New Airport Terminal an Architectural Gem, says PM

The new airport terminal is as an architectural gem which will help project Mauritius on the international scene and boost commercial exchanges and the tourism industry, the Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, said on 30 August 2013 at the inauguration of the modern state-of-the-art passenger terminal at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport at Plaisance.
The Prime Minister said that the construction of the new terminal is one among the major projects initiated by the Government. He pointed out that the project to build the new terminal has been materialised due to the strong friendly bond that Mauritius has developed with France and the People’s Republic of China. He also expressed his satisfaction with the increasing number of private jets landing in Mauritius, which he said is a promising sector for an average of 200 jets comes to Mauritius every year.

Furthermore, the Prime Minister recalled that a total of Rs 1 billion has been invested to extend the runway so as to accommodate bigger airplanes like Airbus A380. As from May 2014, Boeing 787 Dreamliner jets will service Mauritius on a regular basis. Dr Ramgoolam also gave a brief overview of the development of the airport which dates back to the colonial era and the launch of the national carrier, Air Mauritius Ltd. From 15 000 passengers handled in 1968, the figure reached 1 million in 1993 and jumped to 2,7 million in 2012. According to forecasts, the number of passengers expected is estimated at 4 million in the near future.

During the ceremony, the Prime Minister proceeded with the unveiling of a commemorative sculpture. This piece of art, sculpted in glass and metal by a Mauritian artist, symbolises the materials used to build the terminal. The sculpture recalls the silhouette of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, who laid the foundations for the economic development of Mauritius.

The New Terminal

The new terminal covers a total surface area of 57 000 m2. Inspired by the Ravenala madagascariensis, commonly known as the traveller’s tree, this industrial facility was developed to meet environmental standards in line with the Maurice Ile Durable concept.

The project has taken three years to complete, with investment amounting to USD 305 million by the Government of Mauritius with the support of the China Exim Bank. The development, design, construction and operation of the new passenger terminal have been made possible through the establishment of a Mauritian company, Airport Terminal Operations Limited (ATOL), born from a partnership between the State of Mauritius via Airports of Mauritius Co. Ltd (AML) and Aéroports de Paris Management (ADPM), a subsidiary of Aéroports de Paris (ADP) Group.

The new terminal has 5 new docking stations, in addition to the 3 existing ones and 7 passenger boarding bridges for simultaneous handling of 6 wide-bodied aircraft. At peak times, the terminal can handle up to 14 flight departures and arrivals. The new parking area has room for a total of more than 600 vehicles and the raised access road to the terminal has two separate lanes to allow greater fluidity in the dropping off of passengers travelling to the airport by car or by bus. This industrial facility is distinguished by both the quantity and quality of facilities available: the upgrading of the existing infrastructure includes passenger drop-off areas on the raised access road, the timeliness of services, baggage-handling as well as safety and security systems.
Inauguration of the New Terminal
A Visa Waiver Agreement, providing for the exemption from visa requirement for a maximum of 30 days to citizens of Mauritius visiting China and vice versa, was signed on 29 August 2013 in Port Louis.

Signatories were the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Dr Arvin Boolell for the Mauritian side, and the Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, Mr Zhang Ming.

However, under the Agreement, citizens of either Party, who intend to study, work, reside or engage in media activities in the territory of the other party, should apply for visa before travelling.

The Agreement will come into force once the process of ratification is completed by both Governments.

**China-Mauritius First PCM Meeting**

The signature ceremony of the Visa Waiver Agreement was preceded by the first China-Mauritius Political Consultation Mechanism (PCM) co-chaired by Minister Boolell and Mr Zhang Ming. Discussions focused on bilateral relations and issues relating to the dynamic changes in the international political and economic landscape.

Dr Boolell expressed satisfaction regarding the PCM and pointed out that the meeting reaffirmed Mauritius-China shared understanding on many issues. He also announced that China has granted a line of credit of Rs 250 million interest-free to Mauritius for different social-related projects or developmental related projects. The meeting also reviewed the grant to Mauritius of a land in China for the construction of the Mauritian embassy.
DPM opens Non-Revenue Water Chartering Workshop

A one-day chartering workshop in the context of the implementation of Non-Revenue Water (NRW) opened on 28 August 2013 at La Petite Cannelle at Domaine Les Pailles. The aim of the workshop was to emphasise on the goal of the NRW project and its critical success factors.

The NRW project, to the tune of Rs 1 billion, started on 1st July 2013 and will span over a period of two years. It is jointly driven by a team of Central Water Authority (CWA) technicians and a group of experts from Singapore. The Singapore team comprises the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise, the Public Utilities Board and CHM2 Hill, the international consultant, who will provide leadership and project management services with the aim at reducing the present NRW level by half. The project would utilise the latest technological advances in terms of telemetry and network monitoring which would be the model for CWA to replicate subsequently in other parts of the island.

In his address at the workshop, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Public Utilities, Dr Rashid Beebeejaun, stated that the problem of water and NRW is a top priority for the Government. He said that following the study carried out by the Singapore team in the Mare aux Vacoas region as part of the government to government cooperation, a Singapore team has been recruited for the implementation of a reduction in NRW project focusing in the upper Mare aux Vacoas regions which were among the most affected areas during the last drought episode.

For his part, the Chairman of the CWA, Mr Prem Saddul, highlighted the massive investment required for a successful NRW project. He announced that to tackle the problem of NRW, the CWA has set up a dedicated NRW cell coupled with an Anti Fraud Unit. Moreover, budgetary provisions were made to enable the CWA to embark on a yearly pipe replacement programme which resulted in a massive investment of Rs 800 million.

The Regional Director of Singapore Cooperation Enterprise, Mr Alvin Lim, said that Singapore has one of the lowest NRW level in the world (5%). However, he said, Singapore did not reduce NRW overnight but rather the efforts have to be sustained continuously. He added that both the Mauritian and the Singaporean Governments are committed to tackle the problem of NRW in Mauritius.

Energy
Mauritius to have 60 MW of Renewable Energy in its Network Soon

The Central Electricity Board (CEB) will have around 60 MW of renewable energy in its network by 2015, following the signing this year of two Energy Supply Purchase Agreements (ESPA) in line with the Maurice Ile Durable vision.

Two agreements have been signed with Saraco for the installation of a photovoltaic park of 15 MW and with Aerowatt for a 9 MW wind farm at Plaine des Roches respectively. Moreover, last year, the CEB signed a contract with Suzlon Padgreen for a wind farm of 29.4 MW at Plaine Sophie. In the coming weeks, the CEB will sign the ESPA for a photovoltaic project of 5x2 MW

It is recalled that although the CEB has signed contracts for 60 MW of renewable energy, it is important to have a back-up of fossil fuel to ensure a reliable supply of electricity in the eventuality when there is not much sunshine or wind power. As regards the Small Scale Distributed Generation project, a 2 MW will be connected to the grid by the end of this year.

Other CEB projects in the pipeline include the commissioning of a new engine in Rodrigues and a pre-feasibility study for Liquid Natural Gas.
**Education**

**Catchment Areas for Admission to Standard I Reviewed**

The catchment areas of 35 high demand primary schools around the country are being reviewed by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources.

The reviewed catchment areas will be used for admission to Standard I as from 2014 with a view to tightening control and avoiding fraudulent practices for admission to Standard I. This exercise takes into account new developments in the regions such as the setting up of new housing estates, and demographic changes.

Consequently, a “Proof of Residency” Form, comprising the following three components, would be introduced - certification of the genuineness of the address of the child by the Responsible Party; verification of the address of the child, in situ, by the Police; and certification of the application documents by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources. The Proof of Residency form will be used in the 35 high demand Primary Schools as from this year for admission to Standard I in 2014.

It is recalled that the catchment area concept was first established under Regulation 10 of the Education Regulation 1989 and when it was last reviewed in 2002, it comprised 40 high demand schools. Currently, five of these forty schools are no longer considered as high demand schools since the demands for admission at Standard I level have decreased.

**ERT**

**Employment Promotion and Protection Division Operational**

An Employment Promotion and Protection Division (EPPD) is operational since August 2013 at the Employment Relations Tribunal (ERT). It will deal with all cases of reduction of workforce, referred by the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment, whether on a short term basis, permanently or at the closing down of an enterprise.

The setting up of this new division has been enunciated in the Employment Rights Act proclaimed in 2008. It will be presided by the President or the Vice-President of the ERT together with two members well versed in the field of employment and finance respectively.

For the purposes of this new division, the law defines the word “employer” to be one of not less than 20 workers. The rationale behind the setting up of the EPPD at the ERT is to ensure that an independent, impartial body with the required expertise in employment relations matters is dealing with such important issues which may have a bearing on numerous workers.

**ERT**

ERT has as main functions to settle industrial disputes in the civil service, the private sector and parastatal bodies and local government services in addition to hearing appeals related to decisions of the Conciliation and Mediation Commission. ERT also contributes to the promotion of harmonious industrial relations and is expected to enquire into the dispute and make an order/award/ruling within 90 days of the date of lodging.
**Cooperatives**

**Launching of the 1st Edition of Mauritius Excellence Awards**

The first edition of the Mauritius Excellence Awards for Cooperatives (MEAC) was officially launched on 6 August 2013 in Port Louis by the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives, Mr Jangbahadoorsing Seetaram.

The deadline to submit applications is 30 October 2013 and the award ceremony will be held on 12 December 2013.

The model of the Awards, based on international benchmarks, has been designed in line with cooperative principles and values. It is meant to be a long term benchmark for the Mauritian cooperative societies and is geared towards performance excellence, using international norms, standards and quality management systems. The theme chosen for this first edition is ‘Ensam nou pli fort-Ensam nou progresser’.

The MEAC are being held so as to encourage cooperatives to continually improve and graduate towards excellence. The awards aim to recognise cooperative societies for implementing programmes and practices geared towards excellence.

**About the Awards**

*The Award is open to Cooperative societies from Mauritius and Rodrigues operating in the following sectors: sugar, food crop, fish, transport, finance, livestock, consumer, food processing, women cooperatives, and other services.*

*The award criteria will be based on seven important elements of an organisation namely leadership, policy development and deployment, people and resources, information and communication, operations, customers and service excellence, and outcomes.*

*Each of the sectors will receive the MEAC and a Grand Winner will be awarded out of the sectors and which will have excelled in all categories. The Grand Winner will receive a cash prize of Rs 100 000 and a trophy while each winner per sector will receive a cash prize of Rs 25 000 and a trophy.***
Youth and Sports

- 28th CJSOI Ministerial Meet in Mauritius
- Migration the focus of a National Youth Forum
- Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award Mauritius replaces NYAA

28th CJSOI Ministerial Meet in Mauritius

The 28th Ministerial Meeting of the Commission de la Jeunesse et des Sports de l’Océan Indien (CJSOI), on 9 and 10 August 2013, was hosted by Mauritius at the Intercontinental Resort, Balaclava. The Ministerial Meeting, under the chairmanship of the Minister of Youth and Sports, Mr Satyaprakash Ritoo, was preceded by meetings at experts’ level on 7 and 8 August 2013.

Discussions at the meetings focused on the outcome of the activities organised by the CJSOI during the period January to July 2013 as well as on the 10th Edition of the CJSOI Games to be hosted by Mayotte. The programme of activities for the year 2014 was also examined.

Youth Migration the focus of a National Youth Forum

A National Youth Forum under the theme Youth Migration: Moving Development Forward was held on 12 August 2013 at the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre, Bell Village.

The objective was to provide a platform for participants to express their views on issues directly pertaining to youth. The forum also aimed at encouraging youth participation and contribution to the various sectors of development of the country. Topics discussed included employment, education, circular migration opportunities, and youth and social development.

Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award Mauritius replaces NYAA

The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award Mauritius, the new appellation for the National Youth Achievement Award (NYAA), was unveiled on 28 August 2013 during a ceremony held at La Plantation Hotel, in Balaclava.

The new logo was made public on that occasion following the decision of the International Award Office to undertake a rebranding process of Award operators worldwide. All award authorities have had to reapply for conditional licence and go through the process of validation before obtaining the full license.

Mauritius hence becomes the first country in Africa and 2nd country in the world to satisfy the criteria of the International Award Office by being granted the full licence certificate.
**Mauritius-Tunisia**  
**Discussions on Preferential Trade Agreement**

A meeting between Mauritius and Tunisia to initiate discussions on a Bilateral Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between the two countries was held on 28 and 29 August 2013 in Port Louis.

Discussions on the PTA were based on a text proposed by Mauritius and to which the Tunisian side has already expressed broad agreement. The two-day meeting also addressed issues related to rules of origin and market access which will be annexed to the PTA. Participants from both countries were called upon to identify issues that need to be negotiated at technical level.

**IOR-ARC**  
**3rd Bi-Annual Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials in Mauritius**

The 3rd Bi-Annual Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) of the IOR-ARC (Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation), under the chairmanship of India, was hosted on 20 and 21 August 2013 in Mauritius.

Forty delegates attended the meeting at Le Canonnier Hotel to examine new proposals and follow-up on decisions taken at the last Council of Ministers held in Gurgaon, India in November 2012. Participants were from the 20 IOR-ARC Member States namely, Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, India, Indonesia, Seychelles, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Sultanate of Oman, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, UAE and Yemen.

Discussions focused on the following: finalisation of various projects on Maritime Security and Safety; Trade and Investment; cooperation in the field of Fisheries; Student Exchanges; Capacity Building; Academic and Science and Technology Cooperation; and Tourism Promotion.

**ICT**  
**Competition in the Telecoms Sector Workshop**

A half-day workshop on Competition in the Telecommunications Sector was held on 22 August 2013 at La Petite Cannelle, Domaine Les Pailles.

The aim was to provide an open and neutral platform for discussion on the ongoing progress and challenges of the telecommunications environment both as an industry as well as a key enabler to support other sectors of the Mauritian economy. Participants were operators and regulators from the telecommunications sector, consumer groups, civil societies, NGOs. The workshop also discussed strategic areas of relevance for the telecom sector that will assist government in the formulation of future policy.

**Sustainable development**  
**MID Policy, Strategy and Action Plan: Capacity Building Workshop**

A half-day workshop on knowledge sharing and capacity building for the successful implementation of the **Maurice Ile Durable (MID)** Policy, Strategy and Action Plan (PSAP) targeting some 40 Heads heads of Ministries/Departments was organised on 28 August 2013 at La Cannelle, Domaine Les Pailles.

The workshop also aimed at making MID the overarching agenda of Government policies, projects and operations. The objective of the PSAP is to strengthen policy integration, coherence and co-ordination with a view to bringing a long term perspective to decision-making.
Trade Facilitation
Mauritius Trade Portal Launched

Mauritius Trade Easy, a comprehensive trade portal aiming at facilitating trade by providing maximum information on import and export procedures in Mauritius to the business community and to the public, was launched on 6 August 2013 at Le Labourdonnais Waterfront Hotel, Port Louis.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Dr Arvin Boolell, launched the portal in the presence of the Minister of Information and Communication Technology, Mr Tassarajen Pillay Chedumbrum.

The state-of-the-art trade portal provides information on opportunities that exist on the regional and international markets under the different Agreements signed by Mauritius. It is of help primarily to SMEs and those who want to embark on the import and export markets, and is also a valuable source of information on additional market opportunities to the already established businesses in Mauritius.

Several components are embedded in the Portal namely: import and export procedures, trading with Mauritius, market intelligence, Mauritius Trade Agreements, Intellectual Property Policy, as well as useful links. Users can also access market data relating to Mauritius which include market reports, business alerts, and import-export flows. Mauritius’ economic outline and trade profile is available under the component Trading with Mauritius.