

Engineering Newsletter 01

MOMENTS

June 2004



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Civil Engineers
Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport

From the Desk...

The year 2003-2004 has seen the Engineering Section face a series of events, from the publication of the PRB Report and its "anomalous" anomaly report, wherein Engineers were not given their deserved due, to the re-integration of our colleagues previously posted to the ex-MURD, along with the restructuring of the Engineering Section to cater for Engineering needs on a Ministry-wise basis. Hopefully, this period will also be remembered for the publication of the first issue of this Engineering Newsletter: **MOMENTS** ...

MOMENTS is to be primarily a monthly internal communication tool between the Civil Engineers of this Ministry. However, to keep in touch with the outside world... or some would say, to allow the outside world to remain in touch with us... this publication will also be circulated, in limited edition, to some officials outside the Engineering Section.

We do hope that this first issue will indeed be the first of a long series of milestones in completing our project : creating communication and team-building in the Engineering Section of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure.

The Team remembers the comments received when the idea of a Newsletter was first announced, some time in April 2004... There were some who encouraged, and lots with scepticism, doubt, talks that we are losing our time, threats that others will think we are not doing anything useful engineering-wise and that we have plenty of time at hand... the list is very long...

We would like to thank all those who believed in us, but also those whose negative comments had increased our desire to produce this Newsletter, to show that we can come together and work like a Team towards one goal, to show that MPI Engineers need not think that their interaction is limited to office hours ... to show that we can work for a good cause outside office hours. Welcome **MOMENTS** ...

Kiran Shyju

"... Ideals are like stars: you will not succeed in touching them with your hands, but like the seafaring man on the ocean waters, you can choose them as your guides, and following them, you reach your destiny ..."

Carl Schurz (1829 - 1906)

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It gives me great pleasure to contribute to the Engineering Newsletter.



The Newsletter, I consider will serve to open, extend channels of communication. I understand that the Engineering Cadre comprises a wide range of specialities. I fervently believe that the Newsletter will be a means to express opinions, views to share experience and to weave bonds of cooperation to build up solidarity among the profession.

It will be a platform to communicate outcome of study or research to give rise to innovative concepts or techniques to maintain a high standard in the profession.

I seize the opportunity to congratulate all those associated with the initiative to launch the Newsletter and wish them every success.

A.K. Bachoo

A.K. Bachoo
Minister

25 June 2004



I am indeed pleased to bring my contribution to the Engineering Newsletter.

Relatively speaking, our Ministry reckons one the biggest pool of Engineering Cadre. I believe the initiative to launch the Newsletter comes at an opportune time. It marks the initial step, the beginning to open an era to facilitate exchange and develop the culture to communicate. It will offer the possibility for top to bottom and bottom-up interchange of ideas, concepts, to build a sense of belonging and harmonious working relationship among the profession.

On behalf of the Ministry and in my own personal name, I pay tribute to all those associated with the launching of the Newsletter. I express the wish that productive use be made of this important communication tool.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Gunesh'.

G. Gunesh
Permanent Secretary

25 June 2004

It is my privilege to be associated with the launching of the first edition of "Moments", the Newsletter prepared by the Civil Engineers of our department.



This magazine gives an insight of the mood and feelings in the Civil Engineering Cadre and will hopefully be a yardstick to measure the degree of interaction and satisfaction in the profession.

It is hoped that MOMENTS will turn out to be an inestimable tool which all Engineers in the compound may use to express themselves and also to share their knowledge and experience in the field of Civil Engineering.

I therefore seize this opportunity to congratulate all those associated with the publication of the Newsletter and wish them success in their future endeavours.

All the best !

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Ramjan". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

R. Ramjan
Chief Engineer

28 June 2004

Presentation of the New Organigram: Engineering Division

Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport (PI Division)

A NEW ORGANIGRAM, FOR EFFICIENCY

In line with the economic development of Mauritius and the strategy for the modernisation of services related to the infrastructural sector, the Engineering Section of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport has opted to change its traditional organigram to more positively contribute to the implementation of government investment, both in the capital infrastructural investment sector and in the management of Government infrastructural assets.

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport is the Ministry empowered by virtue of the Financial Management Manual to execute capital infrastructural works for Government. In the wake of the economic development of Mauritius, the sheer volume of infrastructural projects have increased significantly, thereby pressurizing the scarce Engineering resources available at the level of the Ministry to cope with the increasing demand in the implementation of projects.

... The Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport is empowered to execute infrastructural works for Government ...

As an extension of the traditional services provided by the Ministry, there is now also a need to revitalise these same services to improve efficiency by adopting a divisional structure, centered on Ministries. Planning and Design functions will thus now be specific to a particular group of Ministries, whilst traditional maintenance will continue to be provided by an Asset Management Section. On this month detachable

centre-page is this new organisation chart and contact info of the Engineering Section.

This new approach to project delivery will revolutionise infrastructure procurement in the present economic context in Mauritius and is judged to be the more appropriate.

... this month detachable centre-page is the new organization chart and contact info of the Engineering Section ...

THE REASON BEHIND THE CHANGE

The Engineering Section is subject to an increasing workload. This is due to an increase in the number of Ministries, which in turn has brought about an increase in the number of capital infrastructural projects to be executed, and an even greater demand for rehabilitation or improvement works.

Moreover engineering resources are required to deal simultaneously with a wide variety of requests with the consequence that less and less time is being devoted to any particular request with less specialisation. This was causing degradation in the quality of the services provided.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the new organigram are as follows:

- a) A divisional structure, centered on Ministries, same as the one adopted by the Head Office and the Architects' Section. Each division is self-contained.
- b) Better co-ordination across the various sections.
- c) Foster team building under dynamic conditions

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Presentation of the New Organigram: Engineering Division

Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport (PI Division)

(continued from page 6)

- d) Bring about a change in organisational culture to cope with technological change
- e) Improve organisational development to enhance long term prospects
- f) To improve the facilities, available to the public at large.
- g) To manage & maintain Government investment in building infrastructure. i.e. Asset Management, in the future for the proper safeguard of the initial capital investment

... engineering resources are required to deal simultaneously with a wide variety of requests...

THE RESULTS

The specific results of the re-structuring are already being reaped. Some of them are:

- Fast response to requests from Ministries because focus is on a limited number of Ministries
- Simplified co-ordination across sections, in particular with the Head Office's organization & Architects' Section since grouping of Ministries is basically along the same line
- Strong orientation to Client Ministry's requirements and better liaison
- Accurate measurement of division performance, i.e. performance accountability
- In-depth development of expertise, which may lead to individual attachment to any particular Ministry in case of increased demand
- Efficient use of scarce engineering resources

- More timely delivery of engineering services
- Improved administrative procedures with less red-tapes
- More equitable and fair distribution of workload
- Better standardisation of outputs and of control mechanisms
- Improved scope of promotion with direct incidence on motivation

THE FUTURE

The logical development to this new organigram is the creation of new posts of higher responsibility to shoulder and to better cope with the increasing workload. This has so far been rightly assessed and implemented by our friends of the Architects' Section...

So, when is the next exercise for creation of posts in the Engineering Section?

The Team

June B'day Boys

The Team wishes a Happy Birthday to:

- Ravin Appadoo
- Abdus Cadarsa

Football – Civil Service Tournament

Results:

MPI vs Flacq Hospital : 2-3

MPI vs Min. of Agriculture: 3-1

MPI vs Min. of Education: 2-0

Best of luck for the next match against J. Nehru Hospital

Hot Spot PRB Report... Chronicle of a failure... (the "Whats", "Whys" and "Hows")

The most awaited Pay Research Bureau Report, released last year, and its Report on Anomalies, issued recently, have both contributed greatly to the "mood" in the Engineering Cadre... A grand contribution to make an already morose and frustrating working condition even darker and unattractive... It should be noted that, like always, this time too, we Engineers were led to believe that this time our competence and contribution will finally be recognized. Let us have a quick review of how this situation has unfolded.

"Whats"

What did the Engineers ask from the PRB? Were our demands exaggerated? What were they? The main ones were:

- We, Engineers, requested that we be given a yearly book allowance of Rs. 10,000 (in line with the medical professionals) so that we may purchase books and magazines and keep ourselves informed of progress in our field of work.
- We also requested that our travelling allowance be reviewed to reflect the amount of site work we are required to do and be separated from other categories of people who use their car only to travel to and from office. On the same line, we requested that Engineers be allowed a fresh duty free certificate every five years, instead of every seven years.
- We moreover requested the PRB to take into account our two years of compulsory training in the calculation of our starting salary.
- The PRB was informed of our list of duties (which is much much more elaborate than the "checking of reinforcement on site" which some say is our only job)
- And of course, a more logical relativity with the other professional cadres, considering our years of study,

compulsory training and degree of responsibilities.

"Whys"

The next feeling now should be, so WHY are we not happy ... Could the PRB not see the genuineness of the requests? Well, apparently not...

And the WHY behind their decision is very simple too... and it is "communication" and "visibility". The Engineering Professionals, unlike their other counter-parts, have so far not been very keen to come forward. Put simply, sometimes it looks like the Engineering Profession has no "bargaining power" and no real representative of the mass. It is amazing to realise the amount of consideration given to those who shouted, held press conferences and threatened to strike week in week out... May be vociferations do count then. I would seize this opportunity to urge the IEM and CRPE to come forward and organise team-building activities among Engineers, and not remain available only to a same group of selected few, as is presently the perception.

Many of our older representatives expect people to understand the situation of the younger generation, bringing forth famous quotes like:

"things were so much harder when I joined" or *"Engineers in India work with much less facilities than what you have"...* but things change, technology change, and so should mentality... Sir, why don't you compare us with Engineers from England or South Africa?

Engineers must understand that they should represent their profession, and not only and solely focus on how to earn themselves some lucrative post after retirement.

(Continued on next page)

Obituary

The Team wishes to express its deepest regret at the demise of Mr. O. Seeburn, of the central registry, who passed away on 9 June 2004. His humbleness and sincerity will always be remembered.

Aspects : Women in Engineering

The number of women joining the Engineering sector has increased considerably during the past few years, probably as a result of women's emancipation. Despite that, the number of women is still only a handful when compared to that of men in Engineering. Why is this so? Probably because in Mauritius, Engineering is still considered a man's world.

At work, in office, women are treated as equal to men. Unfortunately, there is a different attitude on site. Manual workers, being in an all-men environment, find it strange when a woman comes to site and they therefore stare and make unsolicited comments. This shows, among others, that women on site is not a common occurrence. Men Engineers do not generate such reactions... so why should women?

From another point of view, men are physically stronger than women. On site, they acquire respect and are taken seriously by just being a man. As for a woman, she has to

deserve this respect and she must show her ability in her work so as to be taken seriously. Being a woman Engineer is not an easy task, but being respected as an Engineer and doing one's work as well as anybody else is one of the greatest satisfactions one can achieve.

The greatest harm to women in Engineering is caused right from the beginning, at the time of choosing a career, when society's attitudes suggest to women that they are taking a wrong decision trying to become an Engineer, that it is not a woman's job, etc. However with time, it has been seen that women do fit this job and are progressing in it as well.

It is sincerely hoped that, in future, more women will be encouraged to join and practice Engineering and that the industry will evolve so that they are not to be treated as inferior to men.

Nalini M. Jhowry

(PRB Report... Continued)

"l-lows"

So, HOW did we not manage to convince the PRB of the genuineness of our requests? I strongly believe that a major part of that decision rests in a Policy of Divide and Rule. Why would the PRB come forward and recognize professionals who are not united in their outlook... How would one react to a proposal to have a Director of Architecture to head the Engineering Section... Why not a Director of Engineering to head the others? So, the fight starts... cold war...

It looks like the PRB simply took advantage of our own visible non-cooperation, at Building Professionals level, as well as between Administration and Technical level... along this line, the non-invitation of the Chief Engineer to depone in front of

the PRB along with the Management side was shocking...

"So... what do we do now?"

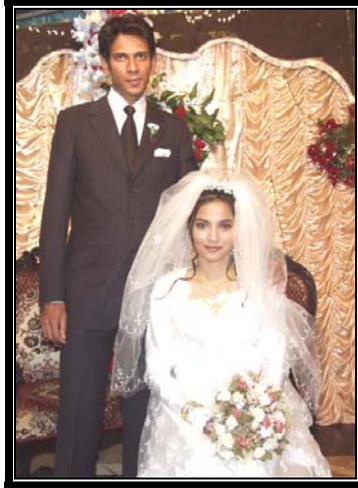
We are still optimistic of our future and the struggle for recognition should continue. We cannot change mentality, but we can hope for change in people. We should now hope that sincerity will finally prevail in recognizing the Engineers' contribution. We should hope that the future will see co-operation (and not attempt of invasion) between the different professional sections. Let's also hope that the future will soon dawn upon the realities of the Engineering Section, with the realisation that "recruitment" of foreign Engineers also means scarcity of Civil Engineers on the local market... So, let's hope for the best...

Kiran Bhujun

Milestone

Another one down ...

Wishes for a Long, Happy and Blissful married life to
Mr. And Mrs. Aslam Pahary who tied the knot on 4th June 2004...
All the Best !!



With The Team's very Best Wishes!

Legal Corner

The Legal Corner will exist with the contribution of each and every one of us, with reports on matters of legal importance, which we encounter in our everyday work.

The first in our series will be regarding Civil Engineers and VAT registration...

If you are planning to build your house soon, do you know that YOU, as a Civil Engineer, are legally not allowed to sign the plans of your own house unless you are VAT registered... and, of course, you are not supposed to be VAT-registered if you are a Government Servant... and obviously, your father's, brother's, sister's, in-laws' houses are absolutely out of question too...

So, what is to the way out of it? Apparently, there is none and you will hence have to pay someone to design your own house, despite the fact that your own competencies in the field are being used to design and supervise the construction of Government buildings....

The Team will be taking up the matter with the concerned authorities, and will come back on this issue as soon as possible...

Humour

Engineers vs. Executives

Theorem: Engineers and Scientists will never make as much money as business executives.

Proof Postulate 1: Knowledge is Power

Postulate 2: Time is Money

As every Engineer knows,

Power = Work / Time

Since Knowledge = Power and

Time = Money, we get:

Money = Work / Knowledge.

Thus, as knowledge approaches zero, Money approaches infinity regardless of the work done.

Conclusions: the Less you Know, the more you make. 😊

Lab Coat

An architect, an artist and an engineer were discussing whether it was better to spend time with the wife or a mistress.

The architect said he enjoyed time with his wife, building a solid foundation for an enduring relationship.

The artist said he enjoyed time with his mistress, because of the passion and mystery he found there.

The engineer said, "I like both."

"Both?"

Engineer: "Yeah. If you have a wife and a mistress, they will each assume you are spending time with the other woman, and you can go to the lab and get some work done. 😊"

The Team

THANK YOU

The Team wishes to express a special note of thanks to:

Mr. Aslam Pahary,
(Civil Engineer)
for the design of the logo of
the Civil Engineering
Division.

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Articles and any suggestions towards improving the quality of this newsletter are most welcome. Please direct all your letters and comments to:

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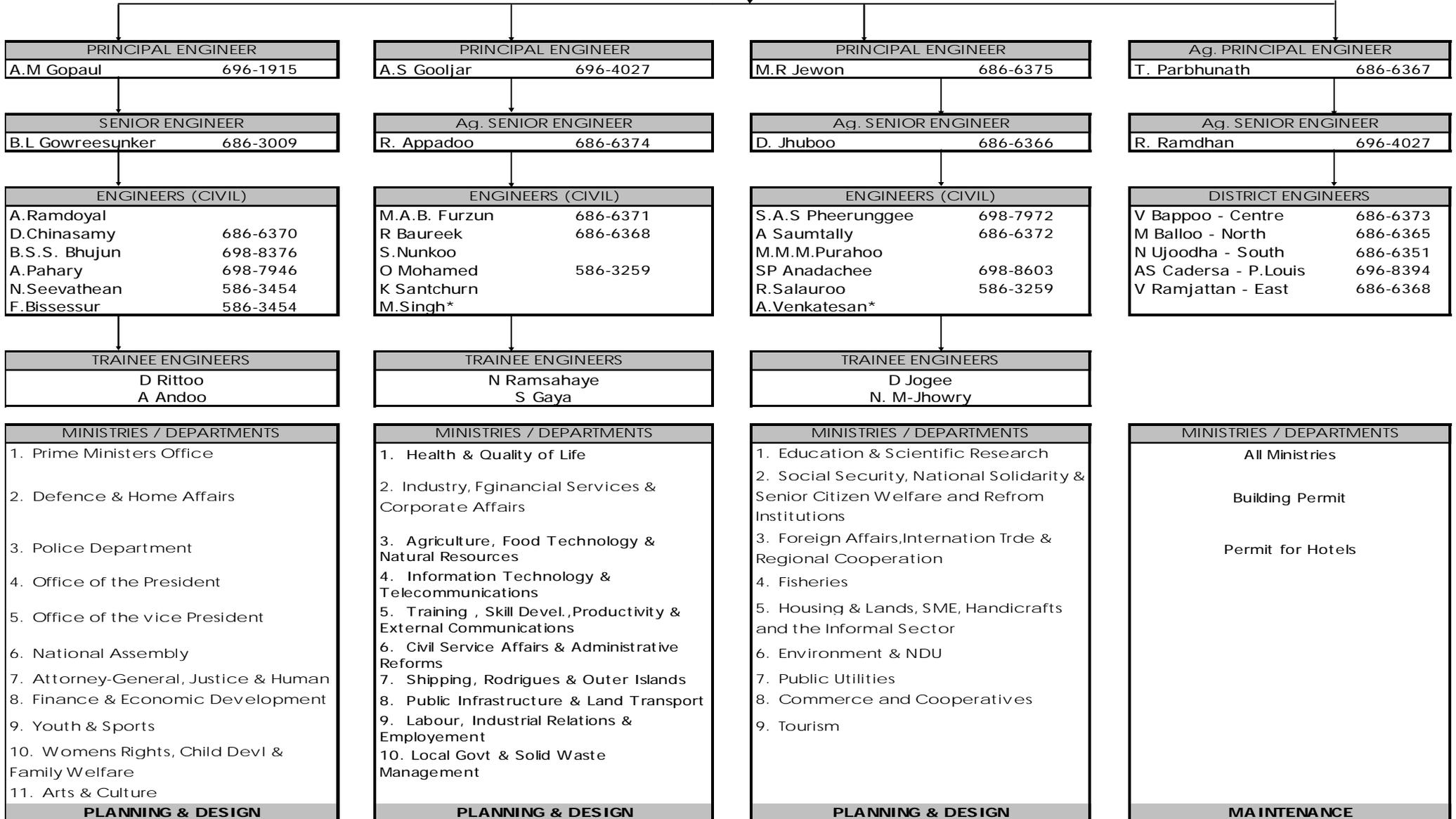
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