(No. B/1571) Miss K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will state if the “Ten-year adaptation strategy” formulated as a Country Strategy Paper submitted to the European Union will be presented to the House for a debate.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, the Country Strategy Paper (CSP) is a joint Government-European Union initiative that outlines the country’s medium-term development objectives and strategies. It has been articulated around the ten-year economic reform programme announced in the 2006/2007 Budget. The CSP is key to accessing grant resources from the European Union under the 10th European Development Fund under which Government expects to obtain some Euro 52 million or Rs2 billion in grant form and of which 85% will be as budget support for the six-year period 2008 to 2013. the 10th EDF will become operational as from 2008.

The CSP also integrates the 10-year (2006-2015) Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy for the sugar sector. The Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy was submitted to the EU early this year as part of the joint Mauritius –EC Response Strategy to the reform of the EU Sugar Regime.

It has already been approved for support under the EU Accompanying Measures for the Sugar Protocol countries.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been very wide consultation with all socio-economic partners in the preparation and finalization of both MAAS and the CSP. The MAAS has been subject to consultation with workers, trade
unions, small planters and parastatals and the private corporate stakeholders of the sector.

Similar consultations were held by Government and the EU delegation on the CSP with members of civil society, the private sector, local authorities and the EU Member States represented locally and the World Bank in July this year. Moreover, during my press conference on 13 October 2006, I presented the salient features of the CSP and invited all partners and make suggestions on the document which has been posted since then on the website of my Ministry.

### POWER PLANTS – EIA LICENCE

(No. B/1572) Miss K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he will state if the power plants in the south of the island are fully complying with their respective EIA licences.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry issued an EIA licence for the setting up of –

(a) a coal fired power plant at Union St. Aubin on 05 March 2004 to Compagnie Thermique du Sud, and
(b) a coal/bagasse fired power plant at La Barraque, l’Escalier on 28 October 2005 to Compagnie Thermique de Savannah Ltée.

A copy of the conditions of the EIA licences is being tabled.

Regular post EIA monitoring exercise to ensure compliance with the conditions of the EIA licence at both construction and operational phase are being carried out regularly.

Presently, the coal fired power plant at St. Aubin is operational and the EIA licence conditions are being complied with. The last site visit effected on 15 November 2006 indicated no environmental nuisance from the activity.

In addition, a stack monitoring exercise carried out by the University of Mauritius at Union St. Aubin from 04 to 12 July 2006 indicates that all
the parameters measured are within standards in accordance with the Environmental Protection Regulations 1998.

My Ministry continues to monitor the activity.

The coal/bagasse fired power plant at La Barraque, L’Escalier is still under construction. The last site visit effected on 17 November 2006 revealed no environmental nuisance. The power plant is scheduled to start operation as from May 2007.

My Ministry will continue to monitor the activity to check on compliance with EIA licence conditions and ensure that emissions are within standard at the operational phase.

**Miss Deerpalsing:** May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware of paragraph 9 of the EIA licence where it says that –

“Provisions shall be made for the storage of coal ash and fly ash in an enclosed structure. The coal ash and fly ash room shall have a concrete floor.”

Is the hon. Minister aware that that there have been tons and tons of coal ash lavishly spread all over the South and that this causes a very serious risk of mercury contamination for our groundwater and our sea water?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the information that I have is that fly ash that is being produced is collected in a silo and from where it is taken in trucks to be disposed of in land fields, in sugar cane fields to facilitate mechanization. I am also informed that an experiment is being carried with a cement factory to incorporate the fly ash cement. But I take note of the information that the hon. Member has given to me. The second issue is regarding the test which is being carried out and the test that has been carried out so far does not reveal anything dangerous. But I’ll take whatever the hon. Member has said into consideration and I will see to it that regular inspections are carried out and actions, if necessary, will be taken.

**Miss Deerpalsing:** May I request the hon. Minister to send his officers to see *de visu*? Everybody in the Constituency Nos. 13 and 14 have seen it that this grey ash has been spread all over the fields.
Mr Bachoo: I take note of this request.

**SUGAR – NATIONAL PRODUCTION**

(No. B/1573) Miss K.R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre-Bornes) asked the Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries whether in regard to the total national production of sugar in tons, he will state the estimated proportion of small planter’s production.

The Minister of Public Utilities (Dr. A. Kasenally): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am replying to this question.

Sir, I am informed by the Sugar Insurance Fund Board, that the sugar produced by small planters as a percentage of total national sugar production was 26.7% for crop year 2004 and 26.1% for crop year 2005. Based on the trend for the last five years, the estimated proportion of small planter’s production would be around 26% for crop year 2006.

**SUGAR CANE – SMALL PLANTERS – PRODUCTION COST**

(No. B/1574) Miss K.R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre-Bornes) asked the Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries whether in regard to the production cost for small planters of sugar cane, he will state if his Ministry has conducted any study to investigate the impact of centralisation in the sugar industry on the cost structure of the small planters.

*(Withdrawn)*

**HADJ PILGRIMAGE 2006**

(No. B/1575) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Arts & Culture whether, in regard to the Hadj pilgrimage 2006, he will –

(a) state if he has considered the letter from the Saudi Minister for Hadj concerning the accommodation of the additional 800 pilgrims within the precincts of Mina, and  
(b) submit the composition of the Hadj mission that will be accompanying the pilgrims.
Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Chairman of the Islamic Cultural Centre that three members of the Hadj mission will be in Saudi Arabia before the arrival of hadjees and they will have meetings with officers of the Mouassassah to confirm availability of tents in Mina for the 1200 hadjees as well as for the 575 additional hadjees.

I am also informed that once tanazzul is paid for each and every pilgrim, they will be accommodated in tents in Mina. Mr Speaker, Sir, this has always been the practice.

The composition of the Hadj mission that will be accompanying the pilgrims has not yet been finalised.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister table the letter of which he has taken cognizance a week ago about the accommodation in Mina?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the letter is not addressed to me and it is confidential…

(Interruptions)

Mr Lauthan: Sir, we are dealing with the fundamental principle of Islam. I know that it is not the Minister, but the Chairman is hiding behind confidentiality. Can the Minister confirm that in that letter mention was made from the authority that they are not giving guarantee that these additional hadjees will be accommodated within the precincts of Mina?

Mr Gowressoo: In fact, it is written here that these additional 800 hadjees will not necessarily be accommodated in tents in Mina, but as I have explained it has always been the practice that once tanazzul is paid, they will be accommodated in tents in Mina.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker, Sir, once tanazzul is paid, they are assured that they will be accommodated under the tents, but not within the precincts of Mina. This is a technical issue and it is very important. There will be accommodation outside the precincts, but not inside and ritually it is important that they are within the boundaries.

Mr Gowressoo: Sir, I am informed that a tent is always in Mina…
Mr Soodhun: Let us put it like this that this should be above politics. I have not been a witness, but the fact that if you are not present in Mina for the five days means that you have not performed the Hadj. It is as if you were there as tourist…

Mr Speaker: What is the question?

Mr Soodhun: I want to ask the Minister – that is very serious – whether he can contact the Saudi authority and to insist that the 800 additional hadjees should have access within Mina area so that they can perform the Hadj. If they are not present in Mina, they cannot perform the Hadj.

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Chairman of the Islamic Cultural Centre has already done his work and that’s why three members of the Hadj mission are leaving Mauritius three days before the hadjees.

Mr Lauthan: Can the hon. Minister inform us about the composition of this mission?

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister has said that he has not finalised it yet.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lauthan: There is a lot of work of co-ordination and education to be done here and there, how is it that the composition of the mission has not been decided yet?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, last year I did this work three days before the hadjees left Mauritius.

Mr Soodhun: Sir, can I make an appeal to the Minister to inform the hadjees about the exact situation?

Mr Gowressoo: I will do so, Sir.

HADJ PILGRIMAGE 2006 - AIR TICKETS
(No. B/1576) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Arts & Culture whether he will state why, in spite of the fact that Air Mauritius had offered Hadj air tickets for Rs35,000, including fuel surcharge, the Islamic Cultural Centre has come to an agreement with Rogers Aviation to the tune of Rs41,300 for the trip Mauritius/Jeddah/Mauritius and Rs42,800 for the trip Mauritius/Jeddah/Madina/Mauritius.

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Islamic Cultural Centre that the price of Rs35,000 quoted by Air Mauritius on 04 July 2006 is based on a 100% passenger load factor. This price includes fuel surcharge as at that date.

I am also informed that Air Mauritius will only be the provider of air transportation between SSR International Airport and Hajj Terminal Jeddah. All other arrangements including, but not limited to land transport, visas, passenger medical insurance and any other travel requirements will be the responsibility of the charterer.

I am further informed that the prices quoted by Rogers Aviation include the cost of Royalty charge of 56 US $ per passenger payable to Saudi Authorities, handling charges and a fee of around 4 percent for the charterer.

I have been advised that the charterer has also to take into consideration that some 12 to 15 seats remain unoccupied per flight and also the charterer undertakes to repatriate any pilgrims to Mauritius even after the normal scheduled time.

Moreover, there are also incidental charges because the expenditure and risks incurred by the charterer in respect of this operation and staff based in Jeddah to handle the pilgrims at arrival and departure.

All these additional costs explain the price difference.

I am tabling a copy of the relevant correspondence between the Islamic Cultural Centre and Rogers Aviation regarding the price of air tickets.
Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker, Sir, how is that the U & S Aviation has to respect all those conditions and they still maintain their Rs37,500 and Rogers is quoting Rs42,800?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I had a meeting with Mr S. Auckbarally of U&S Aviation on 28 November 2006. We discussed about the landing rights in Saudi Arabia and he confirmed that he would submit a landing certificate by 03 December 2006. On 04 December 2006, I called him again with other stakeholders when he failed to produce the landing rights. A communiqué was then issued to avoid last minute hardship to hadjees.

Mr Lauthan: Can the hon. Minister say whether he has been in presence of the landing rights of Rogers Aviation as at now?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have a letter from Rogers Travel that they have been authorised to have three flights for Egypt Air and two flights from Air Mauritius.

Mr Lauthan: Can the Minister confirm that the date limit for the submission of bids was 30.08.2006 and Rogers submitted its bid on 01 November 2006, that is, two months later? Can he explain why?

Mr Speaker: How is he going to explain that?

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, Air Mauritius normally sells tickets to other destinations to other passengers. Why is it that in this particular case Air Mauritius had to sub-contract out to Rogers and why is it that they do not do it itself at a better price?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, Air Mauritius is a transporter whereas Rogers Aviation is a charterer. So, it is the normal practice.

Mr Mohamed: I totally agree with the hon. Minister that this has been the practice, but, however, would the hon. Minister consider that if this wrong practice has been practised for so long, could he try to bring the change now finally?
Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I always invite competition and for our next campaign, maybe I will look into it.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker, Sir, the fact that Rogers had been nominated by the ICC, is it a personal decision of the Chairman or of the Board? If it was the decision of the Board, can he table the minutes of proceedings?

Mr Gowressoo: In reply to a Parliamentary Question last time, I said that there was a tendering procedure. So, it was sent to every company. Rogers and Air Mauritius sent their quotations.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker, Sir, the question is clear. Was the decision to nominate Rogers a personal decision of the Chairman or was it a decision ratified by the Board? If it was a decision ratified by the Board, when was it and would the hon. Minister submit the minutes of proceedings?

Mr Gowressoo: It was a decision of the Board.

Mr Lauthan: I hope that the Minister will table the minutes of proceedings. I have one last question, Mr Speaker, Sir. Is the hon. Minister aware that, because of all those shortcomings, Mr Yacoob Ebrahim Dawood, the representative of the Jummah Mosque, has resigned from the Board?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the price of an air ticket from Mauritius to UK is Rs16,800. Can the hon. Minister say why is the price of an air ticket from Mauritius to Jeddah and Madinah Rs42,800?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is based on a 100% passenger load factor. So, the flight goes to Saudi Arabia full, it has to return back empty.

MRA – CANDIDATES – AFFIDAVIT

(No. B/1577) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to whether persons
applying for jobs thereat are required to produce an affidavit in relation to their assets at the time of submission of their applications and, if so, the reasons therefore.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the requirement for a person applying for a job at the MRA to produce an affidavit in relation to their assets is in compliance with the Mauritius Revenue Authority Act.

In fact, section 14(1) of that Act specifies as follows, I quote –

“Every person shall, at the time of making an application to be recruited by the Authority, or within one month preceding his transfer to the Authority, as the case may be, lodge –

(a) in case of a Director-General, with the Chairperson, a declaration of assets by way of an affidavit in the form specified in the Second Schedule;
(b) in the case of an officer, with the Director-General, a declaration of assets by way of an affidavit in the form specified in the Second Schedule; or
(c) in the case of any other employee, with the Director-General, a declaration of assets in the form specified in the Third Schedule,

in relation to himself, his spouse, his minor children and grandchildren, and subject to subsection (2), children of age.”

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, doesn’t the hon. Deputy Prime Minister think that the declaration of assets must be made at the time of offer of employment?

Mr Sithanen: Mr Speaker, Sir, it’s a tricky one. I asked the same question when I was provided with the answer yesterday evening. I was assured that nobody is penalised for non-submission of what is required by law when he makes an application. However when they are called for interview, this requirement becomes necessary.
MRA – DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES - POST

(No. B/1578) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to whether the post of Director, Human Resources at the Authority has been filled up and, if so, the name of the incumbent.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr R. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Revenue Authority that it has not yet completed the recruitment process for the post of Director, Human Resources and Training.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Deputy Prime Minister inform the House the qualifications which are required for the post in the scheme of service and whether the incumbent, the one proposed, has got the required qualifications?

Mr Sithanen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don’t have a specific answer to the question that has been raised by the hon. Member, but if he comes with a substantive question, I will provide the answer.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the Deputy Prime Minister state to the House whether one, Mr Paul Mathews, who is a degree holder, BA in Geography, is, in fact, interviewing candidates who are holders of Masters and Doctorate in HR?

Mr Sithanen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will give two answers because such type of question have been raised before. One is specific and the other general. On the specific, if my memory serves me right, at the MRA, there is the gentleman mentioned, but he is not the only member of the panel that is chosen to select people. On the other one, Mr Speaker, Sir, there are many instances in life where if you go to the PSC, probably the one who is being interviewed, could be more qualified than the one who is doing the interview. This happens all over the world. Mr Speaker, Sir, I think it is also a question of the right mix on the panel and the experience of the panel.

Mr Dayal: May I ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he can inform the House if one, Mr Paul Mathews, has got any experience in human relations?
Mr Sithanen: From what I understand, Mr Speaker, Sir, he has experience in human resource management, but I don’t know his specific qualification, nor do I know the width of experience that he has accumulated in the sector.

SOS NETTOYAGE LTÉE – WORKERS – LAID OFF

(No. B/1579) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether he is aware that the SOS Nettoyage Ltée has laid off some of its workers, and, if so, will he –

(a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to

   (i) when they were laid off
   (ii) the reasons thereof and

(b) the measures his Ministry proposes to take, if any, for the redeployment of these workers

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry was informed by SOS Nettoyage Ltée, in a letter dated 28 November 2006, that it had laid off 332 workers with effect from 15 November 2006, following the non-renewal of its contract by the Ministry of Local Government. The same letter of 28 November 2006, but addressed to me and enclosing the list of workers laid off was received by fax on 01 December 2006.

As regards part (b) of the Question, I am given to understand that the companies, which have been awarded the contracts of works previously undertaken by SOS Nettoyage Ltée, will require additional workers and following the intervention of my Ministry and the Ministry of Local Government, they have agreed to give priority of consideration to the laid off workers.

The list of laid off workers has therefore been sent to these companies and todate 151 ex-workers of SOS Nettoyage Ltée have been recruited by these companies. Further recruitments are expected.
The Employment Service of my Ministry which, as is the normal practice in such cases, has initiated action on its part, with a view to placement of these workers in other enterprises as well.

CITÉ LA CHAUX, MAHEBOURG - BARACHOIS

(No. B/1580) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) ask the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he is aware that the “barachoïs” found near Cité la Chaux in Mahebourg was closed down and if so, will he state –

(a) the reasons thereof;
(b) the date of the closure, and
(c) whether Government will consider the re-opening thereof.

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that the barachoïs found near Cité La Chaux in Mahebourg is under the control of the Ministry of Agro Industry & Fisheries. It was vested in that Ministry in 1961.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am further informed by the Ministry of Agro Industry & Fisheries that the barachoïs is, in fact, not functional and the walls and gates are damaged.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the precise date since when it ceased to be functional as a barachoïs, and to be considered as such, cannot be established. In fact, part of the main wall on the seaward side does not exist, and 54 local fishermen are using the site for mooring their boats. The Ministry of Agro Industry & Fisheries is still occupying part of the site for its fisheries post and for the propagation of mangroves.

Regarding part (c) of the question, I am advised that, at this stage, the Ministry of Agro Industry & Fisheries is not considering reopening the barachoïs as it is surrounded by a heavily urbanised area. One of the reasons is that it would be difficult to exercise control and avoid poaching.

At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.
On resuming at 2.30 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

ALBION RESEARCH CENTRE – RESEARCH PROJECTS

(No. B/1581) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether, in regard to the Albion Research Centre, he will state the research projects that the Centre is proposing to carry out in the forthcoming months.

The Minister of Public Utilities (Dr. A. Kasenally): Mr Speaker Sir, with your permissions I shall answer this question.

I am informed that the Albion Fisheries Research Centre (AFRC) as the technical arm of the Ministry of Agro Industry and Fisheries has as its main responsibilities the monitoring of fisheries activities, collection of data from all the fisheries, aquaculture research, collection and analysis of data for water quality, ecological surveys, provision of advice to promoters in fisheries on coastal development projects.

I am advised that the Albion Fisheries Research Centre is currently conducting ongoing research on the following projects –

- Stock Assessment of lagoon fish;
- Stock Assessment of banks’ demersal fish;
- Stock Assessment of fish stocks in St Brandon;
- FAD Fishery gear development;
- Breeding and seed production of the fresh water prawn;
- Breeding and seed production of the Berri rouge;
- Trials for breeding and seed production of the sea cucumber;
- Breeding of marine ornamental fishes, clown fish, seahorse; and
- Research on fish toxicity.

In addition to the ongoing research projects, the following new activities are planned –

(i) breeding and seed production of fresh water ornamental fish;

(ii) survey on stocks of sea cucumber;
(iii) test fishing for bank fisheries resources using traps, and

(iv) floating cage culture of sea bream by selected fishers for exploitation.

I wish to inform the House that on 16 November 2006, my colleague, the substantive Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries, has personally chaired a committee comprising the Chairman and Executive Director of the Mauritius Research Council (MRC), the Director of the Mauritius Oceanographic Institute (MOI), Dr. D. Jhuree of the University of Mauritius (UoM) and officers of the Ministry of Agro Industry and Fisheries to examine potential research projects which have strong commercial dimension. The four institutions namely, AFRC, MOI, MRC and UoM made presentations of their research projects after which it was agreed to set up a committee within the Ministry to work out the way forward.

The Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries seized the opportunity of his recent visit to Japan to request technical assistance from the National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries for the re-engineering of the Albion Fisheries Research Centre.

BAT POPULATION - SURVEY

(No. B/1582) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Agro Industry & Fisheries whether, in regard to bats, he will state –

(a) if any survey has been carried out to assess –

   (i) the number thereof, and
   (ii) their disastrous effect on the local production of fruits,
   and

(b) the measures being taken to ensure that they are not carriers of the SARS disease.

The Minister of Public Utilities (Dr. A. Kasenally): Mr Speaker Sir, with your permissions I shall answer this question.
Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, the Agricultural Research and Extension Unit (AREU) has been receiving complaints from orchard owners about serious damage caused to fruits by bats. Members of the National Assembly also have been complaining about their litchis and mango trees. A survey to estimate the bat population was carried out from 14 to 29 September 2006 by the National Parks and Conservation Service. The survey has revealed that the bat population is around 22000 to 25000.

As regards part (a) (ii), I am informed that no survey as such has been carried out, but damage to the fruit crop throughout the island caused by bats has been reported to field officers of AREU. Following this, several meetings with stakeholders were held with a view to finding a satisfactory solution to the problem. There is a consensus among the fruit producers, the National Parks & Conservation Service (NPCS) and my Ministry that an effective measure to control the fruit bat population would be the culling of bats. However, representations have been made by a number of Non-

Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and international organisations against the proposed culling of bats on the ground that such an exercise might cause the extinction of the fruit bat species. AREU is giving proper advice to fruit growers to prune trees and use nets so as to discourage attacks from bats.

As regards part (b) of the question, so far scientific confirmation as to whether bats are carriers of the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) Corona virus is rather tenuous and whether they can transmit the disease to the humans is even more improbable.

However, scientific collaboration between scientists in China, Australia and the US has led to the identification of a SARS like virus dubbed SL-COV in a particular species of bats. These are horse-shoe bats of the genus Rhinolophus. We do not have these bats in Mauritius. Those bats which we have in Mauritius are still virgin and they have not been exposed to the horse-shoe bats from China. Besides, the known SARS virus is normally carried over by long distance migratory birds. Bats do not usually travel such long distances, but they can surely invade fruit trees in Beau Bassin and Rose Hill, from their den in Réduit.
BPML – TENDER COMMITTEE - CHAIRPERSON

(No. B/1583) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Information Technology and Telecommunications whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Business Parks of Mauritius (Ltd), information as to the name of the Chairperson of its Tender Committee since its inception to July 2005.

(Withdrawn)

EMBASSIES & HIGH COMMISSIONS - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/1584) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Co-operation whether, in regard to the persons recruited in Mauritian Embassies and High Commissions since July 2005 to date, he will table a list thereof, indicating the posts occupied and the salary drawn in each case.

Mr Dulloo: Mr Speaker, Sir, a list will be tabled as requested.

Mr Dowarkasing: May I know from the hon. Minister how many trade advisers have been recruited so far?

Mr Dulloo: I have a list which indicates 6. This needs confirmation before circulation.

CENTURY WELFARE ASSOCIATION – STATE LAND - LEASE

(No. B/1585) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will state if a plot of State land has been leased to the Century Welfare Association since July 2005.
Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, no plot of land has been leased as such to Century Welfare Association and may I emphasise that leases for all new plots of State land require Cabinet approval.

However, in February 2006, four Associations, namely the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, the Mauritius Sanatan Dharma Temples Federation, the Association Immaculée de Rivière des Créoles and inclusive of the Century Welfare Association were issued with letters of reservation in respect of plots of State land in the course of a ceremony held in the conference room of my Ministry on 24 February 2006, which ceremony was covered by the media. The reservation for Century Welfare Association was in respect of a plot of State land at Belle Mare for the construction of a social, educational and recreational centre catering for the needy and the less fortunate members of the Mauritian population. In accordance with the letter of reservation, the Association effected a cash deposit of Rs10,000 on 28 February 2006.

Thereafter, the Sugar Investment Trust (SIT) established contact requesting for the portion of land plus a larger plot for a tourist related development project at Belle Mare. In the circumstance, consultations were held with representatives of the Association and SIT, following which the Association has indicated that it would have no objection to release the land for allocation to the SIT, provided another plot suitable for its declared humanitarian objectives is allocated to it.

In the light of the development purpose and objectives of the Association, my Ministry is examining the possibility of reserving an alternative site.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister how does he reconcile that on one hand we are removing State lands from religious organisations and, on the other hand, we are giving them to certain NGOs or other regional organisations?

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is the policy of the Government to allocate land pursuant to the objective of the organisation, and there is no contradiction.
Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister to confirm to the House whether he has been the treasurer of the Century Welfare Association for many years?

Mr Speaker: Can I ask the hon. Member what he has in mind when he is putting this question?

Mr Dowarkasing: I just want to know whether his past position, as an office bearer of the Association, has not influenced his decision to grant a plot of land to this Association?

Mr Speaker: Is the hon. Member imputing motives? I will not allow this question in that case.

(Interjections)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the Minister whether he has been or is still a member of that Association? There is nothing to hide.

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been involved with several socio-cultural and humanitarian organisations in the region of Port Louis and at national level for so many years. I am a member of different organisations, including Century Welfare Association.

AFRICAN CUP OF CLUBS CHAMPIONS – EXPENSES INCURRED

(No. B/1586) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the expenses incurred during the African Cup of Clubs Champions (CACC) in volleyball, he will –

(a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Sports Council, information as to whether an audit has been conducted thereon and, if so,
(b) will he state if a copy of the report will be laid on the Table of the National Assembly.
Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Sports Council that the Mauritius Volleyball Association had requested the council to carry out an audit of the expenses incurred by the association for the period January to July 2006 which includes the expenses pertaining to the holding of the Women’s African Cup of Clubs Championship in volleyball held in Mauritius in April 2006.

The council had subsequently appointed Toolsee and Associates, an accounting firm to audit the accounts of the Volleyball Association for the said period. I am also informed that Toolsee and Associates have recently submitted the audit report to the council.

However, I had already informed the House in my reply to Parliamentary Question B/1229 in October 2006 that following representations made by one member club of the Volleyball Association, the “Federation Internationale de Volleyball”, had delegated the vice President of the African Volleyball Confederation to Mauritius from 22 to 25 September 2006 to investigate into the internal conflicts of the Volleyball Association.

In an interim report submitted by the vice President of the confederation, following his visit to Mauritius, in September 2006, he stated, inter alia, that an inquiry would be carried out to give a fair chance to all parties to put their case forward.

I wish to inform the House that one member of the “Federation Internationale de Volleyball” has arrived in Mauritius yesterday to start the enquiry whilst a second one will be in Mauritius on 07 December to join the enquiry process. They propose, subsequently, to submit to me a final report by mid December 2006.

In this context, the team leader of the enquiry has advised that it is critical that the audit is not released prior to the conclusion of the enquiry. He has pointed out that such a course of action would ensure that the enquiry is completed after taking cognizance of the audit report and submission of the final recommendations.

I wish to emphasise again, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, as a matter of principle, my Ministry does not interfere in internal matters of Sports
Federations which are autonomous bodies, governed by the Sports Act and the legislation pertaining to the Registration of Associations.

However, I will ensure that the necessary steps are taken by relevant parties concerned with regard to rendering the audit report public as early as possible.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether he has taken cognizance of the audit report, whether he is satisfied with the outcome of that report, and whether there has been no mismanagement of funds?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, I can assure the hon. Member.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware that the contribution received from one of the foreign teams, namely Kenya Pipeline, was not deposited into the accounts of the Mauritius Sports Council when the enquiry was carried out? It is only on the insistence of the treasurer that later, the sum of $12,800 were deposited.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: I am not aware of it, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Dowarkasing: The hon. Minister has said that he is fully satisfied that there has been no mismanagement of the funds. So, is he aware that this matter has been referred to ICAC? If you allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will just quote what ICAC has stated –

“The enquiry that they have conducted has revealed that there must be serious discrepancies and mismanagement of funds at the Mauritius Volleyball Association in respect to the African Championship which was held in Mauritius.”

I will table a copy of this letter. Can I, therefore, request the Minister to have a fresh look again at this Audit report?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I can assure the hon. Member that I have already looked at the report. It was made by a specialised firm, Toolsee and Associates and I have no doubt about it.
Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, my last question is: if the Minister says that he is clear, he is assuring the House that he has gone through the report and that there is no mismanagement of funds, so, is he in a position to table a copy of that Audit report in the House since there are public funds that have been involved in the funding of that African Cup of volleyball?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I can just tell the hon. Member to be patient.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, we shall be patient but there is a time limit. Can the Minister give an undertaking to the House that the report will be submitted to the National Assembly this year at least or next month but not in five or six years?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have already said that the report will be submitted to me by mid December this year. So, there is no problem.

Mr Bhagwan: The Minister has just stated that the two officials of the International Volleyball Federation will be coming and one has already come. Everybody knows that things are not going well at the Volleyball Federation. Last time, I asked the Minister that being given that he has a representative of the federation to see to it that no policy decisions are taken by the federation until a fresh election, until matters are cleared. So, can the Minister give an assurance to the House that no major decision will be taken by the federation pending the finalisation of this Commission of Inquiry?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think it is the hon. Member’s opinion on it.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister what has been the tune of funding from public funds for that event?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: If the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I will reply to it.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just stated that it is my opinion. Can the hon. Minister confirm to the House, the population
and the Sports Committee that he is satisfied that everything is being done in transparency and that there is no problem at the Volleyball Federation?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Yes, I can assure the House, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Dowarkasing: One last question, Mr Speaker, Sir. I just want to be enlightened by the hon. Minister. The Mauritius Sports Council is an independent body sovereign to our country. Should we rely on a correspondent that has been sent by the International African Volleyball Confederation not to release an audit report which has been conducted by an institution independent in our sovereign country?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: I will look into the matter, Mr Speaker, Sir.

ALEEMIAH COLLEGE – UNREST - MEDIATOR - REPORT

(No. B/1587) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the mediator who was nominated to address the numerous problems at the Aleemiah College, he will inform the House whether a report has been submitted by the mediator and, if so, what are the recommendations of the report and what will be the outcome.

Mr Gokhool: Sir, following the unrest at Aleemiah College in August 2006, my Ministry, with the approval of Government, appointed a mediator to look into the circumstances which led to a deterioration of the relations between Management and the staff and to establish the causes of such a state of affairs, including any possible shortcomings in the present system. The mediator was also expected to make recommendations for a sustainable partnership between Management and the staff through sound employer-employee relation and for settlement of complaints, grievances and disputes in a spirit of harmonious industrial relation.

The report was required to allow my Ministry to take stock of the situation at Aleemiah College and to decide on the way forward. The Mediator did submit his report on 05 October 2006.

The recommendations contained therein have already been communicated to the main stakeholders and I am tabling a copy of these.
Further, an Implementation Committee has been set up to ensure that the recommendations contained in the report are implemented. This Committee which is chaired by a senior official of my Ministry comprises, *inter alia*, the following stakeholders –

(i) Director PSSA;
(ii) the Manager of Aleemiah College;
(iii) the PSSA Supervisors of the Aleemiah College;
(iv) one Representative from the Secondary and Preparatory School Teachers and other Staff Union;
(v) one Representative from the Parents Teachers Association of Aleemiah College, and
(vi) one staff representative from Aleemiah College.

The other members are mostly senior officials of my Ministry.

A first meeting of the Committee was held on 22 November 2006, and I am informed that an implementation plan has already been worked out at this stage for the execution of the recommendations and the PSSA has been directed to monitor same to ensure smooth resumption of studies in 2007. The Committee will also closely follow the situation.

CUREPIPE/MIDLANDS – LOW COST HOUSES – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/1588) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will state if any site for the construction of low cost houses in Constituency No. 17, Curepipe and Midlands, has been identified and, if so, will he give its location, indicating when works are likely to start.

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, the process of identification of adequate sites for the implementation of low cost housing projects in Constituency No. 17, Curepipe and Midlands and throughout the island is an ongoing one. May I refer the hon. Member to paragraph 270 of the address of the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development on the budget exercise 2006/2007 whereby Government policy regarding social housing was clearly indicated. To this end, Government will acquire
around 2000-3000 Arpents of land across the country near existing agglomerations. Part of the land will be developed into serviced lots of 50 to 60 toises to be sold at affordable cost after infrastructure development to landless families earning less than Rs8,500 a month.

The buyers will benefit the following –

(a) a choice from 4-5 prototype plans design;
(b) title deed;
(c) approved building plan;
(d) clearances from public utilities, and
(e) building permit from the relevant local authorities.

All the above will lead to the beneficiaries being able to start construction within a short time frame. Most importantly, the beneficiaries will become the rightful owner of the land instead of a lessee to Government.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister if there is any site which has been identified so far in Curepipe/Midlands.

Mr Dulull: There are two existing sites at Malherbes and two at Cité Atlee.

Mr Guimbeau: Can the hon. Minister inform the House as to the number of applications which the Ministry has received concerning the low cost houses?

Mr Dulull: If the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I will give the reply.

WOOTON/BELLE RIVE – ROAD REPAIRS

(No. B/1589) Mr L. Bundhoo (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, he is aware of the state of the road between Wooton and Belle Rive, and if so, will he state if it is proposed to have it reinstated and widened.
MOTORWAY M1 – TRAFFIC CONGESTION - STUDY

(No. B/1590) Mr L. Bundhoo (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the traffic congestion occurring at peak hours along motorway M1, he will state if a study has been carried out on the traffic increase during the last three years and, if so will he state the outcome thereof, indicating –

(a) the percentage increase of the traffic;
(b) the average congestion cost over each year;
(c) the cost of pollution caused thereby, and
(d) the measures that have been or will be taken to reduce the inconvenience caused.

(Air Mauritius Ltd – Telephone Conversations – Recording)

(No. B/1591) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Air Mauritius Ltd, information as to whether the Company is presently recording all incoming telephone conversations and the reasons therefor.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval) Mr. Speaker Sir, I am informed by Air Mauritius Ltd as follows -

(i) It is not the policy of the Company to record all incoming telephone conversations;
(ii) As part of its Risk Management Measures, the company has, with effect from 01st April 2006, and in accordance with IATA recommended best practices, implemented a Voice Recording
System, restricted to a small number of extensions and direct lines in specific departments located at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport;

(iii) The primary purpose behind this measure is to *inter–alia* -

(a) enhance the security systems in sensitive areas at the airport,
(b) follow up on any aspect of Flight Operations, or issues affecting aircraft maintenance or crew scheduling, and
(c) enable an accurate assessment of risks;

(iv) Following the recommendation of IATA, this is a common practice for airlines in the furtherance of their operations and is even mandatory in some countries, and

(v) Officers concerned were duly notified of this measure prior to its implementation.

Mr Speaker Sir, I am further informed that the same precautionary measures have been introduced at Airmate Ltd which is a call centre and fully owned subsidiary of Air Mauritius, so as to protect members of the public against conduct which may adversely affect their interests.

According to Air Mauritius Ltd, the voice recording system was implemented following legal clearances from its legal department.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** May I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to look into the matter as my information is that even at the headquarters of Air Mauritius Ltd, the same is being done?

**Mr Duval:** I have inquired into this, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I am informed that there is no recording at the headquarters.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** May I ask the hon. Minister to check whether such a practice is in order and whether it complies with our legal and constitutional provisions?

**Mr Duval:** Mr Speaker, I mentioned that there are no recordings at the headquarters and I am also informed that the legal department of Air Mauritius has cleared this issue. Of course, the officers concerned have been
informed of the recording and when you call the call centre at the same time, you are informed that everything is being recorded.

**Mr Ganoo:** Is the hon. Deputy Prime Minister now prepared to answer questions concerning the daily operations of Air Mauritius Ltd to the House?

**Mr Duval:** This is a question regarding privacy of the employees.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** The Deputy Prime Minister just answered that the officers were informed, but is it proper to have civilians having their conversations being recorded?

**Mr Duval:** Mr Speaker, I am informed that IATA now wants airlines to record certain of their operations, for instance, aircraft breakdown, complaints, bomb threats, etc. This is why this is restricted to a number of sensitive operations at the airport where specific extension and specific direct lines are recorded. I think the hon. Member will agree that security is tantamount to the operations of any airline, whether it is technical security and whether it is from terrorist threat and, therefore, I do not think we should take any risk so far as this is concerned.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** May I inform the Minister because I have made my own investigations and it seems..

(Interruptions)

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** May I ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he can confirm, because my information is that conversations are being recorded even when any civilian calls at the head office simply for reservation of a seat also?

**Mr Duval:** There is a difference between the call centre where you can make reservations and the headquarters. I have not made my own investigations, but I can tell you that I have been informed categorically - and I do not think we should treat anybody as a liar or anything – that there is no recording at headquarters and that the recording is limited to voice recordings, which are known to the staff at the airport and at the call centre where reservations are made.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister mentioned that this issue has been cleared by the Legal Division of Air Mauritius Ltd. Have the customers of Air Mauritius Ltd been informed by way of press or any other means of this new practice?
Mr Duval: If you actually ring some of these numbers you are told that your conversation is being recorded.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: This is where I would like to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to check, because when we have called at Air Mauritius Ltd, we were informed on a recorder that the conversation that is going to take place would be recorded.

Mr Duval: The hon. Member must have called the call centre, but she can give me the phone number later on and I’ll check. But, as I understand, if you call the call centre, clearly you will be told that this is being recorded for processing purposes. If you call at the head office or any other number this is not being recorded, except where it is stated at the Airport, for security reasons.

WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY
– HOUSEHOLD CONNECTIONS SINCE 2002

(No. B/1592) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information from the Wastewater Management Authority with regard to the contracts allocated by the WWMA for house connections region-wise since 2002 –

(a) the number of contracts for house connections allocated by the WWMA since 2002;

(b) the number of household connections to be effected, and

(c) the cost of each project.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am laying in the Library of the National Assembly the information requested for in respect of the number of contracts for house connections allocated by the Wastewater Management Authority since 2002, the number of household connections to be effected and the cost of each project.
In a nutshell, there is a total of 17 contracts allocated, totaling a sum of Rs1,118,941,203.85 out of which 11 have been completed and 6 are ongoing.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I take it from the hon. Minister that 6 of the contracts have been completed?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I said that 11 contracts have been completed and 6 are ongoing.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Will the hon. Minister inform the House of the number of household connections that have been completed as at to date?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I answered a Question to that effect last week. I don’t have the figure right now, but it must be about 50,900. I can confirm that information later on.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Does the hon. Minister have information as to the number of these households which are presently paying the wastewater charges?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I can’t give the figure offhand. Normally, all households which are connected are by law required to pay their wastewater charges. Of course, there are some people who default. There are some who make illegal connections, but we are tracking each and everyone of them..

PLANTERS (SMALL)  
– REGROUPING SCHEME AND OPERATION

(No. B/1593) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether, in regard to the field operation and regrouping scheme being proposed to small planters, he will inform the House of the items being offered to the small planters and the cost to the small planters per arpent.
The Minister of Public Utilities (Dr. A. Kasenally): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission I will reply to this question.

Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply made to PQ. B/1451 wherein information was given in respect of the field operation and regrouping scheme. In fact, this scheme is one of the key elements of our Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy Action Plan 2006/2015. Under this scheme, the following is being provided to small planters -

(a) derocking
(b) land preparation (ripping, furrowing and harrowing)
(c) planting material (treated cane setts and appropriate fertilizer)
(d) labour for planting
(e) two post planting herbicide treatments
(f) labour for the application of fertilizers, herbicides and scum

Mr Speaker, Sir, the level of accompanying measures to be received from the European Union is well below our expectations. Under these circumstances, the Project Implementation Committee (PIC), which is responsible for the implementation of the field operation and regrouping has provisionally fixed a ceiling of Rs60,000 per hectare on all the regrouping project. Real costs would be site specific depending on the nature of the operations to be undertaken and also the topography of the land. The planters are being requested to take the undertaking to cultivate sugar cane for a crop cycle of seven consecutive harvests as from land preparation and replanting date and to make a contribution. As the House has already been informed earlier, in Queen Victoria, the small planters will be charged Rs500 per arpent each year.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the implementation of our Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy Action Plan 2006-2015 is a *sine qua non* for the survival of the sugar cane industry and for the safeguard of the livelihoods of all stakeholders. The regrouping scheme will ensure that one major vulnerable partner, the small planter, remains in business and continues to derive meaningful revenue from the cluster. The other vulnerable partners, the employees, are also being catered for through the various schemes and
voluntary retirement coupled with training and re-skilling facilities in order to empower them to be economically independent in the new sugar cane landscape. This is a vivid example of pro-poor and social dimensions of the Action Plan.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as already indicated in reply to PQ No. B/1501, the present provisions of law relating to income to planters to ensure that they receive fair value for all the revenue streams from sugar cane cultivation have to be reviewed. In fact, planters must have the opportunity to benefit from all revenue streams that will flow out of the modernization of the sugar industry and the sugar cane sub-clusters, including ethanol and other alco-chemicals as they become commercially exploitable, in addition to the revenues they presently derive from sugar, electricity and molasses.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Can the hon. Minister inform the House as to which region the regrouping and work being proposed will start?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish I knew this dossier more in-depth, but I would request the hon. Member to put that question when the substantive Minister is around.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that the sum of Rs1,775 per arpent has been requested from planters in the northern region of the island for the same work, instead of what was stated in the House, that is, Rs500 per arpent?

Dr. Kasenally: I am not aware of it. There is always a request of more than what is obtainable. Obviously, we would have given much more, but it all depends on what we can afford at this present time.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I inform the hon. Minister that the planters are being asked to contribute that amount instead of the stated Rs500 per arpent?

Dr. Kasenally: I am not aware. Apparently, there may be some technical problems. Perhaps, there are more works to be done and derocking. I cannot bow for that; I suppose I have to take all the information. If the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, the substantive Minister will be in a better position to answer.
COURTS – NON-PAYMENT OF FINES

(No. B/1594) Mr L. Bundhoo (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice and Human Rights whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Master and Registrar of the Supreme Court, information as to the number of persons who have been imprisoned for non-payment of fines imposed for the past three years by –

(a) the District Courts;
(b) the Intermediate Court, and
(c) the Supreme Court.

Mr Valayden: Mr Speaker, Sir, according to the records obtained from the hon. Master and Registrar of the Supreme Court, for the last three years, the figures are –

(a) District Court – 5554
(b) Intermediate Court – 238
(c) Supreme Court – Nil.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I request the hon. Attorney-General to consider the advisability of amending the law for non payment of fines into community services rather than imprisonment?

Mr Valayden: As it is a question concerning principles of sentencing we have to look into all the different principles into a more deeper way before deciding.

MAURITIUS PORT AUTHORITY
– CLOSE CIRCUIT TELEVISION SYSTEM

(No. B/1595) Dr. R. Hawoldar (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Port Authority, information as to whether tenders were invited at the end of May 2005 for the design, supply and installation of a close circuit television system, transmission system and access control system and, if so –
(a) the name of the companies which had submitted tender, and
(b) the reasons for which no tender was accepted.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval):** Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Ports Authority (MPA) that, as part of the project for the upgrading of security measures at Port Louis Harbour, tenders for the design, supply and installation of a closed circuit television system, including transmission and access control system were launched in the press on 09 May 2005 under the aegis of the Central Tender Board (CTB).

As of 07 July 2005, the closing date, bids were received at the CTB from the following 8 companies -

(a) IBL Ltd. (Information Technology);
(b) JV Blick South Africa/Electrical and Control Specialists;
(c) Westminster International Ltd;
(d) Grintek Ewation (Pty) Ltd;
(e) Quadrant Video Systems Ltd;
(f) JV ABB/Corsec;
(g) Siemens SBT; and
(h) Harel Mallac & Co. Ltd

The proposals were forwarded to the MPA Consultants, Messrs Portia Management Services Ltd., UK, on 13 July 2005 for technical evaluation and recommendations.

In the report which was received at the MPA on 16 August 2005, the Consultants retained offers from Harel Mallac & Co. Ltd. and Quadrant Video Systems Ltd. for further consideration. On 04 October 2005, the CTB was apprised of the recommendations of Messrs Portia Management Services Ltd. In a letter dated 10 February 2006, the CTB, however, informed the MPA that none of the bids responded to the mandatory requirements of the tender and, therefore, none was compliant. The CTB accordingly advised the MPA to limit drastically the mandatory requirements of the tender.
JUSTICE SYSTEM – REFORM

(No. B/1597) Mr R. Guttee (Third Member for Grand’ Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice and Human Rights whether he will state if Government proposes to amend the law in regard to the criminal procedure and the rules of evidence with a view to modernising the justice system.

Mr Valayden: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I inform the hon. Member that Government is going ahead with the reform.

BHEL, MR RAJ - MFDC REPRESENTATIVE IN INDIA

(No. B/1598) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce & Co-operatives whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Film Development Company, information as to whether any contract has been offered to an Indian national in Mumbai to act as a representative of the MFDC there, with effect from October 2006, indicating the terms and conditions thereof.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been advised that the MFDC has enlisted the services of Mr Raj Bhel for a contractual period of one year with effect from 15 October 2006 as its representative in India.

The terms and conditions of his contract will be placed in the Library.

Mr Gunness: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether we are dealing with the same Mr Raj Bhel who, in 1996, signed a contract with the MBC for 24 serial films for a sum of Rs14 m., and, at the end of the day, only three serials were done?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don’t have this information.

Mr Gunness: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House how many advertising films have been shot in Mauritius last month?
Dr. Jeetah: I don’t have the details of all the films shot, Mr Speaker, Sir. But, should the hon. Member wish to have more information, he can come with a substantive question.

Mr Gunness: Can the hon. Minister check – I am sure it is in his hand – the duties of the same Mr Raj Bhel? I am sure that, at No. 3 of his duties, it is said: ‘to ensure that, at least, two advertising films…

Mr Speaker: The principle of asking a question is to seek for information. If the hon. Member already has the information, he cannot put a question. He should put the question and seek for the information, and not give information!

Mr Gunness: Mr Speaker, Sir, I put my question. Is it true that, in the contract of Mr Raj Bhel, he is supposed to have two advertising films on a monthly basis?

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, it is true, Mr Speaker, Sir. As I said, I am going to table the information in the Library of the National Assembly. He has got very specific requirements that he has to abide to.

Mr Gunness: Therefore, can I know whether any advertising film has been done?

Dr. Jeetah: I just answered the question, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the Chairperson of the MFDC has travelled to India in connection with the said contract?

Dr. Jeetah: I don’t have the information, but I don’t think so, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister verify and inform the House?

Mr Speaker: He said that he’ll do it.

Mr Bhagwan: He has not said so.

Mr Speaker: Is the Minister going to verify and report?
Dr. Jeetah: I have already answered, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Gunness: Can we know the total amount to be paid to Mr Raj Bhel on a monthly basis?

Dr. Jeetah: As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am going to table the information in the Library of the National Assembly.

Mr Gunness: Can the hon. Minister inform the House – If he has the information – what is the role of Mr Partagosh, who is the honorary President of the MFDC, in that particular contract with Mr Raj Bhel?

Dr. Jeetah: I don’t have this name in my file, Mr Speaker, Sir.

MFDC – CHAIRPERSON – COMPLAINT AGAINST

(No. B/1599) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce & Co-operatives whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Film Development Company, information as to whether any allegations of harassment by the Chairperson in post has been reported and, if so, if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, a complaint has been received from a member of the staff of the MFDC against the Chairperson. The matter has been referred to the Board for consideration. At its last meeting, the Board has appointed a special committee to look into the allegations levelled at the Chairperson of the MFDC.

In the light of its findings, necessary action would be initiated by the Board.

Mr Gunness: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister whether, since Mr Selven Naidu has left, the Chairman is also acting as Director?

Dr. Jeetah: That is true, Mr Speaker, Sir.
**Mr Bhagwan:** Will the hon. Minister check and inform the House whether employees of the MFDC are being harassed with regard to their religious beliefs? I know what I am talking about. Can the Minister go and check whether this gentleman is harassing members of the personnel with regard to their religious beliefs?

**Dr. Jeetah:** In my reply, I did say that there was a complaint and that the matter is being looked into.

**Mr Gunness:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can we know from the hon. Minister who has appointed the Chairman as acting Director? Is it the Board? Is there a letter of appointment?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I have to look into the matter, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Will the hon. Minister inform the House whether the Chairperson, Mr Nayna, is receiving additional remuneration for this additional work?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I think so, Mr Speaker, Sir, because it is additional work.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can we know the amount he is receiving as additional remuneration?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I don’t have the exact details, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Cuttaree:** Being given that the Chairman is now acting as Director, can we know whether the hon. Minister has checked if the legislation setting up the MFDC provides for a separation of powers between the Chair and the Director?

**Dr. Jeetah:** This is just a temporary measure, Mr Speaker, Sir, until we get a substantive Director.

**Mr Cuttaree:** Mr Speaker, Sir, maybe the hon. Minister does not know. If something is illegal, it cannot be only temporarily illegal. I cannot kill somebody temporarily.

**Dr. Jeetah:** I will look into the matter, Mr Speaker, Sir.
Mr Gunness: Mr Speaker, Sir, I understand from the Minister that an inquiry is on in the case of Mr Nayna. But, at the same time, he is acting as Chairman and acting Director. Therefore, is it not proper for the gentleman to step down and let the inquiry go on?

Dr. Jeetah: It’s a matter for the Board to decide, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Cuttaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, being given that harassment is a criminal offence, can I ask the hon. Minister why, instead of asking the Board to inquire on its Chairman, this matter has not been referred to the Police?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, certainly the person who has been harassed is free to do the needful.

Mr Cuttaree: It is up to the Board to deal with this complaint seriously. It is not for the complainant to ask the Board to take this matter to the Police or not.

Dr. Jeetah: The person has made a complaint, and we have taken steps to look into that. With regard to his or her personal breach of rights, that’s up to the person to do the needful.

Mr Speaker: The Table has been informed that PQs B/1600 & B/1601 have been withdrawn.

SIDDS CONFERENCE – VEHICLES – ENGINE CAPACITY, NUMBER, ETC

(No. B/1600) Mr V. Mardemootoo (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development whether, in regard to the vehicles purchased for the last SIDS conference which was held in Mauritius, he will –

(a) give a breakdown in terms of engine capacity thereof, and
(b) the number thereof which reached Mauritius after the beginning of the conference.
SIDS CONFERENCE – VEHICLES - SALE

(No. B/1601) Mr V. Mardemootoo (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development whether, in regard to the vehicles purchased for the last SIDS conference which was held in Mauritius, he will state whether a number thereof has been sold to the public or private companies and, if so, indicating –

(a) the number of used and unused vehicles which were sold;
(b) whether duties and other dues were paid by the new buyers;
(c) the names of the new buyers, and
(d) whether any tender exercise was resorted to and, if not, why not.

STATE COLLEGES – ADMISSION

(No. B/1602) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state the criteria which will be used for the allocation of seats in the national colleges for students having the same results.

Mr Gokool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the replies I gave to two PNQs at our sittings of 21 March 2006 and 28 November 2006, as well as the replies to PQs B/19, B/152 and B/1299 & B/1308 at our sittings of 21 March 2006, 04 April 2006 and 07 November 2006 respectively, where the subject of admission on a national basis to State colleges have been dealt with.

I remind the hon. Member that admission on a national basis to State colleges (9 in all), will be made on –

(a) the grade aggregate (in the best four subjects);
(b) relative performance of an applicant at the CPE examinations, and
(c) parental choice

as provided for in the Education (Amendments) Regulations 2006.

Performance will the decisive criterion and this will be based on the refined grading system, the top grade aggregate being 24 units, corresponding to the results of 4 A+.

With regard to the specific issue relating to students having the same results, I wish to state the following –

(i) these are not unusual cases and have occurred in the past, and

(ii) in the event of a tie, that is, where candidates come up *ex-aequo* in the given range of marks, and they are not many, the Ministry will slightly increase the seat capacity in the colleges concerned to allow MES to admit all the *ex-aequo* students within that range of marks. However, simulation exercises on past results by MES have shown that such case will be very few and far apart, if any.

In case there are less than 140 candidates for a given school who have obtained 4 grades A+ with a maximum grade aggregate of 24, then candidates with 3 A+ and one A with a maximum grade aggregate of 23 will be considered and so on.

In case of an unlikely tie arising for the admission of students with a grade aggregate of 23, the same logic as for students with a maximum grade of 24 units will apply, that is, candidates will be admitted by MES looking at the range of marks and in case of tie, for example two candidates having the same aggregate of 23 and the same range of marks for only one available seat, then both candidates will be admitted.

I am tabling a copy of a document setting out the whole rationale and mechanism of admission which has been made public in the past.

**Mrs Perrier:** Si j’ai bien compris le ministre, deux élèves ayant reçu les mêmes résultats aux examens du CPE et une école nationale n’ayant qu’un seul siège disponible, les deux élèves vont être admis.
Mr Gokhool: C’est ce que je viens de dire, M. le président.

Mrs Perrier: Et s’il n’y en a plus que deux?

Mr Gokhool: C’est une question hypothétique parce que d’après les simulations, il n’y aura pas beaucoup de cas, mais les cas qu’on aura on doit accommodate in process.

Mrs Perrier: Le ministre vient nous dire aujourd’hui que le nombre de 1,260 places n’est pas définitif. Il y aura donc plus que 2,260 places.

(Interruptions)

Mr Gokhool: The number of seats provided in the nine colleges is nine times 140. In cases of ties which is not unusual, Mr Speaker, Sir, as it happened in the past, it has been dealt with by the MES and we are going to apply the same procedure. I don’t think it is a problem.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Can the hon. Minister state in the House whether he agrees that the competition this year will be much more than what it has been earlier? Because taking the figures provided by the hon. Minister himself we are having this year around 16,000 students applying for a seat in national colleges and having only 1,260 seats available, that such a competition will be far more acute than what has been the case in the past.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have given the reply in all the PQs I have answered. First, to apply for a seat on a national basis to State colleges is an option, it is not a compulsion. Second, there has always been competition and there will be some competition. But all the arrangements have been made with regard to ex-aequo candidates.

Mrs Perrier: Est-il prêt à publier les points des élèves dans ce cas précis afin de clarifier et d’enlever tout doute dans la tête des parents et rendre cette rentrée beaucoup plus sereine?
Mr Gokhool: I can answer this and many more questions on this, but I cannot clear the confusion in the mind of the hon. Member. She should read the answer that I have given.

UNIVERSAL ICT EDUCATION PROGRAMME

(No. B/1603) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Information Technology and Telecommunications whether, in regard to the Universal ICT Education Programme, he will state –

(a) when it was launched;
(b) its total cost;
(c) the type and duration of the courses offered;
(d) the name of the company or individual selected to offer these courses;
(e) the criteria used for selection, and
(f) the amount payable by Government or the students in terms of licence fees, course fees and examination fees, if any.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission I am replying to this question.

Sir, I am tabling the information called for on Universal ICT Education Programme.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Le Ministre pourrait-il au moins nous répondre to part (d) of the question, that is, the name of the company or individual selected to offer these courses?

Mr X. L. Duval: The National Computer Board is the legal entity offering these courses in Mauritius. This is what I have.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Le Ministre peut-il dire si c’est un certain docteur Appu Kuttan de la Société Américaine National Education Foundation qui a eu le contrat? Est-ce qu’il peut confirmer cela?
Mr X. L. Duval: I am replacing the substantive Minister. I have asked the Ministry to prepare a comprehensive reply for the hon. Member so that I can table it in the House and on the next occasion the hon. Member can ask questions from the substantive Minister.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Le Ministre peut-il nous dire quels sont the criteria used for selection?

Mr X. L. Duval: As I have just said, I’ll table the information and the hon. Member will get it in a few minutes.

Mr Ganoo: May I ask the hon. Ministre whether there has been any biding process, tendering procedure for this election?

Mr X. L. Duval: I am not aware of how the procedure was made, Mr Speaker, Sir.

EBÈNE TRIANGLE - INFRASTRUCTURAL WORKS

(No. B/1604) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Housing & Lands whether, in regard to infrastructural works in the Ebène Triangle, he will state –

(a) the nature of the works to be carried out, and
(b) when tenders will be launched.

Mr Dulull: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am advised that infrastructural works that are required to be carried out in the Ebène Triangle comprise access roads, provision of utility services such as sewerage, drainage, water, electricity and lighting.

The detailed works comprise mainly of the following –

(i) a divided 4-lane arterial road of length 1.0km with drainage structures;
(ii) an intersection with the A7 road at Réduit, incorporating a grade-separated roundabout;
(iii) two reinforced concrete culverts across Cascade River;
(iv) distributor roads of length 2.0 km;
(v) utilities (sewerage, drainage, water, electricity and lighting), and
(vi) road safety control devices and fixtures.

In regard to part (b) of the question, consultations have started with all stakeholders as well as with the beneficiaries of the land in the Réduit Triangle on cost-sharing mechanism for the purpose of financing the costs of the infrastructural works.

Draft tender documents have been prepared. As soon as agreement is reached on the financing mechanism, the tender documents will be finalized and tenders will be launched after obtention of all necessary clearances.

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** Est-ce que le ministre peut-il confirmer si les bénéficiaires de ces nouveaux terrains vont effectivement contribuer au coût infrastructurel à Ebène, si oui, à quelle hauteur?

**Mr Dulull:** We are presently working on the cost sharing mechanism.

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** Est-ce que le ministre peut dire si tout les bénéficiaires, par exemple, Apollo etc. vont contribuer au coût infrastructurel?

**Mr Dulull:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we are working on the cost sharing mechanism and the beneficiaries will be informed. Actually, the beneficiaries and other stakeholders are participating in the setting up of the mechanism.

**MOTION**

**SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)**

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that all the business on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

**The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval) rose and seconded.**
Question put and agreed to.