

## MAURITIAN CURRENCY

*“Mauritius is an instance of a country to which geography and history have, to a certain extent run counter to each other. Geographically it belongs to Africa, but the course of its history has closely connected it with Asia.”*

**Lucas**

Although colonised by the French and the English, the unit of currency in Mauritius is neither the French Franc nor the Pound Sterling but is the Rupee, after the currency system of India.

There are two main reasons for that :-

Firstly, Mauritius happens to share the same history as India in that both had the same colonial overlords. While navigating to India, the French and the English crossed Mauritius which was on their way and necessarily bound Mauritius in strong trading ties with India. Secondly, there was a massive inflow of Indian rupees following Indian immigration to Mauritius.

In 1876, after about half a century of unsuccessful attempts to introduce the sterling as the currency of Mauritius, the Indian rupee was established by law as the local currency of Mauritius. Sterling banknotes previously issued by the local Treasury were withdrawn from circulation and replaced by notes of 5, 10 and 50 rupees. The supremacy of trade relations prevailed in the choice of the currency. In 1932, however, a decision was taken to replace the Indian Rupee by the Mauritius Rupee.

On 29 March 1934, the Currency Commissioners were required by Ordinance to issue currency notes for Mauritius. The currency notes were issued under the aegis of the Treasury.

As from 1966, responsibility for the issue of notes and coins have been entrusted to the Bank of Mauritius. The Bank of Mauritius issued its first banknotes in 1967. The banknotes issued were of 4 denominations, viz. the 5, 10, 25 and 50 Mauritian Rupees. Four issues of this set of banknotes were made. The only variations in those four issues related to the signatures of the Governors and the Managing Directors of the Bank of Mauritius appointed during that period.

The fifth issue was made in 1985 and consisted of a complete new set of banknotes of Rs 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500 and 1000 denomination. A close study of these banknotes reveals an interesting array of subsets which were printed by two banknote printing companies. The notes were also designed at different time periods as there are very few identical and consistent design features appearing on all the denominations. Varying banknote numbering systems, different types of security threads, variations in the design and size of the Mauritian Coat of Arms, different ultraviolet light latent printing, inconsistent variations in the size incrementation between the denominations and multiple different typesets are just a few of the differences. This issue lasted up to 1998.

In 1998, a sixth issue of banknotes consisting of 7 denominations, viz. 25, 50, 100, 200, 500, 1,000 and 2,000 Rupees was made. These banknotes were characterised by a standard format and were all issued simultaneously in November 1998. All the banknotes of this issue were printed in England by Thomas de la Rue Limited. These banknotes were withdrawn from circulation in June 1999.

A seventh issue of banknotes was made after June 1999 which is still in circulation as at today. The banknotes are hereby reproduced.



**25 Rupees**

*Portrait of Sir Moilin Jean Ah-Chuen*

*Vignette of Rodrigues*





**50 Rupees**

*Portrait of Mr Joseph Maurice Paturau*

*Vignette of Le Caudan*





**100 Rupees**

*Portrait of Mr Renganaden Seeneevassen*

*Vignette of Court House*





**200 Rupees**

*Portrait of Sir Abdool Razack Mohamed  
Vignette of Mauritian Market*







**500 Rupees**

*Portrait of Mr Sookdeo Bissoondoyal*

*Vignette of University of Mauritius*

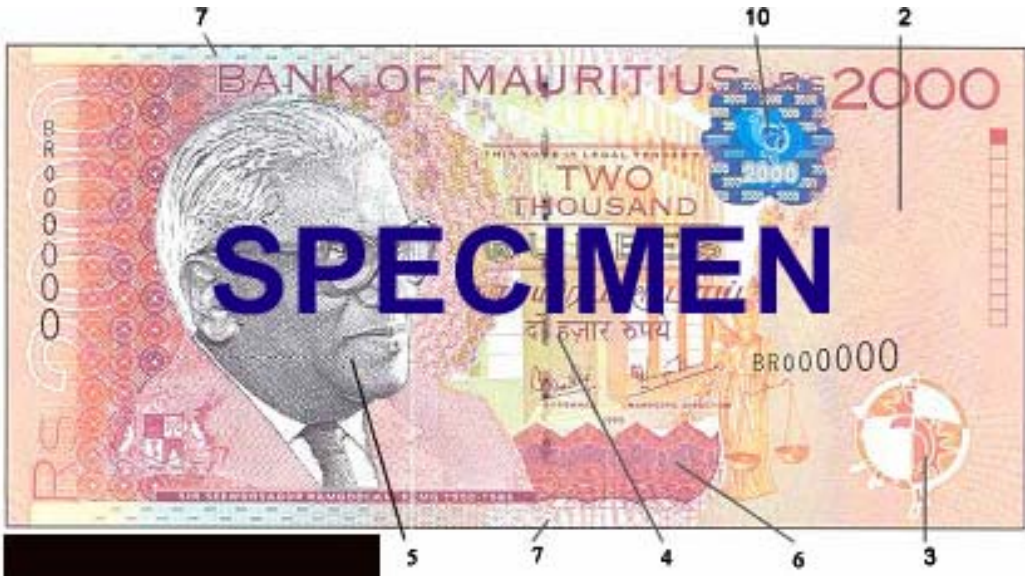


**1000 Rupees**

*Portrait of Sir Charles Gaëtan Duval  
Vignette of State House*



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**2000 Rupees**  
 Portrait of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam  
 Bull & Sugarcane Cart





This new family of Bank of Mauritius currency notes has many design features in common:

### FRONT

Each denomination bears a hand engraved portrait of a prominent Mauritian figure, which appears on the left.

There is also a drawing of the Bank of Mauritius building and a portrayal of the statue of justice on each of the denominations.

Below the denominational value in the top right hand corner is a feature to aid the visually impaired. This is in addition to the differences in sizes between the banknotes of various denominations.

### BACK

Each denomination carries a different vignette, depicting various aspects of Mauritius.

The value figure in Hindi, Tamil and Gujarati can be found below the vignette.

In order to verify the authenticity of the banknotes, the following features are easy to identify:

### ALL VALUES

1. The feel of banknotes paper.
2. Three dimensional watermark in the form of a dodo: when held up to the light the head of the dodo can be clearly viewed.
3. See-through in the form of a conch shell: this image completes when viewed against direct light.

4. Windowed security thread reading "Bank of Mauritius": when held up to the light, this can be seen as a continuous band running through the paper. Viewed flat, the metallic areas can be seen on the surface of the paper.
5. Engraved Portrait in Intaglio ink.
6. Latent image: when viewed at eye level, the image of "BM" becomes visible.
7. Micro-text reading "BM": under a magnifying glass these letters are clear to see.
8. Under ultra-violet light: figures corresponding to the face value of the banknote become apparent.

### 100, 200, 500, 1000, 2000 Notes

9. Iridescent band in gold: when held under the light, this band visualizes and disappears when the viewing angle is changed.

### 2000 Note

10. Hologram containing images of the dodo and the value "2000".

### 500, 1000 Notes

11. Silver Foil: two different images, value numeral or geometric shape, can be seen when viewed from different angles.

### 100, 200 Notes

12. Silver metallic ink: dull silver metallic band running from top to bottom on front, left of note. Metallic strip also beneath top right value numeral.