SPEECH : HC GANAPATHI, RASHID HOSSEN AND THIERRY MONTOCCHIO

Y. E Mr. President and Lady Jugnauth, Hon Etienne, Hon Francoise, Excellency Former Vice President and Madame, Excellency, Ambassador of Egypt and Madame, Excellency HC Commissioner of South Africa, Excellency visiting Ambassador Nivin Ashmawi of Egypt, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to extend to you the warm greetings of Alif Society this evening and to tell you how comforting it is to be surrounded by friends who share your vision of a progressive and Rainbow Mauritius. It is also delighting to have the blessings of our patron, Ali Parker and the special help and precious advice of Baby Chattur. We are welcoming H.E the new Indian HC and Mrs. Ganapathi to our land, honouring Mr. Abdool Rashid Hossen, the new President of the Permanent Arbitration Tribunal and Mr. Thierry Montocchio, the new Laureate of the Tecoma Award.

Allow me to start by congratulating Sir Aneerood on his re-election as President of our country. His wisdom and vision have guided this land during its glorious years and the President Elect of the USA has floated to victory on a popular wave by adopting his 1982 motto of CHANGE.

Allow me to start by saying: Congratulations and best wishes to our Patron on the opening of his Jewel, Mr. Price at les Halles.

Hi to M. et Mme. Israel, a special guest from France.

Hi to Mr. Manou Bheenick, the Governor of the Bank of Mauritius and our Financial Secretary Mr. Ali Mansour and thank them because my bank is still honoring my cheque and there are no layouts,

The Directors of 4 Important Hotels who have left full house to be with us and to whom I would like to wish, in your names, the best of luck,

Mr. Chistophe Plantier of Belle Mare Plage Hotel,

Mr. Jacques Sylvan of Royal Palm,

Mr. Marc Hausser of Le Paradis and

Mr. Vincent Bergman of Prince Maurice

And Hi to Mrs. Nivin Ashmawi, visiting Ambassador of Egypt: Saada As Safira, Anti Ataiti Min Baladin Allazi Nuhibbuhu Wa Nawaddu An Nurahhiba biki.

**Mr. Rashid Hossen has the best of groundings. He holds an LLB from England, has read international law at the Hague Academy**, is conversant with American Legal System and has toured France, Italy, Australia, the US and South Africa to specialise in different legal systems. After his pupilage in the prestigious Moolan Chambers, he has successively been a Crown Counsel, District Magistrate, Senior Crown Counsel, Senior District Magistrate, Magistrate of the Intermediate Court, Vice President of Permanent Arbitration Tribunal, Ag President, PAT, Ag President Civil service Arbitration Tribunal and this year, he has finally been confirmed President, Permanent Arbitration Tribunal. Mr. Rashid Hossen is married to Sarah and the couple have 2 children.

Mr. Hossen’s character is unique. Talk to anyone who knows him, the same words come up over and over again to describe him - 'humane', 'natural', 'kind', 'friendly', 'clever', 'generous', 'fair' and somebody who does not mince words. In a press interview he declared that there are judges who have acted in undignified manners. He himself is leaving in many ways his mark on the law and he is leaving it as a human being. He is an example and inspiration to all young lawyers.

Given this dazzling and rich career which spans over 20 years, one can safely say that there is a wide category of plaintiff in this country whose life has been touched by his work. Among those who have appeared before him are: Sir Gaetan Duval, Vice Prime Minister Harish Boodhoo and Minister Michael Glover. When one deals with such high-profile cases, one has to be trained in the art of not succumbing to influences. To his credit, he has on these issues kept focused unwaveringly on what he has conceived to be the core, and not been distracted by the irrelevant or the unimportant, so much so that he received the recognition of Sir Gaetan. His judgement on the 40-hour week in the sugar industry has saved this vital sector.

He has a number of bedrock characteristics which have been guiding him at each stage of his judicial career: justice for all, each individual treated equally and fairly, by his fellow man and by the state, each person entitled to respect, dignity and a voice. And that is the essence of life. Mr. Rashid Hossen has kept those ideals close at hand in all his work and I hope Mauritius will recognize him, most of all, for that. He simply has absolute faith in the judicial system's duty to protect the weak and restrain the powerful. And we all share his essentially civilised view of society. He has done it from a position of total loyalty to the beliefs and institutions, which have nurtured him - the Islamic faith, the Bar, the Bench, and the Mauritian law.

Unfortunately, Mr. Hossen’s love for the law and dedication to justice is clearly non-contagious. His two children Zeenat and Abdul Azize, are dedicated to Business studies, business which permeates the family since the first Hossens set foot in Port Louis. Mr. Hossen, we would like to join your supportive family members present tonight, your lovely wife, your brother Farook and his children and your cousin Abdulla, to wish you well.

**ALIF would like to welcome the new HC of India and Mrs. Ganapathi to Mauritius. Alif does not want to replace the state, nor can we, but we want to address our own welcome as friends of India.**

Swagatam Excellency from the land of Tata, Birla, Reddy, Mittals, Azim Premji and Dhirubhai Ambani and congratulations on your successful launching of a lunar module built by Indian technology. Excellency, you hail from the biggest working democracy at a time when tiny states are at the end of their wits to maintain a semblance of civilized living, a country predominantly inhabited by Hindus where the King maker is a Catholic of Italian origin, a Prime Minister who is a Pakistani born Sikh, a President until lately a Muslim and a newspaper called HINDU whose anti Hindu stand on principles of justice cannot be beaten.

Thomas Malthus will turn in his grave if he learns that an overpopulated country like India, bound to be a failed state in his prediction, is a leading world economy and has become an agent of Easternisation of world cultures in fine arts, literature, [ I am thinking of Arundathi Roy Amrit Sen], food, with the proliferation of Tanduri outlets in the West, fashion, Bollywood and Yoga. Thank you for proving Fukuyama and the Neo-Cons wrong by overturning a clash of cultures into a fusion of cultures.

Excellency, India’s record on preventing global warming and the proliferation of offensive nuclear technology is to be applauded with both hands. Led ably by Mr. Shyam Saran your former High commissioner and a friend of Alif, the Indian delegation at Kyoto provided a view of the world status on pollution that has been appreciated as an eye opener.

# The moral high ground you have chosen to pitch your tent and the ethical compass you use to navigate has cost you dearly because morality is not bankable commodity. India has, in its philosophy of not trading her conscience for a piece of bread, preferred to stand by Palestine and the NAM, and turned down the lucrative offers of the enemies of Pakistan to attack the nuclear installations of your neighbour. You have chosen to play an international role on Universal principles of fairness despite the threat to the economic wellbeing of your own people in line with the advice of Abdul Kalam that those who aim high have to learn to walk alone. And loneliness has not bothered you.

Excellency, the meteoric rise of India and its contribution to world history is undeniable, you have chosen to make history rather than submit to it. To paraphrase Francois Mitterand, the torch of history seems to be passing from the West to the East and at a time when there are growth and hope in the East, debts and fears in the West, your country is well equipped in different ways to face today’s crisis. You are an important player in BRICS and CHINDIA. Our leaders have bound us into a tie of friendship that no misunderstanding has been able to shake the foundations. Let’s work together, as we have always done in the past for the happiness of our two people. And as your friend, Mauritius would like to be invited to cruise on board your boat of success.

**To-night we are also honoring an all-round Artist in the person of Thierry Montocchio who is a gifted entrepreneur and who enjoyed growing and selling potatoes in his** backyard garden at the age of 6. At 15 he drew illustrations of Mauritius, at 17 he illustrated the BAT calendar and at 19 he won a place among the 12 best Batik Project Designer at HSC. His success encouraged him to study Graphics design in South Africa. After graduation he joined the prestigious Ogilvy World Wide Network and two years later, he was recruited as Creative Director by Maurice Publicite and finally opened his own company in partnership with Michel de Speville. Now Circus is present in Reunion and will soon have an office in Madagascar. Circus had bid against French and South African companies to win a contract from the World Bank and during the past 13 years, it has won 153 Creative Awards locally, regionally and internationally. The Cheery on the cake for Thierry is the 2008 Tecoma Award.

We would like to congratulate this accomplished artist whose unique talents are opening new horizons in the Indian Ocean region and an expansion of his company’s turn over.

His achievements are a source of pride for us Mauritians and a model to be copied by the ambitious youth in quest of success. By inviting him and his family, his wife, his mother and his brother, Alif means to pay homage to a young man who is standing in the first line for the battle of development and to keep away the wolves from our doors. We also feel that we are honoring one of ours because Thierry dedicates enormous time in Social Work. He has been active in Inter Faith Dialogue and helped to fight some of the most pernicious social ills that plague our society. Thierry has a strong faith in God, dedicates time for praying in between work schedules and is a staunch believer that FAITH conquers all.

In the aftermath of the subprime fiasco, we need his qualities as a key to progress, growth and employment. He has the flair to innovate and to mobilize the geniuses to win the battle as he has in the past against companies of the first world. He has talents commensurate with the massive challenges we are facing. He is the catalyst that sets the pace to create investors whom we shall call “Business Angels”

At a time when the doom sayers are forecasting catastrophe, I am sure that we can resolutely mobilize all those like-minded like him, two of whom are present here to-night, Cathy Giraud and Vikram Bhunjun, to steer a course to achieve the status of MID.

Thierry, Best wishes and God Speed in your endeavour.