



Hello Peter ,

What is the Commonwealth People's Forum?

It is the largest gathering of civil society on the Commonwealth calendar that brings together hundreds of delegates: creatives, advocates, policymakers, and more. The Forum takes place alongside the Heads of Government Meeting and feeds into it.

The programme will focus on climate justice, freedom of expression, and economic inclusion, while small states, women, and young people will feature as priorities that cut across the whole programme.

The People's Forum is an opportunity for the people of the Commonwealth to learn from each other and work together to find solutions to shared problems.

Ready to learn more?

Watch the video and comment with the issues you hope to see discussed at the Forum:

Watch on LinkedIn

Watch on Facebook

Watch on Instagram

Applications to attend the Forum in person are open until 30 September. Hundreds of civil society leaders, creative practitioners and policymakers have already signed up to join the conversation live in Antigua and Barbuda. Peter , would you like to join them? Sign up now.

We hope you'll be part of the discussion.

Best wishes,  
Commonwealth Foundation



*From Japan, Mylene writes*

# Prince Hisahito turns 20 when Japan's Female Emperor Debate Returns



**Princess Aiko**  
*Picture from the Net*

**The Japanese Emperor Naruhito has only one child, Princess Aiko (born 2001). She should be the next in line to the Chrysanthemum throne, however, a recent revision of Japan's Imperial House Law reinforces male-only succession.**

This puts the spotlight on **Prince Hisahito**, the only son of Heir apparent — Crown Prince Fumihito, who turned 20 on September 6. He is currently second in line to the throne, after his father.

It is heartening to know that national polls consistently show that 70% - 80% of Japanese people support allowing a woman (like Princess Aiko) to become emperor. So, there is a clear gap between public opinion and government policy.

As Japan's first female prime minister, you might expect Sanae Takaichi would be in favour of greater opportunities for women. However, her ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has firmly supported preserving the traditional male line of succession.

PM Takaichi often compares herself with former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, the so-called Iron Lady. Yet, like Thatcher, she has so far done little to promote women in government or the workplace.

During Thatcher's 11 and a half years as prime minister, she appointed only one woman to her Cabinet, Baroness Young, who was a peer rather than an elected Member of Parliament.

By comparison, PM Takaichi has appointed two women to her 19 member cabinet. Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama, the first woman to hold Japan's top economic post, and Kimi Onoda, Minister of State for Economic Security and minister responsible for foreign resident issues. Onoda was raised by her Japanese mother after her Irish-American father left the family.

Thatcher did not see herself as a champion of women's rights, but she did introduce an important change through the Finance Act 1988. It ended the system under which a married woman's income was treated as part of her husband's income.

PM Takaichi's approach is described as a form of "conservative feminism". Rather than supporting broad government intervention, it emphasises individual opportunity, merit and personal responsibility. At the same time, it values traditional roles, viewing motherhood as important and deserving of equal respect.

## Back to the Imperial House of Japan

Japan has had female emperors in its history, eight to be exact. Yet today, the emperor's own daughter cannot inherit the throne simply because she is a woman. Instead succession passes first to her uncle, apparent heir Crown Prince Fumihito, and then to her male cousin, **Prince Hisahito**.

Princess Aiko is often compared favourably with her cousin, **Prince Hi-**

**sahito**. Both undertake official imperial duties. The princess has increasingly appeared at public events and official engagements, while her cousin has begun taking on more formal duties following his coming-of-age ceremony on September 6.

Much of this comes down to The Imperial House Law and traditionalists who want to preserve the male line. The law states that the Imperial Throne is inherited by "a male offspring in the male line" of the Imperial family. Traditionalists also argue that if a woman became emperor and married, her children could create a different line of succession.



**Prince Hisahito**  
*Picture from the Net*

## Hey! Japan Look Around

Since the Second World War, the position of women at the highest levels of power has changed dramatically.

Female monarchs inherited their positions through hereditary systems, while an increasing number of women have broken barriers by being elected or appointed to seats of power. The Japanese Prime Minister, Sanae Takaichi, is one example.

## Notable Women Monarchs (Post WWII)

**Queen Elizabeth II, United Kingdom & Commonwealth (1952-2022).** She was the longest reigning female monarch in history and served during the terms of 15 British prime ministers.

**Queen Margrethe II, Denmark (1972-2024)** She was widely respected for helping to modernise the Danish monarchy.

**Queen Juliana, The Netherlands (1948-1980)** She guided the Netherlands through post-war reconstruction and the independence of Indonesia.

**Queen Beatrix, The Netherlands (1980-2013)** She played a highly active role in Dutch political and international affairs. She married German-born Claus Von Amsberg who became Prince Claus.

## Throughout history, royal marriages were often used to strengthen international alliances or to gain territory.

Queen Mary I of England married King Philip II of Spain in a strategic marriage. Fearing Spanish influence, the English Parliament required Philip to sign a Marriage Treaty limiting his power in England.

In more modern times, royal marriages continued to cross national boundaries. Queen Victoria of England married a German prince, Queen Beatrix married a German who became Prince Claus of The Netherlands. Queen Margrethe II of Denmark married a Frenchman, and Queen Elizabeth II of England married Prince Philip of Greece and Denmark.

And the world never stopped turning.

**So, I find the arguments for keeping the Japanese throne male only, frankly, hard to take seriously.**

**Even if [the Gaza war] stopped tomorrow,  
there would not be peace... until the Balfour  
Declaration is unpicked**

Charles Dance





5702-5238

## SMART CHOICE FOR YOUR FUTURE

Ref VN001 | Location : Ville Noire, Mahebourg | 50 Perches | MUR 4.5M



# The Rodrigues Newsletter

*From Paul Draper,  
Port Mathurin*



Care-Co (Rodrigues). & the Trevor Huddleston Association for the Disabled (Rodrigues).  
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## AUGUST- SEPTEMBER 2026

### Hello from Rodrigues

**We are now starting the last term of the School year at the GPL Centre. We do not have any of our pupils taking part in exams this year, as it happens some years. So, the atmosphere is relaxed.**

On Friday of this week all the children and the teachers went to a Sports day, organized for the SEN schools on the island under the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Education Commission. It was held on the beach at Grand Bay (Rodrigues).

#### Special News

Susan (School Director) has some more news about the various programmes and competitive events she and the rest of the school staff have been involved in recently, and during the vacations break in August.

Three of our pupils: Samuel who draws, Serge who is autistic and non verbal, but who sings, and Alando who is deaf but dances, participated in a Talent competition in Rodrigues organized by the Mauritius Recreational Council. They won a place in the final which was held in Mauritius.

So on the big day, the three pupils accompanied by Evodie, one of our teachers and Serge's mum took the plane to Mauritius for the final.

Results: They all won first prizes and were awarded the sum of Rs 5,000 each! It was a great day for them and the GPL Centre.

#### Care-Co News

Birgit was happy to have the inaugural opening ceremony for the Pilot Beekeeping Project in the Rodrigues Prison.

The Commissioner for Prisons was there as well as a gathering of well wishers. The event was covered by the local media. I think I am right in saying that this initiative of Birgit, the ENSMAN Project and Care-Co are unique in Rodrigues.

#### Now for some not so good news.

There are concerns over the Care-co Workshop roof slab. It is deteriorating and needs attention. The repair may be expensive. Care-co is facing somewhat of a dilemma over this deterioration.

The workshop was constructed about 30 years ago. Apart from one or two defects in the construction, only the roof slab has shown signs of deteriorating in the past few years. Various reasons have been put forward, namely the poor standard of construction, and more recently, the increasing number of Seismic shocks near Rodrigues.

Whatever the cause, something has to be done to avoid any accidents to the people using the workshop rooms. We are exploring various opinions and suggestions as to how the problem can be resolved. This includes the possibility of a completely new roof.

This could be a reverting to a corrugated Iron roof – to replace the concrete one, a new concrete one – or both! In any event it will be quite costly and beyond our financial situation. It will involve fundraising. We await a full assessment by a consultant on the situation before we make any decision. We will keep you informed of developments

Once again I apologise for the printed letter, and I promise to respond to all emails.

*Paul*

# Mauritius Scholarship 2026



Front row - The men from L to R: Mr Robert Hungley (V.P), President Dharam Gokhool, Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam, Education Minister, Dr Mahend Gungapersad with their partners

**The 73 laureates of the 2025 Cambridge Higher School Certificate (HSC) examinations, including those selected under the Merit and Social Criteria for Additional Scholarships, were honoured this morning at a reception held at the State House in Réduit in recognition of their academic achievements.**

The President of the Republic of Mauritius, Mr Dharambeer Gokhool; the Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam; the Vice-President of the Republic of Mauritius, Mr Jean Yvan Robert Hungley; and the Minister of Education and Human Resource, Dr Mahend Gungapersad, were among the distinguished guests present at the ceremony.

In his keynote address, President Gokhool congratulated the laureates on their achievements and commended their parents, families, teachers and schools for the support provided throughout their academic journey. He noted that bringing together the different categories of laureates reflects a commitment to equity and inclusion. He also acknowledged the efforts of students who, despite their hard

work, were not among the laureates, and wished them every success in their future endeavours.

Addressing their future prospects, the President urged the laureates to approach the next phase of their educational journey with confidence and determination. He encouraged them to remain curious, acquire new skills and languages, build networks and view mistakes as opportunities for learning.

Emphasising that education extends beyond qualifications and degrees, he highlighted the importance of lifelong learning, resilience, empathy and adaptability. He also called on those pursuing their studies in Mauritius or abroad to broaden their horizons while remaining connected to their country and serving as proud ambassadors of Mauritius.

In his speech, Prime Minister Ramgoolam underlined the importance of recognising academic excellence and ensuring that talented students from all backgrounds have access to opportunities. He stressed that the laureate system should continue to reward excellence

and provide deserving students, including those from modest backgrounds and regional colleges, with access to leading universities.

**Dr Ramgoolam further highlighted the need to address the loss of highly qualified Mauritian talent who pursue their studies overseas and subsequently remain abroad. For the Prime Minister, it is important to create an environment that would encourage laureates to return and contribute their knowledge and expertise to Mauritius, adding that their success carries a responsibility to contribute to society and help advance the country.**

As for Minister Gungapersad, he hailed the laureates as national assets and a source of pride for Mauritius. He called on them to put the knowledge, skills and training they acquire to the service of their country and contribute to its development. Education, he said, should also foster compassion and humanity, urging the laureates to uphold these values in all that they undertake.

GIS

## Laureates, Come Back

Yes, these scholars, as numerous as they are, will undertake studies of their own choice at Mauritius Government expense including a monthly maintenance allowance during the whole period of their studies.

Those who opt for medical studies receive from 5 to 6 years of financial benefits to qualify for the Bachelor of Medicine/ Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS). The laureate studying law obtains the LLB and is called to the bar in a period of three years. So,

cleverly with government approval, the Classical Side laureate goes for a three-year degree course and then undertakes law. Thus, all in all, all laureates are *at par* in terms of financial benefits for their scholarship.

The scholarship based on the results of the Cambridge Higher School Certificate (HSC) in colonial days used to be known as the English Scholarship (La Bourse d'Angleterre). It was very competitive and only four scholarships were awarded for State Colleges, and four scholarships for Private Colleges — **Mod-**

**ern Side:** One for Boys and one for Girls; **Classical Side:** One for Boys and one for Girls in respect of the State Colleges and the Private Colleges. The total number of scholarships per year were eight.

HSC students used to push themselves so hard that many suffer from mental exhaustion/ breakdown after the exams.

In colonial days, the Laureates had to go and study in the UK. They were not allowed to go and study in any other country. Almost all those laureates did not come back to Mauritius after their studies. The country could not care less. The few job vacancies available in the country were left for local consumption.

But today, it's another kettle of fish. With a shortage of manpower, the

country wants them back, especially after spending so much on them, for years.

It is the same litany we hear, year after year. The laureates should come back to serve the country. Can they be forced to do so?

Some believe that it should be part of the conditions on which the awards are made. Is this practical?

We have highlighted in red above part of the speech of the PM at the 2026 award ceremony. He says that Mauritius should create an environment to encourage the laureates to return. How can this be done, we wonder!

P.C.

# Tribulations d'une famille en Grande Détresse

« À 75 ans, je continue de me battre pour les miens »  
L'appel poignant de Poosmawtee Sobhee



À 75 ans, Poosmawtee Sobhee assume toujours seule le poids de sa famille. Cette veuve de quatre enfants sollicite l'intervention des autorités afin que le dossier de sa fille Shakuntala Devi Sobhee, 45 ans, souffrant de troubles bipolaires et de l'humeur, soit réévalué. Depuis février 2026, celle-ci ne perçoit plus d'aide sociale après avoir été jugée en dessous du seuil d'incapacité exigé.

Déjà confrontée aux soins de sa fille et de son

fils de 55 ans, immobilisé à la suite d'une fracture du bassin, Poosmawtee Sobhee élève également les trois enfants de son plus jeune fils, décédé dans un accident.

La suppression de cette allocation a aggravé une situation financière déjà très précaire.

Selon Poosmawtee Sobhee, l'état de santé de sa fille et les effets de son traitement l'empêchent de travailler, raison pour laquelle elle demande un nouvel examen de son dossier.



Vivant dans une modeste maison en tôle dont le toit se dégrade, cette mère de famille espère avant tout retrouver un soutien financier indispensable pour offrir des conditions de vie plus dignes à ses proches.

**Pour toute aide ou information, vous pouvez contacter Mme Sobhee au 5706 9919 ou au 211 1637. Numéro de compte Mme Poosmawtee Sobhee Banque : MCB N° de compte : 000014912589**

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## Where is THE TRUTH?

| <br><b>IRAN</b> | <br><b>ISRAEL</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NEVER ATTACKED A NEIGHBOR                                                                          | ATTACKED ITS NEIGHBORS<br><b>REPEATEDLY</b>                                                          |
| SIGNED THE NPT                                                                                     | <b>REFUSED TO SIGN NPT</b>                                                                           |
| IAEA INSPECTIONS                                                                                   | <b>NO INSPECTIONS</b>                                                                                |
| NO NUCLEAR WEAPONS                                                                                 | <b>400 NUCLEAR WEAPONS</b>                                                                           |

**WHO'S THE REAL THREAT?**  
**ISRAEL THREATENS IRAN'S EXISTENCE!**



**WHY THE LIES?**  
**WHY THE DOUBLE STANDARDS?**  
**WHY THE HYPOCRISY?**

## CAREER OPPORTUNITY



**Account Manager -  
Trade Sales – Air Mauritius Delhi  
(Ref: AM/DEL/09/26)**

Air Mauritius is the National Airline of the Republic of Mauritius and currently operates direct flights to Europe, India, Africa, Australia, South East Asia and Indian Ocean islands.

The Company is seeking a dynamic, creative, and self-driven professional to fill the position of Account Manager - Trade Sales to ensure effective market coverage. Based in Delhi, the incumbent will be responsible for developing, managing and growing the sales and marketing portfolio of Air Mauritius in India.

Find more: <https://lnkd.in/dTDk24Um>

### APPLICATION PROCEDURE:

Qualified and interested candidates are invited to apply by submitting a completed application form. The form can be downloaded from the Air Mauritius Website. (<https://lnkd.in/dMgehzrK>)

It is compulsory to send the completed application form together with a full curriculum vitae, educational certificates and documented evidence of work experience to [recruitment\\_mkhr3@airmauritius.com](mailto:recruitment_mkhr3@airmauritius.com) (the size of the email should not exceed 13MB) latest by 21 September 2026.