measure.

When you go to their offices, they no longer want to see you, when they are driving in the streets their sirens scare you, while I suspect that those who invented the sirens meant that it should be used for good purposes. For them it is a badge of honour, and they harass us in the streets.

They acquire things for which they have not worked; they promise us things that they know they will never deliver; they want to be described as honourable even when they are horrible.

These are the men that we elect to govern us ...

National Assembly Speaker Sooroojdev Phokeer bows out

The Speaker of the National Assembly has finally thrown in the towel in the face of the hordes of hooligans who were after his blood. Sittings after sittings, they gave him a hard time in the National Assembly, In the end through 'usure', they have worn the man out.



Sooroojdev Phokeer, Speaker, unseated

Finally, the Speaker had had enough. A lesser man than Sooroojdev Phokeer would have thrown in the towel much earlier, but he held on thinking that he could mate the recalcitrant.

The way the Speaker in the Assembly was responding to the provocations

from the hordes indicated that before long his heart would fail him, and this was what actually happened. Admitted to hospital for cardiac treatment he recently informed, to whom it may concern, that he had undergone a first surgery and that a second surgical intervention was in sight. Instead of appeasing his tormentors, they rather see it a ruse on the part of the Speaker pour deguerpir or bourrer (as we say in the Mauritian vernacular). And one mini-headline of a paper stated that the memory of Sooroojdev Phokeer has now been confined to the dustbin of history.

A Controversial Figure

Sooroojdev Phokeer was a controversial personality in fulfilling his role as Speaker of the National Assembly, he was considered as rough and tough. Otherwise, if he was to sit quietly in his presidential chair and let the recalcitrant do what they wished, even passing water on his head, there would have been no problem.

Taking into the consideration that the lot, with the exception of a few, are no choir boys or innocent virgins, the recalcitrants were determined to give Sooroojdev Phokeer a hard time. His main weakness was that as a one-time teacher, he had a bit of the teacher's reaction vis-à-vis the unruly elements of the Assembly determined to give him a heart attack. Sittings after sittings, they took him to the edge of destruction. In the end, they succeeded to cause him a serious heart condition which led to his resignation. If he knows what is good for him, he should be happy to be far from the madding crowd.

It is better to close your mouth and let people think you are a fool than to open it and remove all doubt.

Mark Twain

The Speaker's Saga

Enters Adrien Charles Duval

A Lamb to the Slaughter House

For the new Speaker, Adrien Duval, it's a totally adifferent kettle of fish from the Sooroojdev Phokeer's drama.

His very nomination is controversial in the eyes of the Opposition. His daddy Xavier Duval had, for some time, been negotiating with the MMM leader Paul Bérenger and Labour leader Navin Ramgoolam for an electoral alliance to bring down the Government of Pravind Jugnauth. All was going well, negotiations were moving in the right direction until the first dispute arose as to the number of seats that should be allocated to the Xavier Duval's PMSD.

Xavier Duval wanted more seats than the number suggested for his party in the MMM/PT/PMSD proposed coalition. The negotiations soon broke down and Xavier Duval started to move away from the two partners, namely Paul Bérenger and Navin Ramgoolam, not to their liking of course.

Rumours

Rumours soon began to circulate of a rapprochement of Xavier Duval and PM Pravind Jugnauth in spite of the considerable previous mudslinging that took place between them on the opposite sides of the House. PM Jugnauth was even severely critical of the encounters with the law of Xavier Duval'



New Speaker, Adrien Charles Duval in the Chair

son Adrien, who still has a case waiting for court judgement. And now, PM Pravind Jugnauth at the National Assembly has himself proposed the appointment of Adrien Duval as Speaker.

One can imagine the fury of the Labour/MMM Opposition on the volte face of the PMSD following the disruption of the coalition negotiations for the next general election and the appointment of Adrien Duval as Speaker. Hence the '*dessan dans la rue*' of the Labour Party and the MMM bloc.

The public outcry of MMM's Paul Bérenger and Labour's Arvind Boolell is considered as their genuine right to do so. But the storming of the National Assembly, as they did on July 18 and the disrupting, with a lot of brouhaha, of the investiture ceremony of Adrien Duval has been censured by many observers. It is considered that a sacred place as the National Assembly has been raped by hooligans from the two political parties.

Leading the pack was MMM leader Paul Bérenger. According to Paul Bérenger the deputy Speaker Zahid Nazurally should have been appointed Speaker and not Adrien Duval. According Paul Bérenger, Section 50 of the Constitution has been violated, which he told the press during a demonstration outside the National Assembly. In the eyes of the Opposition, the appointment of Adrien Duval is unconstitutional, which he intends to take to the Supreme Court after legal consideration.

Minister of Labour Soodesh Callichurn declared at a press conference that he invited Bérenger to have the guts to go to court. The two lawyers commenting on television the disruption of the National Assembly by the Opposition said the manifestations were planned in advance by MMM MP Paul Bérenger and his daughter MP Joanna Berenger.

Pierre Louis

Disruption of the National Assembly on July 18, 2024

Like a lamb in the slaughter house, Adrien Duval faced the wrath of the Opposition parties following his appointment as Speaker of the National Assembly

As mentioned in the previous piece, the leader of the pack of tormentors who tried to cause havoc during the sitting of National Assembly on July 18 was Paul Bérenger, a seasoned "contestateur".

Who is Paul Bérenger?

MMM leader Paul Bérenger was alleged to have been behind the barricade during the 1968 students unrest in Paris, then headed by Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a statelss student, of Jewish origin, who was bent on creating troubles in France, his country of adoption. How ungrateful one can be!

If the Paris Barricade allegation is true, one can imagine the *parcours* of Paul Bérenger during the past 55 years in Mauritius up to the National Assembly brouhaha on July 18. With the zouaves behind him, the intention was to prevent Adrien Duval, rightly or wrongly, from assuming the role of Speaker, an action qualified of 'voyouterie' in

various quarters. This sort of show-down *abaisse l'homme en question*, but for him it is nothing more than one of his trade-mark contestations.

Since he set foot in Mauritius, naked, as he has always claimed to be, the man has been causing a lot of turmoil in the country to make a name for himself and build up his fortune. Soon after his return to Mauritius in 1969, he first wrested control of the powerful Dockers' Union from Eliézer François whom he accused of misusing the Union's funds. François got *gain de cause* through the court, but it was too late for him; he lost control of the Union.

With his Bangor University qualification, Bérenger put his Philosophy degree to good use. There is money in politics for those who hold the right portfolio. Many who came naked on the political scene, according to their own saying, ended up on the Rich List (and the very rich list too, declared or undeclared) of the island.



Standing Paul Bérenger (top of picture) and other demonstrators shouting during investiture ceremony)

One academic writing about Paul Bérenger, who has often been identified as a member of the White community of country, said he was devoid of all feelings of 'communalism'. The aca-

demic is wrong, Paul Bérenger is believed to carry a chip on his shoulders which has defined his stand in the trade-union movement and in politics.

P.L.

Muritians' Presence in the UK, *as depicted some 26 years ago*

The feature below is one of the articles that appeared in a Special Edition of Mauritius News in March 1998 to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the Independence of Mauritius. It deals mainly with the first generation of Mauritian migrants who came to settle in Britain.

All in all, we can say that the present feature in this MOG issue No 35 is talking of Mauritians in the UK of some 50 years back.

This is part of the history of the Mauritian people which is worth documented

30 years have elapsed since Mauritius obtained independence from Britain, and it is as long a time since many Mauritians left the island for a better tomorrow. Others have been here much longer, but still it is with pride that the expatriates, especially those organised into various social groups, have been commemorating the National Day since the country acceded to sovereignty on March 12, 1968.

March 12 is the day when UK Mauritians turn their thoughts to the motherland they were forced to leave so long ago for economic reason. As a result, even the younger generation of Mauritians, born and brought up in this country, follow the example of their elders and celebrate the National Day.

This special edition of Mauritius News is a tribute to the motherland on this auspicious occasion. In 1988 and in 1993 we published such a commemorative issue for the 20th and 25th independence anniversaries respectively. In both issues we took stock of our own progress as immigrants in the UK. Ten years ago the family structure was different and we still could lay emphasis then on the first generation of Mauritian immigrants. But in 1998 the younger family members are now adolescents, grown-ups or even married. This is a fundamental change.

Mauritian expatriates have often been reproached for leaving the motherland when the country faced great difficulties. The fact is that when the compatriots left Mauritius in their thousands during the 1960s (before and after independence) Mauritius was economically weak depending entirely on the revenue from sugar. Unemployment which was already a major



A Mauritian New Year Party in north London in the 1990s

problem was on the increase with thousands of school leavers every year entering the labour market.

Mauritius had no benefit scheme for the unemployed and this together with the high cost of living and severe housing shortage threatened the very fabric of society. The population explosion, as a result of the high birthrate, appeared as a real danger and the future looked terribly bleak. It was against this background that those Mauritians, of their own initiative, left the country to seek a future overseas and to a large extent to alleviate the burdens of the island.

The country which most Mauritians flocked to was Britain as we were still British subjects until Mauritius achieved independence in March 1968. Even after the introduction of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act in 1962 Mauritians still kept coming to Britain in large numbers.

These expatriates never forgot their homeland; every month they sent money to the relatives they left behind. While those at home go for their holidays these days to such places as Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, India etc, Mauritian expatriates

in the UK still prefer to take their families home in preference to other destinations. The Mauritius Government Tourist Office (MGTO), itself, in its early days urged Mauritians to come to Mauritius for their holidays. "There's no place like home - on holiday", was the MGTO's appeal to overseas Mauritians.

The Mauritian visitors took home substantial sums of spending money, presents for relatives and friends, rent bungalows and hire cars. Their contribution to the economy of Mauritius over the years has been immense, and even the national airline, Air Mauritius, as their favourite carrier has greatly benefited. The Tourism Authority may perhaps think differently now.

Nostalgia

It is with quite a bit of nostalgia that we look back on the old days of the 1960s when we experienced moments of great difficulties which some of us would sensibly like to forget. But there were also moments of satisfaction which



The Mauritius Tourist Office inviting UK Mauritians in the 1980s to spend holidays in Mauritius

From Page 5

establishment. It is perhaps that in the nursing profession that Mauritians will have made a greater

advantage of the possibilities which the country can offer. The young ones' school performance has always been above reproach. They have acquired academic qualifications enabling them to obtain employment with a greater ease. So many of them are on a level of earnings that their elders could never dream of. Even those without high qualifications prefer to seek work commensurate with their ability and temperament for a decent living.

The younger generation has blended fairly well into the British way of life and feel comfortable in their environment without for that matter achieving total integration especially with their pronounced ethnicity. The Government itself has since long realised that integration is not possible and has established a system of monitoring to ensure that equal opportunities be made available to all. The young Mauritians feel like being in a sort of no man's land situation when, for statistics purposes, they have to identify their ethnic origin.

Mauritian parents have, through the setting up of various denominational associations in the UK, tried to instill in their offspring a sense of their ancestors' cultures and traditions, but will the young people pay any heed to these traditions once the elders will have left the scene? Like their parents they may enjoy dual nationality of being both British and Mauritian, but will they have any feeling for Mauritius in years to come and visit the country on top of other destinations? The answer to this second question will depend on Mauritius itself.

Mauritius welcomes other foreign countries to set up cultural centres in Mauritius and it is high time that the Mauritius Government considers setting up a Mauritian Cultural Centre in the UK for which the Mauritian community has been craving for years. Such a Mauritius Cultural Centre will show that Mauritius cares for the young overseas Mauritians and they in turn may care for Mauritius.

There may be a lot to be gained by Mauritius if overseas Mauritians should care for the island! Mauritius owes itself a duty to show some affection for the descendants of overseas Mauritians if only for economic reasons. A Mauritius Cultural Centre could be looked upon as the island's overseas legacy for the next millennium.

The Mauritian community faces the next millennium with a considerable degree of confidence. This is a community that has been well-established in their new country. Mauritians are conscious of the race problems inherent in everyday life of Great Britain but they would not let these problems mar their determination to lead an ordinary and happy existence. Their resilience comes perhaps from the fact that they themselves are from a country which is not foreign to these issues.

Peter Chellen



UK Mauritians dancing the sega at openair festivals in London

we would cherish with fond memories. It was a time when those young Mauritian immigrants in the UK were struggling for the basic necessities of life to start a career and create a family in their new country.

The early migrants were real pioneers. Colour bar, as racial prejudice was known then, was prevalent and it was not easy to find rooms for accommodation. The white collar job, even for those with O-level and A-level qualifications, was out of reach. It was mainly factory work or work which the whites refused to do that was open to coloured immigrants on arrival during the 50s and early 60s though exceptions were not uncommon.

It would take the newcomers quite some time to acclimatise and get accustomed to spoken English and to secure office work. Thanks to the grant which was available to mature students it was not difficult for those academically inclined to acquire a university degree or diploma.

By sheer hard work Mauritians have enjoyed upward mobility in their career to occupy senior or managerial positions, or to be even appointed as university lecturers and researchers. In the course of time, those with business flair started their own small businesses and made their way as successful businessmen and entrepreneurs. There are quite a few millionaires within the community and this is no small feat considering that most of us landed here with only a suitcase or two.

The nursing profession in the UK was an area which the English avoided in the sixties, and thousands of college leavers from Mauritius found nursing in this country to be a good opening for a career. At one time, practically every single UK hospital had a few Mauritian nationals on its

headway to occupy senior hospital administrative positions or to become nursing tutors (now lecturers). With the part privatization of healthcare they did not hesitate to take over the responsibility of acquiring running their own nursing homes.

It may be said that on the whole as a minority among the ethnic minorities of Great Britain, Mauritians have done fairly well. As law abiding citizens, they have led an exemplary life in this country. Through considerable personal sacrifice, doing more than one job in the beginning, through their own efforts they have secured a strong footing in this country. They have proved that they are people who can stand on their own feet to find solutions to their problems. To this day, the Mauritian community is probably the only ethnic minority community who does not receive a single penny from any local authority to run an advisory service to cater for their needs though they are entitled to it as rate-payers. One penny of every pound we pay as rate to the local councils is supposed to be given back for community service. We are entitled to a lot of 'pennies'.

Younger Generation

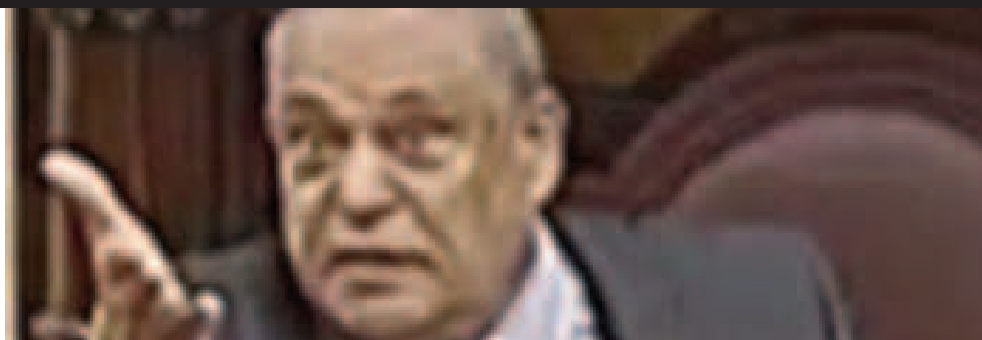
Mauritians have been a credit to both their motherland and their country of adoption in spite of the inequality and racial tensions which prevailed during the early days. They have brought their contribution in whatever capacity they can to their adopted country. Their sacrifice and industry have not been lost on the younger generation of Mauritians who are more than determined to do as well as, if not better than their parents.

Mauritian migrants have a high regard for education and they see to it that their children take

Fingering in the National Assembly



*A member of the Assembly pointing the finger at the Speaker
"Dans la ri to connais," he seems to say*



"Comma toi, enne paquet" the Speaker seems to reply