

AIR MAURITIUS LTD. – UPGRADING OF AIR TICKETS – BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/750) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to Air Mauritius Ltd., he will state the names of the passengers having benefitted from free upgrade of air tickets from economy class to business class and from free extra luggage entitlement when travelling on the flights thereof over the period 2012 to 2014 on instructions from the Prime Minister's Office, indicating in each case, the names of the officer having given the said instruction.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, as already indicated in replies to previous Parliamentary Questions, Air Mauritius Ltd. is a Company listed on the Stock Exchange of Mauritius and is governed by the Memorandum and Articles of Association and the Companies Act.

It would, therefore, not be appropriate to provide the information asked for by the hon. Member.

Dr. Sorefan: Madam Speaker, I am very sorry to hear that and I do not see why the hon. Ag. Prime Minister is misleading the House. The question is...

Madam Speaker: I am sorry! Hon. Member, you cannot say that! Please, withdraw this word, because if you say that the hon. Ag. Prime Minister is misleading the House, you take your own responsibility.

Dr. Sorefan: I do withdraw. But Air Mauritius is suffering from beneficiaries. It comes from the PMO to give direction to Air Mauritius to do so. Air Mauritius is losing money; it has nothing to do with the internal affairs of Air Mauritius. My question is: who are the beneficiaries that make Air Mauritius lose about Rs150 m.?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I do not know if the figure that the hon. Member is quoting is right or wrong; I have no clue, Madam Speaker, but I will refer the hon. Member to a reply that the Prime Minister himself gave in the House, saying that, henceforth, he would not reply to questions relating to Air Mauritius as it is a listed company and, therefore, information, as the hon. Member may or may not know, the Stock Exchange has listing rules. These listing rules - he should refer to them - are very clear and say that information regarding a listed company should be provided in priority to the Stock Exchange and to the shareholders.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: Even if the hon. Prime Minister does not want to answer questions relating to past practice, can he tell the House at least whether this practice has been discontinued now?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I am not aware, Madam, whether this practice has been discontinued or not. I stand by the decision of the Prime Minister concerning that; questions coming from any quarters, whether it is from the Government side or from the Opposition side, Madam.

Mr Ganoo: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, if this is the case, is it not parliamentary practice if Government has decided to take that stand that such questions should not even be allowed to appear on the Order Paper?

Madam Speaker: Let me tell the hon. Member that I do not have any control on the reply of the Minister.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, if I may just enlighten the House. There are two questions concerning Air Mauritius today; this one concerning the practice of upgrading or not and another question concerning loans guaranteed by Government for Air Mauritius. That particular question, because it relates to public funds, is being responded to, but not this particular question. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: I have got a supplementary question on this, Madam.

Madam Speaker: I have already said next question!

NDU - PROJECTS – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/751) **Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the projects implemented by the National Development Unit since 2013 to date, he will state the number thereof in respect of which the contract has been awarded –

(a) through the emergency procurement method, indicating the number thereof which have been –

(i) completed as per the contractual terms and conditions, indicating in each case, the cost thereof, and

(ii) not completed as at to date, and

(b) without the approval of the Central Procurement Board, indicating the number thereof which have been –

(i) completed as per the contractual terms and conditions, indicating in each case the cost thereof, and

(ii) not completed as at to date.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the National Development Unit (NDU) that following the flash floods of 13 February 2013 and 30 March 2013 respectively affecting the northern regions of the country and the regions of Port Louis and Canal Dayot respectively, the NDU resorted to the emergency procurement method.

Madam Speaker, section 21 of the Public Procurement Act stipulates that -

“(1) A public body may purchase goods, other services or works from a single supplier without competition in cases of extreme urgency.

(2) The scope of the emergency procurement shall as far as possible be limited to the period of the emergency, so that appropriate competitive procurement methods may be utilised at the conclusion of the emergency period.”

I am tabling a list of 24 emergency projects that Cabinet approved on 15 and 22 February 2013, respectively.

I am also informed that under the emergency procurement method for the year 2013, an additional 45 projects were also awarded by the NDU to either (a) the NDU Zonal Contractors, (b) the Road Development Authority (RDA) Contractors, and (c) one particular construction company, namely Nawrang Co. Ltd.

The list of 69 projects that were to be implemented under the Emergency Procurement Method with the required information is also being tabled.

Out of these projects, Madam Speaker, it is to be noted that 6 were subsequently cancelled though Works Orders were issued. The reasons for same are, *inter alia*, unavailability of way leaves and complexity of projects.

Madam Speaker, as the House is aware, there is presently an ongoing inquiry by the CCID on this issue.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I know from the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether those additional contracts were approved by Cabinet and the Central Procurement Board, and whether the Minister concerned at that time asked for approval from the Minister of Finance?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam, I would like your guidance, do I respond with respect to Cabinet decisions on this issue?

Madam Speaker: Yes, next question, hon. Rutnah!

(Interruptions)

COURT CASE V O. G. – CONVICTION

(No. B/752) Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the recent Intermediate Court case of Police V O. G., following the death of one O. B., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the -

(a) initial charge lodged against the suspect, and

(b) outcome thereof.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that O. G. was first arrested on 18 May 2012 and provisionally charged for ‘Assault with premeditation’ for having wilfully and unlawfully inflicted wounds and blows upon the person of one O. B. She was bailed out on the same day.

Following the death of O. B. on 24 May 2012, O. G. was arrested anew and the provisional charge of ‘murder’ was lodged against her before the District Court of Pamplemousses. On 16 June 2012, she was released on bail.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that upon the completion of the enquiry, the case file was referred to the Director of

Public Prosecutions on 29 March 2013, and on 16 September 2013, the Director of Public Prosecutions advised prosecution of O. G. under the charge of ‘wounds and blows causing death without intention to kill’ in breach of section 228(1) and (3) of the Criminal Code.

Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Director of Public Prosecutions that on 01 October 2015 i.e. the day when the case came for trial before the Intermediate Court, the prosecution had moved to amend the information to provide for a charge of simple ‘assault’ in breach of section 230(1) of the Criminal Code since no causal nexus between the death of O. B. and the act of O. G. could be established with certainty on the basis of medical records and opinions communicated to the prosecution in May 2015. The cause of death of O. B. was septicaemia.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that O.G. pleaded guilty to the reduced charge to simple assault and the accused was convicted on 01 October 2015. On 08 October 2015, O. G. was sentenced to pay a fine of Rs2,000 and Rs500 as costs.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Rutnah!

Mr Rutnah: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In relation to the issue of causal nexus, is the Ag. Prime Minister aware that on 13 May 2012, the deceased made a statement to the Police and she said the following –

“Ça tifi Gokool là fine bate moi partou lor mo le corps...”

Madam Speaker: Hon. Member, please sit down! I don’t think you can quote the statement made by whoever. Please! Ask your question otherwise!

Mr Rutnah: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In relation to the causal nexus, is the Ag. Prime Minister aware that the deceased actually gave a statement wherein she stated very clearly that she was subject of an assault all over her body and, as a result of that, she was also pushed and actually fell in sugarcane...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Now, hon. Member, the Ag. Prime Minister will not be able to reply to your question because it is a question for the Commissioner of Police to carry out the enquiry and it is a matter for the Court to decide.

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker...

(Interruptions)

Is the Ag. Prime Minister aware that the deceased was told by the doctor that all her nerves could not work as a result of the...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Member, I am really sorry, I have to interrupt you because, here, we are not in a Court, we are in the National Assembly and the Ag. Prime Minister has given you his reply. On the basis of the reply, if you have got other clarifications, you can ask, but you cannot come to this House and make as if you are in Court and that you are cross-examining the Ag. Prime Minister! Please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, can the Ag. Prime Minister say whether the Police actually made proper enquiry as to the cause of the death itself?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I understand from the Ag. Commissioner of Police that according to his information, the injuries suffered by the victim were slight injuries. This is what I am informed.

As far as the rest is concerned, Madam Speaker, as far as the enquiry is concerned, as far as the decision of the Director of Public Prosecutions is concerned, Madam Speaker, these are totally independent bodies.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Jhugroo!

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION - LEGISLATION

(No. B/753) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Human Rights Commission, he will state if consideration will be given for the law in relation thereto to be amended to increase the powers thereof to investigate into alleged cases of miscarriage of justice.

(Withdrawn)

AIR MAURITIUS LTD. – LOANS

(No. B/754) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to Air Mauritius Ltd., he will state the number of loans guaranteed by Government thereto, indicating in each case, the –

- (a) quantum thereof;
- (b) date on which the loan was; guaranteed, and
- (c) terms and conditions of the guarantee.

(Withdrawn)

Madam Speaker: Next Question, hon. Jhugroo!

GOVERNMENT PUBLICITY - NEWSPAPERS

(No. B/755) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to Government publicity, he will give a list of the newspapers the services of which have been retained for the publication thereof, since July 2005 to December 2014, indicating in each case, the total amount of money paid out thereto.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am advised by the Attorney-General's Office that it would not be in order for me to provide the information called for by the hon. Member as disclosure of the information is likely to prejudice the outcome of a case against the State, which is pending before the Supreme Court.

ARSENAL - ALLEGED ARSON CASE

(No. B/756) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the alleged case of arson of the residence of one Mr I. B. of Jogeea Lane, in Arsenal, reported to the Terre Rouge Police Station, on or about 24 September 2015, which was thereafter referred to the Central Criminal Investigation Division, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand as to the inquiry carried out thereinto.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that so far, 6 persons have been arrested in relation to the alleged case of arson of the

residence of Mr I. B. at Arsenal. Two of them have been remanded to jail and four have been released on bail.

I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that, in view of the complexity of the investigation, the case has been taken over by the Central Criminal Investigation Division, and that enquiry is still ongoing.

Mr Mohamed: Is the hon. Ag. Prime Minister aware that it is following a programme on radio that the Commissioner of Police was approached by the victim and asked to transfer the matter from Terre Rouge CID and to send it over to Central CID. It was then that this matter was transferred over and it was only then that the Police started really looking into the matter with some *serieux*?

The Ag. Prime Minister: That may be so, Madam Speaker, but the information I have is because of the complexity. Obviously, Madam Speaker, there were reasons which motivated the Commissioner of Police to transfer the file to the CCID.

Mr Mohamed: Is the hon. Ag. Prime Minister aware that one of the persons who was arrested on 26 October - if I am not mistaken - was taken the very next day - when he had not even been taken to the Central CID since the case has been transferred to the Central CID - directly to the Bail and Remand Court, where a bail application has already been made and where the Police stood up instead of objecting to bail for a case as serious as giving instruction to commit a crime, the crime of arson, when there are witnesses who have given declaration against him...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Again, hon. Mohamed, let me tell you something. The hon. Member can ask his question directly in relation to the main question which has been asked, but he cannot go into the complexity of the matter. The Minister will not have all the information.

Mr Mohamed: I understand what you are saying, but this has nothing to do with the complexity. Could the hon. Ag. Prime Minister tell us or find out from the Commissioner of Police why is it that the Police did not stand up and object to bail in this matter when a statement itself had not even been recorded?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I will pass on this request to the Commissioner of Police, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Next Question, hon. Mohamed!

QUARTIER MILITAIRE POLICE STATION

- POLICE OFFICERS - TRANSFER

(No. B/757) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Quartier Militaire Police Station, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of Police Officers who, since December 2014 to date, have been transferred –

- (a) therefrom and
- (b) thereto, indicating in each case, the
 - (i) grade of the officer transferred and
 - (ii) reasons for the transfer.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, as regards part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, as from 01 December 2014 to date, 43 Police Officers have been transferred at various points in time from Quartier Militaire Police Station as follows -

Chief Inspector	1
Inspector	1
Sub-Inspector	1
Woman Sub-Inspector	1
Sergeant	9
Corporal	4
Police Constable	18
Trainee Police Constable	1
Woman Police Constable	6
Trainee Woman Police Constable	1

Madam Speaker, likewise during the same period, 37 Police Officers have been posted thereat as follows –

Chief Inspector	1
Inspector	1
Woman Sub-Inspector	1
Sergeant	9
Police Constable	15
Trainee Police Constable	4
Woman Police Constable	5
Trainee Woman Police Constable	1

Madam Speaker, it is to be noted that, for the time being, Quartier Militaire Police Station is operating with a contingent which is above the authorised staffing.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that transfer and posting of Police Officers are the sole prerogative of the Commissioner of Police and these are carried out in the best interest of the Force coupled with the exigencies of the service whilst ensuring a quality service delivery.

Indeed transfer in the Police Force is a usual feature which contributes to increasing the officers' experience by exposing them to different work environment.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please! Hon. Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Recently we have all talked about Quartier Militaire Police Station, the population has seen the ability of certain Police officers to - I do not know how to call it, some people called it belly dance. So, some people have seen the whole belly dancing on YouTube...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Member, ask your question!

Mr Mohamed: It has gone viral.

Madam Speaker: Put your question!

Mr Mohamed: Are those five Police officers – if I am not mistaken – concerned since they were transferred and brought there at the beginning of the year, have they been transferred away from that Police station, and if they have been transferred, is the hon. Ag. Prime Minister aware where they have been transferred to?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am aware that all five have been transferred and that there has been a Police inquiry into this matter. The inquiry is complete and there will be disciplinary procedures against all five; where they have been transferred exactly, I do not know.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the Ag. Prime Minister confirm to the House whether in the past with regard to the briani case of Quatre Bornes, Police officers...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, please! This question is totally irrelevant.

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Mohamed: Could the Ag. Prime Minister ...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: If he is going to do that, I am going to run!

(Interruptions)

Could the hon. Ag. Prime Minister state, since I understand that they were transferred as a punitive measure, if it is because of their ability to belly dance that they were transferred to Plaine Verte and Vallée Pitot?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am sure that the hon. Member is a best judge of that.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ramful!

POLICE – CRIME STATISTICS

(No. B/758) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to criminal offences, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if the

Mauritius Police Force regularly compiles statistics in respect thereof and, if so, indicate the figures of the latest exercise carried out in relation thereto, region-wise, further indicating –

- (a) if an analysis of the said figures has been carried out to establish the regions where there has been a rise in the number of cases thereof, and
- (b) the remedial actions envisaged in the light of the findings thereof.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that data in regard to criminal offences are compiled at the level of Police Stations and Units on a daily basis, and forwarded to the Police Information and Operations Room. After compilation of the figures provided by the Police Stations and Units, the Police Crime Record Office prepares monthly reports by type of offences and region-wise. I am tabling the information regarding latest figures compiled region-wise for September last.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that crime statistics and data are analysed in detail on a daily basis by a specially constituted Team, comprising specialists from all branches of the Mauritius Police Force, led by the Commissioner of Police himself. The team has a daily monitoring meeting during which crime data are analysed on the basis of timing of criminal activities, specific locations and regions where criminal activities are being carried out as well as the modus operandi used by the offenders. This in-depth analysis enables Police to identify hot spots and crime prone areas.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, in the light of data analysis carried out, strategies are formulated as to immediate actions to be taken on the ground by Divisional Commanders. In the event a rise in crime rate is observed in a specific region, the following actions are taken by the Police -

- (i) increase in mobile and foot patrol;
- (ii) intensification of stop and search;
- (iii) crackdown operations;
- (iv) public awareness campaign;
- (v) pooling of resources from Divisional Supporting Unit and other station areas;
- (vi) intelligence led operations.

According to the Commissioner of Police, based on the assessment of crime data, a special operation known as “Make Safe” was launched in the months of September and October 2015, aimed at improving safety of citizens be it in their houses, in public places or

on roads. The operations were carried out island-wide, one region at a time. During the operation, a total of 1387 contraventions were established for different offences, 3 arrests were made, and one motorcycle was recovered within a period of seven days.

I am further informed that the Commissioner of Police holds a periodic meeting known as the “Force Strategic Guidance Review” with all Deputy Commissioners of Police and Branch Officers to evaluate the effectiveness of special operations carried out, and further discussion on remedial actions to be taken.

Mr Ramful: As regards the Southern Division which consists of localities like Rose-Belle and Mahebourg, I am informed by their inhabitants that there has been recently an increase in the number of crimes specially involving larceny by breaking. Can the hon. Ag. Prime Minister confirm this fact and can I request him to ensure that there are stop and search controls regularly in strategic places?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Yes, Madam Speaker. In fact, if I can give the information – the hon. Member is talking about the Southern Division. Southern Division crimes, Madam Speaker, in July were 46; misdemeanours: 374; drug cases: nil. In August, crimes: 52; misdemeanours: 447, and in September, crimes: 51; misdemeanours: 444. So, there has been a slight increase, but I understand from the Commissioner of Police that the October ‘Make Safe Operation’ was successful all around the country.

Mr Jhugroo: Will the Ag. Prime Minister confirm to the House that with the arrival of the new Commissioner of Police, we have got many crackdown operations and Police Officers are used more diligently than previously when we have seen Police Officers posted in every 100 metres whenever the former Prime Minister was leaving or coming from foreign trips?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, personally, I think Police Officers need to be used where they are more effective.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Sesungkur.

FOREIGN NATIONALS - VISA/ PERMANENT RESIDENCE PERMIT

(No. B/759) Mr D. Sesungkur (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to immigration, he will state –

(a) over the period 2005 to 31 December 2014, the number -

- (i) of foreign nationals who have been granted a visa for a period exceeding 5 years or permanent residence, indicating in each case, the main reason/s and purpose/s of the stay, and
 - (ii) application for the issue of a visa/ permanent residence permit which have been rejected, and
- (b) the assessment of Government of the policy in relation thereto.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, foreign nationals who come to Mauritius for short stay for the purposes of visit or business are granted a visa or entry permit. Those who come to reside in the country for a longer period for work and/or residence purposes are granted either a Residence Permit, an Occupation Permit or a Permanent Residence Permit in accordance with relevant sections of the Immigration Act.

The following categories of persons are, subject to terms and conditions, eligible for long-term residence permits -

- (i) holders of Permanent Residence Permit for 10 years;
- (ii) non-citizens who have acquired a residential property under the Integrated Resorts Scheme (IRS) and Real Estate Scheme (RES) until such time they hold the residential property, and
- (iii) non-residents who have contracted civil marriage with a citizen of Mauritius are granted a Residence Permit for an indefinite period.

The spouse, children and dependents of holders of permits referred to are also eligible for a Residence Permit for the corresponding period.

In regard to part (a)(i) of the question, the breakdown of the different permits issued for a period of above five years under approved schemes over the period January 2005 to December 2014 are as follows -

<input type="checkbox"/>	Permanent Residence Permit for 10 years	179
<input type="checkbox"/>	Residence Permit under IRS/ RES	2,260
<input type="checkbox"/>	Foreign spouses of citizens of Mauritius	5,239

Permanent Residence status have also been granted to 72 foreigners under the defunct Permanent Residence Scheme and a Scheme to Attract Professionals in Emerging Sectors (SAPES) which were revoked with effect from 01 October 2006.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (a) (ii) of the question, 19 applications for Permanent Residence Permits for 10 years have been turned down since its operation in 2012 up to 31 December 2014.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that Government is currently in the process of reviewing the various schemes governing the issue of Residence Permits to foreign nationals.

Mr Sesungkur: Is the hon. Ag. Prime Minister in a position to give us some figures - if he has - regarding the estimated permits that would be given with the implementation of the Smart City Scheme?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I don't have these figures, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: You don't have any supplementary questions on this one. So, next question!

DRUGS & ALCOHOL-RELATED OFFENCES – LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

(No. B/760) Mr D. Sesungkur (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to hard drugs and alcohol-related offences, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of males and females in the 10-12 , 13-16 and 17-18 years age group respectively against whom legal proceedings have been initiated, over the period January 2013 to date, indicating the number thereof having been found guilty and sentenced to immediate custody.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am tabling the required information pertaining to the number of males and females in the age bracket of 10 to 12, 13 to 16 and 17 to 18 years age groups against whom legal proceedings for hard drugs and alcohol-related offences have been initiated over the period January 2013 to date.

According to records available at the Rehabilitation Youth Centre falling under the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions no one has been sentenced to immediate custody in respect to hard drugs or alcohol-related offences.

Mr Sesungkur: Can the hon. Ag. Prime Minister say what assessment he makes about this situation?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Again, Madam Speaker, as you will note from the figures which we are tabling, there has been an increase in these offences over the last two to three years, Madam Speaker and this is, I am sure, something that the Commissioner of Police as well as the Minister for Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare are well aware of and remedial measures are being envisaged.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Ag. Prime Minister consider asking the Commissioner of Police whether he can send Police Officers - in civil, not wearing Police uniforms - in discotheques all over the island to go and see whether these drugs are being ...

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the presence of minors in discotheques is a disturbing issue. I have raised it, myself, with the Tourism Authority and the Commissioner of Police and I will pass on this request to the Commissioner of Police.

Madam Speaker: At the beginning of Prime Minister's Question Time, I stated that PQ No. B/754 was to be replied by the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development. I have now been informed that PQ No. B/754 has been withdrawn.

Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ No. B/770, in regard to the Construction of another football ground at Le Morne Village and addressed to the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports, will be replied by Dr. the hon. Minister of Local Government. PQ No. B/776, in regard to risks of landslide in the region of Vallée Pitot and addressed to the hon. Minister of Environment, will be replied by the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport. PQ No. B/777, in regard to the Civil Service Family Protection Scheme Act and addressed to the hon. Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, will be replied by the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development. PQ No. B/803, in regard to the proposed development project of the Port Louis harbour and addressed to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development, will be replied by the hon. Ag. Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications. PQ Nos B/783 and B/808 have been withdrawn. I am now being informed that PQ No. B/761 has been withdrawn. Next question, hon. Quirin!

SPORTS COMPLEXES & FOOTBALL GROUNDS - FEES

(No. B/761) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the sports complexes and football grounds managed by the local authorities, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain

from the local authorities, information as to if the utilization thereof by local clubs and by individuals is free of charge and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS - ADVISERS/COACHES

(No. B/762) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the advisers/coaches attached to his Ministry, he will give a list thereof, discipline-wise, indicating in each case, the terms and conditions of appointment thereof.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, I am circulating the information regarding advisers/coaches attached to my Ministry along with their respective discipline and also the terms and conditions of their appointment.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, je remercie le ministre de bien vouloir déposer les informations requises, mais, cependant, j'aimerais qu'il nous indique quelles sont les conditions d'emploi de ces *advisers/coaches*?

Mr Sawmynaden: Actually, all of them have got different terms and conditions of employment. It is in the list, the hon. Member will find it there.

Mr Quirin: L'honorable ministre peut-il nous dire si le contrat de ces *advisers/coaches* peut être résilié à n'importe quel moment?

Mr Sawmynaden: Actually, for some of them, their contracts have already expired and they have been retained on a month-to-month basis with a view of close monitoring and assessment of their performance. Most of them, within one month notice, as prescribed by the law, we can stop their contracts.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Quirin !

Mr Quirin : Peut-on savoir, Madame la présidente, si un adviser/coach qui a, quinze à vingt années de service, prend sa retraite, au moment de sa retraite est-ce qu'il bénéficie d'une compensation ou d'une pension?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, they are not employed by the Government. They are on contract. I think if the hon. Member can come with a question on that, then we can reply.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, une dernière question. L'honorable ministre ne trouve-t-il pas que c'est inhumain? Je sais qu'il vient de me dire de venir avec une autre question, mais je pense que la question supplémentaire a sa raison d'être. Quelqu'un qui a été au service du sport pendant de longues années, ne trouve-t-il pas que c'est inhumain que cette personne qui a donné toute sa vie, toute sa carrière professionnelle passée au service du sport et quand cette personne se retire, elle se retrouve sans rien, aucune compensation ou aucune pension?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned, I will have the answer to this question with another question from the hon. Member, I will be more than happy to reply.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Quirin !

MAURITIUS GYMNASTIC FEDERATION – INQUIRY

(No. B/763) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Mauritius Gymnastic Federation, he will state –

- (a) if it is recognized by his Ministry, and
- (b) the findings of the inquiry carried out by his Ministry thereinto, earlier this year, indicating the actions taken in relation thereto, if any.

Mr Sawmynaden : Madam Speaker, I have to inform the House that in March 2014, the Mauritius Gymnastic Federation was granted derogation by my predecessor to operate in six sports regions with a total of five clubs for an initial period of one year. The derogation was conditional to the Federation undertaking to expand the sports in all the regions and also to ensure to have the required number of clubs in each region during the one-year period.

In March 2015, it was noted that the Federation had not made any effort to comply with the conditions of the derogation and was requested to submit written explanation as to why it has not fulfilled the terms of the derogation. The Federation did not submit any explanation to my Ministry within the requested time. The Ministry had, therefore, no alternative than to suspend its recognition as per section 11 (6) (b) of the Sports Act 2013 for non compliance

with sections 12 1 (a) and 12 2 (a) of the Act regarding the number of regions and sports clubs enrolled within it.

As regards part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the Federation has lodged a case in the Supreme Court against the decision of the Ministry to suspend its recognition. As the case is still before the Supreme Court, the House will appreciate that it will not be appropriate for me to comment further on the matter.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, je comprends la position de l'honorable ministre mais j'aimerais qu'il nous dise cependant ce qui est advenu de la demande de conciliation qu'avait faite le *Curepipe Super Sports Club* devant l'*Ombudsperson for Sports* et qui date du 17 février dernier? Il y avait une demande de conciliation.

Mr Sawmynaden: There was a demand, but then they have lodged a case in front of the Supreme Court. So, now I don't think that it is appropriate for us to reply.

Madam Speaker: Yes, next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

SALE BY LEVY SOLIDARITY FUND - BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/764) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Sale by Levy Solidarity Fund of Rs100 m, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, a breakdown of the funds disbursed therefrom, as at to date, indicating in each case, the names of the beneficiaries thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): With your permission, Madam Speaker, I shall reply to that question. The information requested is being tabled. I have to add that the Sale by Levy Solidarity Fund which was created in 2007 is no longer operational.

Follow up arising out of cases dealt by the Fund are being handled by the National Solidarity Fund.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Vice Prime Minister if Government proposes to bring amendments to the Borrowers' Protection Act?

Mr Collendavello: Well, I am sure that if a proper question is put, we shall see after discussions.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: May I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister what is the total value that has been disbursed out of this Rs100 m. that has been earmarked?

Mr Collendavello: Well, the figures are on the paper which I am tabling. You just need to do the addition, some Rs15 m. approximately.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker, I realise that the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is not the substantive Minister, but the hon. Vice Prime Minister just mentioned that the Fund is no longer in existence and cases are being dealt with by the National Solidarity Fund; so, may I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether the same criteria that has been used under the Sale by Levy Solidarity Fund is being used by the National Solidarity Fund or no consideration at all is being given to victims of Sale by Levy?

Mr Collendavello: First of all, the exact figure is Rs15.7 m., not far from my first guess. To answer the question by my hon. friend: financial assistance of up to Rs500,000 per beneficiary was provided. This measure was restricted to cases occurring in financial years 2007-2008, 2008-2009. Now, no new cases are being dealt by the NSF. Let me just see that! But the National Solidarity Fund is currently paying five beneficiaries, old age persons a monthly rental of Rs1,250 subject to the presentation of a life certificate every three months.

Mr Ganoo: I know the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is not the substantive Minister of Finance, but in his Budget Speech, the hon. Minister of Finance announced that an enquiry would be set up in the case of Sale by Levy. Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House whether the whole process has started?

Mr Collendavello: The Committee currently set up is going to be requested to look into the advisability of revamping the Sale by Levy Solidarity Fund.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

DOMAINE LES PAILLES LTD – LARCENY CASES

(No. B/765) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Domaine Les Pailles Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Investment Corporation Ltd., information as to the number of reported cases of larceny having occurred thereat, since January 2015 to date, indicating the additional measures that have been or will be taken to reinforce the security of the premises thereof and of the assets thereat.

(Interruptions)

Mr Collendavelloo: You can bring information if you want!

Madam Speaker: Please, I said no cross-talking!

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Madam Speaker, I am informed by the State Investment Corporation as follows -

- for the period January 2015 to date, three cases of larceny have occurred and have been reported to the Police for enquiry;
- two cases were reported on 22 August and 25 August 2015 respectively which relate to the Alambic Rum Distillery at *Domaine Les Pailles* Ltd;
- the third one which relates to the theft of 20 metres of electric cables, was reported on 08 September 2015;
- these cases occurred at a time when the security services were outsourced following the cessation of business of *Domaine Les Pailles* in July 2015;
- the contract of the security company was terminated with immediate effect;
- the security services at *Domaine Les Pailles* are now being assured by an internal team constituted by State Investment Corporation Ltd.

Mr Ameer Meea: According to information made public in the press, a whole distillery was being stolen. It is like a very, very big machine. Can I ask the hon. Minister if he has an idea where this has landed....

(Interruptions)

...if this has landed in the factory of *vié ferailles* and also, if this distillery was insured and what has been the outcome with the insurance company, if any claim has been made thereof?

Mr Collendavelloo: I don't think that the whole thing was removed in one day.

(Interruptions)

What I understand is that on 22 August, there were some distillery items including red copper pipes estimated at Rs200,000. On 25 August, that is, three days later, further distillery items were stolen. The value stolen is unknown. There is no idea as to where they have landed, and no further information is available. There has been also a theft of 22 metres of electric cables. With regard to the insurance, I am afraid I do not have the information.

Mr Ganoo: It is good that the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is informing the House that the value of this object is Rs200,000, from the information in his file. But can he tell the House who has ascribed this value to this *pièce d'antiquité*?

Mr Collendavelloo: This was given by the declarant, that is, the ex-Estate Management of Domaine Les Pailles, when he reported it to the Police. He reported Rs200,000 for the first theft, the second one was value stolen unknown. For the 20 metres of electric cables, the value was estimated at Rs2,000.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

FREE WIFI HOTSPOTS PROJECT - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/766) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms, Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the proposed Free WIFI Hotspots Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Telecom, information as to where matters stand as to the implementation thereof, indicating –

- (a) the proposed locations that have been identified therefor, and
- (b) if it will be funded under the Corporate Social Responsibility of the company.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr E. Sinatambou): Madam Speaker, with your permission, I shall reply to both

Parliamentary Question B/766, asked by the hon. Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East, and to Parliamentary Question B/778, asked by the hon. First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East, as they both relate to the same issue, that is, access to internet and installation of WIFI Hotspots.

Madam Speaker, as regards the installation of WIFI Hotspots across the island, I am informed by Mauritius Telecom that the implementation is in progress and that the project is expected to go live in early 2016. Presently, Mauritius Telecom is finalising the evaluation of equipment. The sites which have been identified for provision of the free WIFI Hotspots include community centres, elderly day care centres, social welfare centres, municipal councils, district councils, youth centres, women centres, post offices and village halls. This project is funded under the Corporate Social Responsibility of Mauritius Telecom. I am also informed that Mauritius Telecom is currently offering free WIFI service in its Orange Shops and at the Bagatelle Shopping Mall.

As regards households having been given access to high-speed internet service, I am informed that Mauritius Telecom has already connected more than 160,000 households to high-speed internet services. This is over and above the customer base of 402,499, as at September 2015, who can access high-speed internet while being mobile, namely through mobile phones, tablets and laptops.

By the end of 2018, it is expected that all the households in Mauritius will have the possibility of being connected to high-speed internet through fibre by Mauritius Telecom.

Mauritius Telecom has also undertaken a number of actions to make high-speed internet more affordable to all Mauritians.

Firstly, I am informed that, in July 2015, Mauritius Telecom has introduced a high-speed internet package at Rs499 VAT inclusive, thereby offering high-speed internet at the cheapest price in the African region.

Secondly, since 01 June 2015, customers of Mauritius Telecom who subscribe to the ADSL internet service have benefitted from a 30% decrease of the internet tariff, which has dropped from Rs699 VAT inclusive per month to Rs499 VAT inclusive.

Thirdly, between January and October 2015, Mauritius Telecom has also migrated, free of charge, about 50,000 households from the traditional copper network to a new fibre network. The internet speed of these customers has been upgraded by up to 10 times without any additional charge on their monthly rental.

Finally, Madam Speaker, Mauritius Telecom has, since 01 September 2015, reduced the price of high-speed connectivity offers to the BPO industry by an average of more than 65%, thereby positioning Mauritius as one of the cheapest BPO destinations in the world. At least, so am I informed.

Mr Bérenger: I think I heard the hon. Minister confirm that this WIFI Hotspots Project is being financed by Mauritius Telecom through its Corporate Social Responsibility. Madam Speaker, being given that, under the Income Tax Act, the companies have to submit to the MRA details of all CSR projects and the MRA approves or does not approve these projects, can I know whether that idea of the CSR of Mauritius Telecom financing the free WIFI Hotspots has been approved by the MRA and, if yes, whether we can have a copy of the authorisation from the MRA and what sum we are talking about?

Mr Sinatambou: Well, the hon. Leader of the Opposition will appreciate that, firstly, I am not the substantive Minister. Secondly, I certainly can confirm that, from information given, I have been told that this is going to be financed from the Corporate Social Responsibility of the company. But, thirdly, I would suggest that the hon. Leader of the Opposition comes with a substantive question on the issue of taxability and approval.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, this measure was in the electoral manifesto of *l'Alliance Lepep* and it was set as a priority for the first three months of the Government. Now, we heard that this measure will come into practice next year, in 2016. May I know why this is taking so long, and also what is the total amount that has been earmarked for this project, which was supposed to be financed by the Government, but now financed by the Mauritius Telecom?

Mr Sinatambou: I must say, Madam Speaker, I put the exact same question to the people responsible and the reply I have obtained is as follows –

First of all, Mauritius Telecom has had to test several types of equipment that fit the purpose.

Secondly, after pilot testing of the equipment, Mauritius Telecom has had to go through a tendering process for procurement of the equipment.

Thirdly, at this stage, that is, early November 2015, the tender evaluation is ongoing.

And finally, the free WIFI deployment, as I said just before, is expected to go live early 2016.

(Interruptions)

I don't have that reply at this stage.

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, I do understand that the hon. Minister is not the substantive Minister albeit he was once upon a time, I do recall, Minister of Information and Communication Technology. Based on that previous experience, I gather it will be easy for him to answer. I have heard him say with regard to WIFI spots, community centres, elderly people centres and municipal councils. Those are all places that he is making mention of that had already being taken care of by the previous Government. What is he doing which would be new; something innovative? Does this Ministry intend to innovate or does it intend to just basically state what the previous Government has already done?

Mr Sinatambou: Well, quite surely, if we speak of WIFI Hotspots, my understanding is that people using all the apparatus around or in those various locations will be able to actually manipulate their apparatus and have access to the internet free of charge. Before, you would have to go through the ADSL and get connected. For me, what is important is that - I did state earlier in the reply - by the end of 2018, it is expected ...

(Interruptions)

I know something. Madam Speaker, I cannot be interrupted by someone who has...

Madam Speaker: Please, address the Chair! Address the Chair and make your reply!

Mr Sinatambou: I would appreciate if I were not interrupted unduly by the hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, I have asked you to proceed with your reply, please!

Mr Sinatambou: What I am told is that, under the last Government, only Municipalities had actually initiated WIFI Hotspots; that's what I know.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Could the hon. Minister, at least, tell us what will be the high-speed connectivity at those new places that would really be something innovative? Madam Speaker, it is easy to say high-speed but, what would be the speed?

(Interruptions)

Mr Sinatambou: Let me say that...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Sinatambou: ... the information that I have is that if it is actually copper wire, it is going to be 512Kb and if it is actually optical fibre it is going to be 10Mb. For someone who does not know anything, I hope they will appreciate.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Last one on the same issue...

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: If you insist, No. B/767.

INDEPENDENT BROADCASTING AUTHORITY – APPOINTMENTS & COMPLAINTS

(No. B/767) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms, Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the Independent Broadcasting Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the -

- (a) names and terms and conditions of appointment of the Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson thereof respectively, and
- (b) number of complaints received thereat, since January 2015 to date, indicating in each case, the outcome thereof.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr E. Sinatambou): Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) became operational in 2001 under a Government led by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth. Its objectives are, *inter alia*, to -

- (i) ensure that licensees include, in their services, regular locally produced programmes;
- (ii) set acceptable standards for programmes and advertising and monitor compliance with those standards, and
- (iii) ensure that broadcasting services are impartial and accurate.

It also has among its objects a duty to inquire into public complaints against a licensee and take any action it thinks appropriate.

As regards part (a) of the question, there is presently no Chief Executive Officer since the demise of the former Director, Mr Dulliparsad Suraj Bali on 15 December 2014. The latter was drawing a total salary in excess of Rs170,000 per month plus 21 days refundable annual leave every year, two months' gratuity and full duty free for a 1600 c.c. car.

With regard to the current Chairperson of the IBA, the incumbent is Mrs Washeelah Youshreen Choomka. She was appointed for a period of three years on 30 April 2015 by the President of the Republic, in accordance with section 6 (a) of the Independent Broadcasting Act 2000. The Chairperson is earning a monthly allowance of Rs50,000. She is also entitled to a travelling allowance of Rs10,000 and a refund of telephone expenses of Rs2,000 monthly. Of course, Madam Speaker, all the payments mentioned are before tax.

I wish to inform the House that the post of Director of the IBA has been advertised since 26 October 2015 and I am tabling a copy of the advert.

As regards part (b) of the Question, I am informed that since January 2015 to date, ten complaints have been received at the IBA. As a comparison, Madam Speaker, for the year 2013 there were twelve complaints and for the year 2014 there were eight complaints. I am tabling the list of complaints for 2015 together with their outcome or their current status.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, I did not hear the hon. Minister about the outcome of the Complaints Committee.

Mr Sinatambou: I just said, Madam Speaker, that I am tabling the list of complaints for 2015 together with their outcome or their current status if they have not yet reached an outcome.

Mr Ameer Meea: What is the reason that it took almost a year to advertise for the post of Director of the IBA? Was it because a Parliamentary question was being asked? Because it is a coincidence...

Madam Speaker: Don't make any comment! Please, ask your question!

(Interruptions)

Mr Sinatambou: I have no idea. But what I am sure of is that this Government does not need to have Parliamentary questions from the other side to do its work!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Under the IBA Act there are certain qualifications that are required before someone can be appointed to the Board. May I know from the hon. Minister - this Chairperson that he has mentioned - how many years at the Bar, as a barrister, does she have before she has been appointed as Chairperson of this very important institution?

Mr Sinatambou: I have no idea of the number of years of the Chairperson at the Bar but, there are a few things I know. *Premièrement, on dit que la valeur n'attend pas le poids des années...*

(Interruptions)

Secondly, I know of many people with many years at the Bar who are still not able to do work properly. So, I don't think that this is pertinent to her appointment as Chairperson.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: I suspend the sitting for one and a half hours.

At 1.03 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.36 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Leopold!

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

(No. B/768) Mr J. Leopold (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the problem of violence in the family, she will state the identified common causes thereof according to her Ministry, indicating –

- (a) if weaknesses susceptible of jeopardizing the prevention thereof have been identified in the policy of her Ministry in addressing same;
- (b) the scale and severity thereof in Mauritius, and
- (c) the remedial measures that will be taken in relation thereto.

Mrs Perraud: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to inform the House that according to cases reported by victims of domestic violence at my Ministry, the underlying causes of domestic violence, whether in the form of isolated acts or systematic patterns of violence, is a combination of several factors, the most common ones being conflicts between partners, absence and lack of communication, extra-marital affairs, conflicts over finance, interference of in-laws, and substance abuse, amongst others.

With a view to addressing the problem, my Ministry has adopted a two-pronged approach, namely intervention and prevention. As regards the intervention aspects, an integrated service is provided through the 6 Family Support Bureaux of my Ministry where psychological counselling, assistance to victims at Court, legal advice and legal representations at Court and counselling to perpetrators, amongst others are provided.

Insofar as prevention is concerned, awareness raising campaigns are carried out throughout the year, to sensitise various segments of the population on the magnitude of the problem and the ways of addressing it. These sensitisation campaigns are held in collaboration with various stakeholders, namely the Police, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, religious organisations and NGOs such as NATReSA, the *Centre Idriss Goomany*, and the Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association, amongst others.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards weaknesses in policies that may jeopardise the prevention of domestic violence, I wish to inform the House that the Report of the Advisory Committee on Reinforcement of Framework for Protection from Domestic Violence, which I will call the Domingue Report, has identified a series of issues that may impede our efforts in curbing domestic violence. These include, among others –

- (i) the definition given to the concept of domestic violence is too narrow and does not capture all forms of domestic violence;

- (ii) not all acts of domestic violence are criminalised, e.g., our law does not capture psychological harm and economic abuse as offences and do not provide sufficiently for aggravating circumstances;
- (iii) the criminal justice response is not very effective and specialised expertise for handling of such cases is lacking;
- (iv) the protection given to victims is somewhat deficient and the risk of re-victimisation is rather high;
- (v) redress and reparation for victims is lacking;
- (vi) the monitoring and evaluation system is not strong enough to deliver the appropriate response to this societal problem, and
- (vii) lack of multi-sectoral approach and commitment from stakeholders in providing both intervention and prevention strategies.

Insofar as the scale and severity of the problem, I would like to inform the House that for the years 2014 and 2015 (from January to September) a total number of 3,571 and 2,604 cases were registered respectively through the 6 Family Support Bureaux of my Ministry.

Moreover, figures available from the Annual Report of the Judiciary for the year 2014 indicate the following –

**Cases under the Protection from Domestic Violence Act 1997 at
the District Courts - 2011-2014**

2011	1612 cases
2012	1544 cases
2013	1805 cases
2014	1895 cases

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the face of this “*fléau social*”, my Ministry has put in place various programmes and projects pertaining to family welfare, namely –

- (a) strengthening values for family life;
- (b) shared faith belief;
- (c) pre-marital counselling;
- (d) marriage enrichment;
- (e) inter-generation relationship;
- (f) zero tolerance clubs;
- (g) victim empowerment and abuser rehabilitation, and

(h) Domestic Violence Information System.

Additionally, following consultations with stakeholders, my Ministry has already initiated actions to implement recommendations of the Domingue Report and to bring further amendments to the Protection from Domestic Violence Act. My Ministry is also reinforcing its structures for the protective and support services to victims of family violence. In addition, my Ministry will set up a Coordinating Body to monitor implementation of multi-sectoral collaboration and recommend policy measures to address family violence.

Moreover, in an endeavour to safeguard the families whose members have to oscillate between their family and professional commitments, my Ministry is in the process of developing a Balancing Work and Family Life Programme.

The issue of violence in the family ranks high on the agenda of this Government. In this context, as announced in the Government Programme 2015-2019, a National Coalition against Domestic Violence Committee has been set up under the aegis of the Prime Minister's office. Various meetings have been held and the report thereof is in the process of finalisation. Once approved, the recommendations will be implemented by various stakeholders to address this issue.

I also wish to inform the House that the most recent study on the extent, nature and cost of domestic violence to the Mauritian economy dates back to 2010. However, given the new trends and challenges being faced by the Mauritian families ...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, I am sorry to interrupt. Will your answer be much longer?

Mrs Perraud: No! My Ministry is in the process of seeking consultancy services to conduct a fresh study to assess the well-being of families in the Republic of Mauritius. That in-depth study will, *inter alia*, identify weaknesses susceptible to jeopardise the prevention of violence in the family and will also indicate the scale and severity of the problem. The study will enable reinforcement and consolidation of policy measures with the collaboration of all concerned stakeholders.

Thank you.

Mr Leopold: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Minister agree with me that women and children are the most vulnerable victims when it comes to family violence? On top of that, they are the ones who will need to get out of their house and they become homeless and they go to refuge. Will the hon. Minister inform the House whether she is coming with new legislation so as to toughen the law and to protect all those victims and to make their perpetrators get out of their house instead of the women and children, so that the

women and the children stay in their house and the perpetrators get out so that the children and the women do not get homeless?

Mrs Perraud: Yes, in line with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the report on Reinforcement of Framework for Protection from Domestic Violence, initiatives are being taken to bring further amendments in the PDVA and amendment in the Criminal Code.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in terms of remedial measures as suggested in the question, the hon. Minister has talked about sensitisation of the perpetrators of the violence, may I ask the hon. Minister if she would consider, when revising the law, what takes place in other countries, for example, in the United States that whenever a Protection Order is issued, the husband is formally ordered to also attend classes and courses of *sensibilisation* which can yield positive results?

Mrs Perraud: When we will work on the amendments, we will take this on board.

The Deputy Speaker: Next Question, hon. Jhuboo!

ST BRANDON ISLANDS - FISHING LICENCES

(No. B/769) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the St Brandon Islands, he will state the -

- (a) number of fishing licences granted therefor, indicating the names of the companies granted therewith;
- (b) status of the fish reserves thereat, and
- (c) policy of Government in relation to the fragile eco-system prevailing thereat, indicating the measures taken for the preservation thereof, if any.

Mr Koonjoo: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, as regard to part (a) of the question, as at date 13 licenses have been issued to 7 companies, namely -

- i. Raphael Fishing Co Ltd;
- ii. Djasazee;
- iii. Babul and Sons Fishing Co Ltd;
- iv. Hassen Taher Seafoods Ltd;
- v. Med Fishing Cooperative Society Ltd;

- vi. Sea Lord Fishing Company, and
- vii. Ocean Catch Ltd.

With respect to part (b), there is, at present, no fishing reserve or fish reserve in the waters of St. Brandon.

With regard to part (c), the policy of this Government is the sustainable management of the fisheries resources and associated ecosystems.

In this context, the following measures are being adopted in St. Brandon -

- i. limited entry and licensing system are in place for all fishing operations;
- ii. allocation of catch quota to companies;
- iii. all fishing boats and vessels report to the Fisheries Monitoring Centre and the National Coast Guard through the Vessel Monitoring System;
- iv. all safety and security measures are undertaken by the vessel operator;
- v. use of selected gear for fishing activities in the inshore waters of St. Brandon, and
- vi. regular inspections are carried out by enforcement officers to ensure that all conditions specified in the fishing licence are adhered to.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a new Fisheries and Aquaculture Bill is being finalised, which will provide for better management of the ecosystem in the Maritime Zone of Mauritius including St. Brandon.

Furthermore, catching of marine turtles, mammals and berried lobsters in the waters of St. Brandon are not authorized. Besides, a ban on fishing of sea cucumbers is in place since 2009 and will be in operation till February 2016.

Additionally, visits to St. Brandon are restricted. A quota of 200 persons per year has been imposed in respect of foreign nationals, subject to clearance from the Prime Minister's Office.

Moreover, a set of conditions applies for pleasure craft operators and tourists in order to ensure least disruption of the ecosystem of the Island. These conditions, inter-alia, include

-

- a. avoidance of spillage of fuel and oil, and

b. prevention of damage to the plants and animals species found on the island.

Mr Bérenger: The question relates to St Brandon. Can I ask the hon. Minister, there was a problem concerning the lease, the present leaseholders had argued in Court that their lease was eternal, there was a dispute. Has this lease issue been settled?

Mr Koonjoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this has been amicably settled between the Government of Mauritius and the people who are asking for the lease.

Mr Bérenger: As far as sea cucumbers are concerned, can I know whether – because I am given to understand at one point that it had been completely exploited and therefore a ban was put by the previous Government - the ban has been enforced? Is it still enforced and what is the situation? Has there been an improvement in the population of sea cucumbers?

Mr Koonjoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a ban on the sea cucumbers and I said it will last till February next year. The ban was imposed and the Leader of the Opposition is perfectly right to say that there was some *pillage* de sea cucumbers (barbaras) in those regions. The ban has been staying there. We are working on whether to lift up the ban completely or to lift up partially because there is a big demand for the sea cucumbers not only in Mauritius but all around the world. Its price is very high and it is very good for certain people – *sa pa pu toi sa, pu Navin sa!*

(Interruptions)

Yes, we are working upon that and we will come soon with whether we are going to lift completely the ban or partially. There was an abuse, but, for the time being, I can assure the House that everything is in order and perfect.

Mr Jhuboo: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and National Parks Bill was adopted a few weeks ago and mention was made that special reserves - an islet of utmost ecological importance would be created, protected and preserved. Does the hon. Minister think that it is high time that we come with a proper legislation to declare the archipelago of St Brandon as a Marine Protected Sanctuary?

Mr Koonjoo: I know there is some problem there Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and I have got news that there are places where the environment is very bad because of the mischief of some fishermen working there. I am planning, perhaps in a couple of weeks, to go there and see visually, as I went to Agaléga, how things stand and I can assure...

(Interruptions)

I am not taking the sea cucumbers as such!

We will see for ourselves how things stand and come back, and naturally we will take proper actions.

LE MORNE VILLAGE - FOOTBALL GROUND

(No. B/770) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to Le Morne Village, he will state if consideration is being given for the construction of another football ground to be provided with the necessary amenities and, if so, indicate the -

- (a) estimated cost thereof, and
- (b) expected start and completion dates thereof.

The Minister of Arts and Culture (Mr S. Baboo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with you permission, I shall reply to this question.

I am informed by the District Council of Black River that there is no football ground at Le Morne and one plot of land has temporarily been put at the disposal of the inhabitants of the region by Societé Sitnot Le Morne Brabant for use as a football ground.

I am further informed that a request was made in August 2009 by the Council to the Ministry of Housing and Lands for the vesting of a plot of State land at Le Morne for the construction of a football ground. Since the proposed football ground falls within the buffer zone of Le Morne Cultural Landscape whereat construction is not allowed according to the Planning Policy Guidance, the request was not favourably considered.

The Ministry has subsequently requested the Ministry of Housing and Lands to identify another plot of State land in the region of Le Morne for the construction of a football ground and it has been informed that a plot of State land of an approximate extent of 2A20 has been identified at La Prairie for this project. The Le Morne Heritage Fund, which has been consulted, has raised no objection to the site.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, once the procedures for the vesting of the plot of State land identified La Prairie would be finalized by the Ministry of Housing and Lands, after confirming that the site is suitable to be used as a football ground, the cost estimate would be worked out for the development of the plot of land into a football ground.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Rutnah!

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY – LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION – DOCUMENT LAID

(No. B/771) **Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the document tabled by the hon. Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly on 22 September 2015, purportedly being the Management Account of the Central Electricity Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, information as to if an inquiry has been carried out to ascertain the provenance thereof and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am informed by the CEB that its Board, after taking cognizance of a copy of the document which purported to be the Management Account of the CEB for the period January to May 2015, has directed that an enquiry be conducted. The Board of Enquiry has been set up and is investigating into the matter.

I am further informed that the CEB has also reported the matter to the Central CID.

Mr Rutnah: Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister state to the House whether at this stage of the enquiry, the hon. Leader of the Opposition's assistance or cooperation has been sought in order to further the enquiry?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Rutnah!

Mr Collendavelloo: I am not aware...

The Deputy Speaker: Let me just remind the hon. Member that the conduct or the character of a hon. Member of this Assembly, the hon. Leader of the Opposition cannot be questioned. It has to be brought through a motion.

Mr Rutnah: In due course, I will move with a motion.

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. On the same issue, I have been doing some reading recently and I have come across a very interesting piece of *ouvrage* - if I may call it that way - that talks of freedom of information and that was the electoral

manifesto of 'l'Alliance Lepep'. How does the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, therefore - that is what I would like to ask him - reconcile that he has gone to the Central CID as opposed to the freedom of information, proposal that he stood so proudly and took a photograph while presenting the electoral manifesto? So, how does he reconcile one with the other?

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Vice-Prime Minister, you don't have to answer. It is not relevant to the question!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Uteem!

PAILLES - TREATMENT PLANT PROJECT

(No. B/772) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Treatment Plant Project at Pailles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the –

- (a) costs thereof, indicating the amount of variation costs;
- (b) date on which it will become operational, and
- (c) if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member may wish to refer to my replies to PQ B/334 of 28 April 2015 and PQ B/147 of 03 March 2015 respectively.

With regard to part (a), I am informed by the Central Water Authority that the contract amount for the Pailles Water Treatment Plant is Rs725,814,684.41 inclusive of VAT. A Variation Order of Rs961,651.20 has been issued for laying of pipelines within the compound and will be met from contingencies and therefore within the approved contract amount.

As regard part (b), the Water Treatment Plant was supposed to have become operational in May 2015, but following structural defects, operations were suspended.

In June 2015, an independent expert, Aurecon from South Africa, appointed by the Central Water Authority, carried out an assessment and his recommendations have been implemented by the Contractor, at no additional cost.

I am informed that operations have resumed on 08 October with a daily production of 10,000 m³ and will operate at full capacity of 80,000 m³ by the end of this week.

I am also informed that the Central Water Authority Board has obtained legal advice on the findings of the independent expert with regard to prejudice caused to the CWA by the consultant and contractor and has decided to claim damages.

The Central Water Authority will submit the expert's report and the legal advice to the Procurement Policy Office.

Mr Uteem: May I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether advice has been sought from the State Law Office as to the action and quantum of damages to be claimed from the contractor and the consultant with respect to this project because that was reported in the press?

Mr Collendavelloo: Well, no. The State Law Office is not the legal advisor of the Central Water Authority. Its legal advisor is Mr Rishi Pursem, a Senior Counsel and he is the one who has given that legal advice, which I understand the Board is seriously attending to.

Mr Uteem: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister, in a press conference on 30 June, stated that he had referred the case for investigation by ICAC. That was in relation to the circumstances under which the contract was allocated; there was a tender, then it was annulled by IRP and then there was an emergency procurement. Answering to a question – I am reading from the press release – the hon. Vice Prime Minister is supposedly quoted as having stated that the matter has been referred to ICAC for enquiry. So, may I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether this is a correct statement of fact and what is the outcome of the enquiry?

Mr Collendavelloo: There is a distinction. I did not refer the matter to ICAC and I did not order any such reference, but the Ministry had, independently of me, referred the matter to ICAC and I don't know which date it was. I believe it could have been very earlier on these days, but I did not do so.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In reply to my question B/417 earlier this year, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister stated that when the work would have been completed - that was supposed to be in April of this year - water supply will move from 30,000 m³ per day to 80,000 m³ per day, and now we hear that it is 10,000 m³. Is that right? Way below what it was before on the one hand. And my second question, if I may, is the quality of the water had all jeopardised with what is going on right now?

Mr Collendavelloo: Two questions! First of all, yes it is true that originally the first gush of water was going to be 30,000 m³, but now after having seen these defects and the remedial defects, the technicians, I suppose, have felt it better to start with 10,000 m³, but the maximum of 80,000 m³ being reached later. As to the quality of the water, I understand that regular tests are being performed and nothing untoward has been reported to me up to now, but I shall certainly take this one up and try and ascertain from CWA whether they are following up with these water tests?

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The hon. Vice Prime Minister mentioned that action may be taken against the contractor and the consultant. Following the report of Aurecon, the South African expert which criticise the consultant, may I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister what is the total amount that has been paid to the Consultant on this project?

Mr Collendavelloo: If the hon. Member comes with a question, I will certainly be able to do this. I don't believe that this would be available immediately. I know it offhand, but I would not want to dare an answer now.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Uteem!

APOLLO BRAMWELL HOSPITAL - ACQUISITION

(No. B/773) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Apollo Bramwell Hospital, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the

—

(a) funds that have been used for the acquisition thereof;

(b) procedures that have been followed for the acquisition thereof;

(c) monthly income and expenditure thereof since the acquisition thereof to date,
and

(d) intended use thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Madam Speaker, with regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed that the Apollo Bramwell Hospital has not yet been acquired and accordingly there has been no transfer of funds.

The NIC Healthcare Ltd, a subsidiary of the National Insurance Co. Ltd, invited an Expression of Interest (EOI) on 11 September 2015 following which 25 submissions were received. Subsequently, all those who responded to the Expression of Interest were invited to submit their proposals. They were given the options to make an outright purchase, to enter into a management agreement or management contract/equity participation.

I am informed that at the closing date of 19 October 2015, 12 bidders have submitted their proposals. These proposals are currently being evaluated by the Transaction Adviser.

Regarding parts (c) and (d), the questions do not arise as the process of acquisition has not yet been completed.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I understand fully that the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is not the Minister in charge of this file. But, if I can refer the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to what was said in this House, on 01 September 2015, answering to a PNQ by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Minister Bhadain stated and I quote –

“I am informed by the FSC that the hospital operations and assets have been transferred to the National Insurance Co. Ltd. and NIC Healthcare Limited on 25 August 2015 by the Special Administrators.”

And now, is the hon. Vice-Prime Minister telling us that whatever hon. Minister Bhadain stated, on 01 September, is not correct and there has not been any transfer of any asset from the Apollo Bramwell Hospital to National Insurance Company (NIC) or any other companies?

Mr Collendavelloo: This is not what I am saying. What I am saying is that NIC Healthcare Ltd. has invited an Expression of Interest. I am afraid I would not be able to enlighten you more than that, at this stage, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr Uteem: Surely, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister will have a note in his file, saying at what price was the asset which belonged to the BAI Group, was transferred to the National Insurance Company which does not belong to the BAI Group which belongs to the State. So, surely, there must have been a transfer and consideration paid. I understand it was Rs1.2 billion plus R1.00.

Mr Collendavelloo: No, I am afraid I don't have that information. I am sorry!

Mr Bérenger: The question related also to monthly income and expenditure. I am given to understand that pending a decision being taken concerning the exercise of taking over or whatever, that the Minister of Finance has said that the State, Government will foot whatever deficit there is monthly. So, can I know, last month, the month before, how is Apollo Bramwell Hospital doing? I am given to understand that there is massive loss every month, that is being taken charge of by Government or the SIC which is the same thing. Do we have the figure of, therefore, the comparison, as asked in the question, monthly income and expenditure at Apollo Bramwell Hospital?

Mr Collendavelloo: Well, the question was 'monthly income and expenditure thereof since the acquisition'. Well, please! Come!

(Interruptions)

It is another play on words. This is the question 'since the acquisition'. There has been no acquisition. Therefore, I don't have the figures for a question which has not been asked.

Mr Uteem: I can't understand. You just mentioned that there was an acquisition, but the price has not been paid yet. That is what hon. Bhadain stated National Insurance Co. has acquired it. So, may I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, on 03 September 2015, the hon. Minister of Finance, in an interview, stated that he is in discussion at Pierre and Marie Curie University so that the hospital would be used henceforth for the formation of doctors and that this Apollo Bramwell Hospital will become and I quote –

“A charitable trust”.

So, do I take it now that this idea of a charitable trust and university is all thrown out of the window?

Mr Collendavelloo: Well, I am sure the hon. Minister of Finance would be glad to enlighten you.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker Next question, hon. Barbier!

FLIC EN FLAC - PRIVATE CLINIC - EIA LICENCE

(No. B/774) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fifth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management whether he will state if his Ministry is presently processing an application for the issue of an Environment Impact Assessment licence in relation to a private clinic in Flic en Flac and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the name of the entity having submitted the said application, and
- (b) if the said clinic has already started operation and, if so, indicate
 - (i) the date of coming into operation thereof;
 - (ii) the distance of the nearest residence adjacent thereto and
 - (iii) if it is equipped with a standby generator and, if so, indicate if it conforms with the standard applicable norms.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that there is no EIA application which is being processed by my Ministry presently with regard to a private clinic at Flic en Flac.

Mr Barbier: May I know from the hon. Minister whether there has been any file for request for a clinic in the region which has been processed recently?

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, negative.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

ISLET NATIONAL PARK – CONSERVATION & UPGRADING

(No. B/775) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the islets located around Mauritius, he will state the number of the islets constituting the Islet National Park, indicating the –

- (a) names, location and extent thereof, and

- (b) actions initiated for the conservation and upgrading thereof, in view of the deplorable state of the environment prevailing thereat.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there are 49 islets around Mauritius which are located at various distances from the mainland. Most of these islets are located along the north, east and south eastern coastal regions of Mauritius. Some islets are quite large and some are very tiny.

Out of these 49 islets, eight have been proclaimed as National Park and are under the control of the National Parks and Conservation Service of my Ministry. These eight islet national parks are: Ile d'Ambre, Pigeon Rock, Ile aux Fouquets, Ile aux Vacoas, Ile aux Fous, Rocher des Oiseaux, Ile aux Flamants, and Ile aux Oiseaux.

Furthermore, seven islets are nature reserves and are under the jurisdiction of the Forestry Service of my Ministry. These seven nature reserves are: Ilot Gabriel, Flat Island, Round Island, Gunner's Quoin, Ile aux Serpents, Ile aux Aigrettes, and Ilot Marianne.

The remaining islets are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

I am tabling the information on the extent and location of the Islet national parks and nature reserves under the control of my Ministry.

As regards part (b) of the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that most of the islet national parks and nature reserves are important for their biodiversity as they harbour endemic species of fauna and flora. Some islets support large colonies of seabirds and endemic reptiles. Conservation management is carried out jointly by the NPCS and the Forestry Service in collaboration with the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation.

Some islets are easily accessible and are open to the public for leisure and recreational purposes. These are Flat Island, Gabriel Island, Ile d'Ambre, Ile aux Fouquets, Ile aux Vacoas, and Ilot Marianne. Cleaning and maintenance are regularly carried out by both the NPCS and the Forestry Service.

The other islets are either closed nature reserves and access is restricted or they are too far and not easily accessible.

As the House is aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Ilot Gabriel was formerly leased to a private company which restricted access to visitors. The lease agreement was terminated in February, this year, for non-compliance with the lease conditions and the islet is being

restored presently. I carried out a site visit on the islet recently and I am satisfied of the progress of rehabilitation works.

As regards Flat Island, it was also leased in the past and the lessee had sublet the islet to a third party who has entered a case in Court against Government. My Ministry is awaiting the final outcome of the Court case to take back full possession of the islet for its restoration. The National Coast Guard has a permanent post on Flat Island and carries out regular security patrol.

I am considering the possibility of setting up a permanent post on either Flat Island or Gabriel Island for the proper control and monitoring of activities on these islands.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has had information concerning l'île aux Bernaches? It is a very popular islet in the North which is used by people in the region on many occasions. If the deplorable state of l'Ile aux Bernaches is not within his responsibility, whether he can discuss with his colleague, the Minister of Housing and Lands so that l'île aux Bernaches be put back in its normal condition?

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Ile aux Bernaches falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Housing and Lands. So, it is not under my Ministry.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to Flat Island, can the hon. Minister inform the House, who is the person, which is the company with whom the Government had a dispute and whether, at a period of time, that islet was vested to the Tourism Authority?

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Deputy Speaker, from the information I have, the lease was granted to a company called Discover Mauritius which was further sublet to another company.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether Discover Mauritius was one of the satellites of the Ministry of Tourism then and whether the Minister is considering that it is high time to rapidly take possession of that island which is at a strategy position?

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, like I just mentioned in my reply, that company which sublet the island has put a case in Court and we are awaiting the outcome of the court case to know what to do with that.

Mr Deputy Speaker: A last one!

Mr Bhagwan: But, pending the court case, can the Minister inform the House whether order will be put on Flat Island? From what we gather, Flat Island is in a deplorable state - *jusqu'a phare zot ine coquin*.

Mr Seeruttun: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we do have teams of the National Parks and Conservation Service and the Forestry Department which go there every fortnight to carry out restoration works. In the meantime, we have even put a signboard there to inform the visitors that this place is under our jurisdiction.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Uteem!

VALLÉE PITOT – LANDSLIDE - RISKS

(No. B/776) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management whether, in regard to the risks of landslide in the region of Vallée Pitot, he will state the –

- (a) number of inhabitants concerned therewith, and
- (b) actions taken in relation thereto, if any.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to this question.

The landslide prone area in the region of Vallée Pitot is about 80 m long and 100 m wide along Canal Anglais. In fact, following heavy rainfall in February 2013, a solid mass of soil from the mountain area moved down the canal. This damaged and obstructed the canal over a length of about 20 metres.

With regard to part (a), the number of families affected by the landslide at Vallée Pitot as at date is 18.

As regards part (b), the Ministry benefited from the expert advice of the Japan International Cooperation Agency, which undertook a study on “Landslide Management in the Republic of Mauritius”. The study confirmed that Vallée Pitot has become one of the most critical landslide prone as well as flood prone sites in Mauritius.

In order to mitigate both problems of flooding and landslide, JICA recommended several countermeasures, which are being implemented by the Ministry. The bed slope of the canal has been readjusted to ensure proper drainage and an existing earthwork cut-off drain upstream of the landslide area has been cleaned and opened up.

In addition to the above, the Ministry appointed a local contractor for the drilling of boreholes, installation of monitoring equipment and the monitoring and maintenance of landslide devices at Vallée Pitot. The monitoring equipment is linked to an automatic siren system for alerting the inhabitants and the authorities on the actual landslide situation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that the site is equally closely monitored by the National Emergency Operations Command in consultation with the City Council of Port Louis, the Police and the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services. The NEOC has installed a simple rain gauges in the dwellings of the inhabitants to monitor rainfall in the region. Simulation exercises have been carried out to sensitise the inhabitants on the safety measures to be taken in the case of emergency and with a view to improve the preparedness of the 18 families concerned.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister mentioned the report of Japan International Cooperation Agency, which was tabled in October by the hon. Minister Dayal. May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether in this report any recommendation has been made to moving the people living in this region to another region and, if this is the case, what action has his Ministry taken for the relocation of these inhabitants?

Mr Soodhun: There has been a request for the moving of these 18 families. According to my information, the number of additional families who have been affected is 10. Out of the 18, research has been carried out by the Ministry of Housing and Lands and it has revealed that 17 were built on the site lease; they have a lease according to the law. We have been able to find eight families affected by this landslide. It was proposed to relocate to Mgr Leen Avenue at Bell Village. However, now we are identifying the land so that we can transfer all these people. But, eight out of 18 have already been identified.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: May I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister when the drain clearing was undertaken? Between the first movement in January of this year and last month, the land

moved again and it was quite dangerous. I was there and I met the Japanese expert as well. My question is as follows: whether, after the drain has been cleaned, there was movement again.

Mr Soodhun: I think yes.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In his reply, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister mentioned Canal Anglais. Is he aware that Canal Anglais forms part of Constituency No.3? Since more than a year, the Canal Anglais has been severely damaged and major repairs are urgent. I myself have raised this issue several times at adjournment time. Each time there is heavy rainfall, it leaks out in the houses of inhabitants living there. Therefore, can I request the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to urgently look into the matter so as to remedy the situation?

Mr Soodhun: I thank the hon. Member. I am aware about it as Minister of Housing and Lands, and we are doing needful to transfer all the 18 families. We are supposed to move very close to Canal Anglais, but the fact that the Ring Road is coming very fast, we have to move because due to the Ring Road...

(Interruptions)

... there is a canal. Once there will be heavy rain the canal is going to affect all the people. So, we have already taken the decision to move all the 18 families at Canal Anglais.

The Deputy Speaker: A last supplementary, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. There have already been damaged houses; there has already been one dog which was killed during the landslide. Now that the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is very much aware of the problem and the risk to these 18 families, can we have a timeframe as to when his Ministry – because that would fall under the Ministry of Housing and Lands – is thinking about coming forward with this relocation plan?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this problem exists since 2013. I agree with the hon. Member that we have to do something. It is not because this exists since 2013 that we have to do nothing. As mentioned, we are doing something. We have already identified eight, but I think that for the 10 we will have no problem. We are working on a global basis

for all the squatters in Port Louis. So, I am going to include these 10. I am going to look after it.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Mohamed!

CIVIL SERVICE FAMILY PROTECTION SCHEME - LEGISLATION

(No. B/777) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms whether, in regard to the Civil Service Family Protection Scheme Act, he will state if consideration will be given for proposed amendments to be introduced thereto in order to enable the surviving spouses of public officers who have only contracted religious marriage therewith to benefit thereunder and, if not, why not.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the proposal contained in the question is deserving of the most serious consideration. I shall see whether we can put up a technical committee, but I will need the substantive Minister to be present so as to look into all aspects of the matter.

Mr Mohamed: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Jhugroo!

WIFI HOTSPOTS – PUBLIC PLACES

(No. B/778) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms, Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the internet, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Telecom, information as to, since January 2015 to date, the –

- (a) number of –
 - (i) public places having been provided with WIFI hotspots to allow members of the public to have free access thereto, and

- (ii) households having been given access to high speed services thereof,
and
- (b) actions taken to reduce the price thereof.

(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/766)

WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY – RECRUITMENT

(No. B/779) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Wastewater Management Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, a list of the employees recruited thereat, since July 2005 to December 2014, indicating in each case the -

- (a) post occupied;
- (b) mode of recruitment;
- (c) qualifications held, and
- (d) terms and conditions of appointment, including the salaries and other benefits drawn and if the employment is on a contractual or permanent basis.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavello): With your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the information.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House what procedures have been carried out for the recruitment of engineers at the Wastewater Management Authority?

Mr Collendavello: For engineers, I see that there was external advert. What I will do is to purely and simply table for all the grades, the manner in which the procedures were followed, so that we will not need to waste a lot of time on this. But for civil engineers, it was an external advert in 2005; for the training engineers, all this was through external advert.

I am tabling the information.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether engineers are involved during the commissioning of works carried out by contractors?

Mr Collendavelloo: Yes, they are at the time of commissioning. There are engineers employed by the Wastewater Management Authority, whose main duty is to follow-up with the work of the consultants to see whether there is accurate performance of the contract. That doesn't mean that this is satisfactory - don't read in my answer something which I have not said.

Mr Jhugroo: Is hon. Vice-Prime Minister aware that during the commissioning of works carried out at Quatre Bornes and at SSR road, there have been several complaints with regard to defects?

Mr Collendavelloo: Yes, I am aware of this. I have instructed the Officer-in-Charge to look into it.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question hon. Jhugroo!

WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY - LEGAL ADVISERS

(No. B/780) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Wastewater Management Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the names of the legal advisers whose services have been retained thereat, since July 2005 to December 2014, indicating in each case, the total amount of fees paid out thereto.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): With your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the information.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Jhugroo!

BASIC RETIREMENT PENSION - OVERPAYMENT

(No. B/781) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the Basic Retirement Pension, she will state the measures that are taken to avoid the overpayment thereof when the beneficiaries thereof pass away or during the prolonged absences thereof from the country.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: I wish to inform the House that overpayment of pensions has been occurring since 1976. The amount representing overpayment is, therefore, a cumulative figure. Overpayment usually occurs in circumstances where the Ministry is not notified on time of the death of beneficiaries or of their departures overseas for more than six months. In such circumstances, the Basic Retirement Pension continues to be credited into the bank accounts of the beneficiaries and their heirs or proxies continue to encash the benefits.

Although, it is a legal requirement for beneficiaries or their relatives in case of death or departure overseas to notify the Ministry of these changes, yet, in practice, most of the time, they do not notify the Ministry and as such payment continues to be effected in their favour. This was the reason why when I assume duty, I forthwith instructed that a reminder be introduced in the award notice to the effect that beneficiaries should immediately notify the Ministry of any changes in circumstances affecting their eligibility for the pension.

It is to be highlighted that once overpayment is detected, payment of the benefit is immediately stopped. For overpayments that have already occurred, a ledger account is opened in the name of the beneficiary and is updated each time refund is made. In case of non-refund, an enquiry is conducted by the Special Investigation Unit of the Ministry. After enquiry, the Special Investigation Unit then recommends the line of action to be initiated to recover the overpayment amount and the beneficiaries' bank and relatives are notified accordingly.

As the above situation is viewed with serious concern and has been the subject of many audit queries in the past, I have, since I took office, taken the following additional measures to prevent overpayment of pension –

- (i) exchange of information between the Ministry and the Civil Status Office pertaining to death of beneficiaries was previously being done manually. However, since the beginning of 2015, an electronic system has been put in place to ensure that information on death cases are obtained online on every working day. On receipt of the daily updated list, the Ministry takes immediate action to stop payment of benefits in appropriate circumstances, and
- (ii) the Passport and Immigration Office provides the Benefit Unit of the Ministry with information about beneficiaries who are above 60 years and who have been outside of Mauritius for more than six months on a monthly basis. Upon receipt of this information, a matching exercise is

effected by the IT Unit of the Ministry to immediately stop payment in favour of all beneficiaries who have been outside of Mauritius for more than six months.

Mr Bérenger: May I ask the hon. Minister, for us, Members of Parliament, to have an idea, *l'ordre de grandeur*, what amount of overpayment takes place every year and what amount is recouped every year?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: According to the National Audit Report, in 2013, there have been an overpayment of Rs26.5 m. and, in 2014, to Rs22.6 m. with regard to the Basic Retirement Pension only. We recouped about Rs10 m. yearly.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the actual IT system is effective to detect any error with regard to overpayments?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, the IT system currently being used for the processing of pension payment is outdated and it produces errors which result in overpayments. That is why, with a view to eliminating overpayments, there is an urgent need to revamp the IT system. In that regard and we are coming with an updated system. Relevant tender document have already been finalised by the Ministry and the bidding exercise is expected to start shortly.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister inform the House what mechanism has been put in place to recover the overpayments which occurred since year 1980?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, some cases are referred to the Commissioner of Police for an enquiry to be conducted. We are awaiting the outcome from the Commissioner of Police. Proper actions will be initiated.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister state whether any enquiry has been made to ascertain improper conduct which could have assisted in the continuing claim of BRP?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: We already have the audit report and at the level of my Ministry, we have the Internal Control Unit. The audit report itself is a comprehensive report. I have not felt the need to have another enquiry. You will agree with me, hon. Member, what is important is action. So, we are taking appropriate actions to try to reduce overpayments which have been occurring for the past years.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there is an online system with the PIO to verify the departures and arrivals of beneficiaries of State pensions?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: The exchange of information with the Passport and Immigration Office is still being done manually. As from this year, necessary action has been

initiated by my Ministry for an electronic system to be put in place so that information can be obtained in a more systematic and timely manner. I do hope that shortly the electronic system will be operational.

MBC - ZEE MULTIMEDIA (MAURICE) LTD - PUBLICITY RATES

(No. B/782) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms, Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the agreement signed between the Zee TV/Mauritius and the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation in relation to the profit sharing on the *Espaces Publicitaires*, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to the -

- (a) date of the signature thereof;
- (b) terms and conditions thereof, including the duration thereof;
- (c) name of the person who negotiated same on behalf of the Corporation,
and
- (d) benefits derived therefrom.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr E. Sinatambou): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) that in 2012, it had contracted two (2) agreements with Zee Multimedia (Maurice) Ltd for the broadcast of two TV Serials, namely –

- (1) *Chotti Bahu*, and
- (2) *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Lil Champs*.

In both cases, I am informed that there was no profit sharing for '*Espaces Publicitaires*'. On the contrary, Zee Multimedia (Maurice) Ltd had to pay to the MBC a fixed sum of Rs3,000 per episode. In return, in connection with *Chotti Bahu*, Zee Multimedia (Maurice) Ltd benefitted from a discount in publicity rates, i.e., the company paid for publicity at a much lower rate of Rs625 per spot instead of Rs2,490 and this up to a maximum of Rs10,000 per episode. In connection with *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Lil Champs*, Zee Multimedia (Maurice) Ltd agreed to pay Rs1,350 instead of Rs8,100 for publicity for the first two months followed by a fixed fee of Rs15,000 per slot.

The agreements for the TV Serials *Chotti Bahu* and *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Lil Champs* were signed on 12 June and 17 August 2012, respectively by the former Director General, Mr Dan Callikan, who personally negotiated the contracts. The agreement in respect of *Chotti Bahu* has been terminated on 31 October 2014 for the purpose of renegotiating the publicity rates while the contract of *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Lil Champs* expired in December 2013.

As regards the last part of the question, I am informed that the total benefit derived by the MBC from the two agreements amounts to Rs3,462,662.50 (VAT Inclusive) as follows –

- | | | |
|------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| (i) | <i>Chotti Bahu</i> | : Rs2,492,350.00 |
| (ii) | <i>Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Lil Champs</i> | : Rs970,312.50. |

NTC - SEMI-LOW FLOOR BUSES - PROCUREMENT

(No. B/783) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the procurement of 100 semi-low floor buses, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Corporation, information as to –

- (a) who prepared the specifications therefor;
- (b) the date the bid therefor was launched and the dates on which bids were received,
and
- (c) if the contract has been awarded and, if so, indicate –
 - (i) the name of the successful bidder therefor;
 - (ii) the contract value thereof, and
 - (iii) if any representation has been received following the award of the bid and, if so, indicate by whom and where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

SMART CITIES - AGRICULTURAL LAND CONVERSION

(No. B/784) Mr C. Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Smart Cities, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Smart Cities Mauritius, information as to the total area of agricultural land that will be converted therefor, indicating their grade as agricultural land and the impact the conversion thereof will have on the sustainability of the agricultural sector in terms of food security and energy production from bagasse.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, based on the recommendations of the Smart City Scheme Technical Committee, the Board of Investment has, to date, issued Letters of Comfort to promoters of seven Smart City projects. There are 10 other projects in the pipeline, including the Highlands Smart City and the Riche Terre Smart City (Jinfei).

Out of those seven Smart City projects issued with a Letter of Comfort, three would not involve agricultural land whilst 1,530 *Arpents* of agricultural land are found within the proposed project boundaries of the four other projects. In addition, the Highlands Smart City project would be implemented, in phases, on some 2,180 *Arpents* of sugarcane land. The grade of agricultural land ranges from moderately suitable to highly suitable for cultivation of sugarcane or food crops.

I am further informed that, except for the Riche Terre project where the land was previously under food crops and already converted in the past, all other Smart Cities projects concern lands devoted to sugarcane plantation. The impact on food security with the implementation of Smart Cities would therefore be minimal.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, even if all the applications for land conversion permits relating to those seven projects and the Highlands Smart City are approved, reduction in sugar production would be limited to some 9,380 tonnes, that is, only 2.3% of our total annual sugar production. Production of bagasse would also be reduced by a commensurate percentage.

I wish to add the following points –

- First, a substantial proportion of those agricultural lands had already been granted with a land conversion permit, prior to 18 June 2015, that is, before the coming into force of the Smart City Scheme.
- Secondly, even if there was no Smart City Scheme, part of the land would, in any case, have been converted for '*morcellements*' or other development projects.

Thus, the impact of the introduction of the Smart City Scheme on food security and energy production from bagasse would be minimal. On the contrary, together with the Smart Agriculture and Bio-Farming Scheme, it would contribute to the promotion of green and renewable energy and sustainability of the agricultural sector.

Mr Mahomed: If I heard the hon. Vice-Prime Minister correctly, the amount of land is in excess of 1,000 acres, is that right? 1,500 acres of agricultural land will be converted into Smart Cities and the area of sugarcane land is currently about 30,000 to 40,000 hectares.

So, that represents a huge percentage insofar as area of land is concerned. Well, will that not impact on – I know you mentioned minimal in terms of energy production - bagasse production and also on ethanol production given that Government has fixed a target of 35% renewable energy by 2025 and that the current percentage of electricity being produced from bagasse is 14%, the more so the Smart Cities will also consume electricity? Thank you.

Mr Collendavelloo: That is a very clever mixing of issues so that my Ministry is brought in in that question. Yes, there will be reduction, of course. Bagasse, as I have said, I gave the figures last time, has fallen down by some 200,000 tons. It is going to fall down again.

With regard to energy production, we all know we are going to have new methods of energy production. For agriculture, there will be new techniques linked to renewable energy like greenhouses with solar photovoltaic on the roofs. All these techniques will come and, hopefully, compensate the loss of agricultural land.

Mr Mohamed: On the issue of all the agricultural lands that will have to be converted, letting aside the issue of the VAT and the fiscal issues from the MRA, would the figures be correct? Could the hon. Vice-Prime Minister tell us that as far as land conversion is concerned itself some Rs6 billion at a minimum will be what the State will not be making just because of this whole project, some Rs6 billion, let alone the VAT exemption and the eight years' exemption as far as tax is concerned?

Mr Collendavelloo: Of course, there will be lots of revenue, but I would prefer to have the substantive Minister answering to a substantive question on this, before I venture into this. I appreciate your humility.

RING ROAD PROJECT - BOULEVARD VICTORIA - VIADUCT

(No. B/785) Mr C. Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the proposed construction of an elevated viaduct along Boulevard Victoria as part of the Phase II of the Ring Road Project, he will state if consultations have been held with the inhabitants and those responsible for the places of worship located in the said region to secure the views thereof in relation thereto and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank the hon. Member for the pertinent question. I would give a very comprehensive answer. After the answer, I will have no supplementary.

As mentioned in the reply of PQ B/625 on 06 October 2015, Government will embark on a vast Road Decongestion Programme (RDP) as from July 2016. The Ring Road Phase 2 and Ring Road Phase 3 from part of the RDP.

I am informed by the RDA that the Ring Road Phase 2 will be an approximately 3.9 km long single carriageway. It will link the end of the existing Ring Road Phase 1 at Les Guibies, through an approximately 1.2 km long tunnel across the Quoin Bluff Mountain to the centre of the capital on Volcy Pougnet Street at Tranquebar and on Boulevard Victoria at Champ de Mars.

Along with the Ring Road Phase 1, which is expected to be completed in March 2016, this project will provide a strategic alternative access that would allow traffic to enter and exit Port Louis and alleviate traffic congestion along Motorways M1 and M2 as well as within the city itself.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the RDA that the alignment with the viaduct above Boulevard Victoria will avoid the outer edge of Vallée Pitot which would have otherwise high negative social impacts and would present geotechnical challenges. The viaduct will start near the end of Ring Road Phase 2 at Champ de Mars by means of an access ramp and ends near the junction of Military Road. It will be approximately 1.1 km long and 11 m wide with a two-lane 7.0 m wide single carriageway and 1.5 m wide shoulder on each side and it will be supported on piers which will be constructed within the existing central verge. A barrier shall be constructed on each side of the viaduct to attenuate noise and air pollution.

I am further informed that the RDA is in the process of launching a RFP to hire the services of a Consultant to review the concepts of Ring Road Phase 2 and Ring Road Phase 3 projects and to prepare the bidding documents.

As regards the consultations with the inhabitants, I have to inform the House that, in line with the Terms of Reference, the Consultant will be required, amongst others, to carry out an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment. They have not put MPs, I have MPs - all MPs concerned, all stakeholders, including inhabitants and those responsible for places of worship located in the region shall be invited to participate in the process and share their

views on the impact of the projects. It is expected that the Consultant will start his assignment in February 2016. The total cost of the project is estimated at Rs5 billion for Ring Road Phase 2 and Rs2.9 billion for Ring Road Phase 3. Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr Mahomed: So, I understand that, in terms of process, the Consultant will be recruited first and then consultation will be conducted; is that right?

Mr Soodhun: That's what I have said. I have already answered.

Mr Mahomed: But how about if consultation does not turn out to be positive?

Mr Soodhun: As I mentioned – I'll read it again: 'I have to inform the House that, in line with the Terms of Reference, the Consultant will be required, amongst others, to carry out an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment.' He is going to have contact with all the people. There were no MPs, I have put MPs. The MPs also are concerned.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Before the Consultant is retained and before he is asked to do the Environment and Social Impact Assessment, surely, at the level of the Ministry, someone must have taken a decision that there is going to be this flyover crossing Boulevard Victoria, where may I remind the hon. Vice-Prime Minister that there is a Kovil; there is a Mandir and there is a Mosque. So, has a pre-feasibility study been carried out internally to assess the negative impact which such a flyover will have on all those religious places along that stripe?

Mr Soodhun: As I mentioned, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, before starting, I am 100% sure that there has been a feasibility study. I can assure the hon. Member because we are not doing as the former Government *comme un aveugle*. We always take into consideration all the existing and this is not for us to disturb the existing or religious institutions. It is in the interest of the country and it is in the interest of *les citoyens* de Port Louis.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister - if I heard him right, he said that the Ring Road Phase 2 will be a single lane traffic - whether this is compatible with the congestion? The tunnel will be a double lane,

will end up on a single lane and the viaduct also, if I heard him correctly, is single lane traffic. Will that not create more congestion in the future?

Mr Soodhun: According to my information, I think that the consultant has taken all these issues into consideration due to the fact of what had happened in the past. We are not going to make the same mistake. This is very important.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mahomed, last supplementary!

(Interruptions)

Silence! Hon. Mahomed, please!

Mr Mahomed: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I do reckon that the Vice-Prime Minister is not the substantive Minister, so I am not going to...

(Interruptions)

Insofar as residents are concerned, when the Ring Road Phase 2 will approach the Military Road, which is quite narrow and at some point in time highly densely inhabited, will the inhabitants there be affected at all by this alignment? Will they need to be moved?

Mr Soodhun: We are not going to have any development at the detriment of the inhabitants of the region. It should be in the interest of the inhabitants.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question. Hon. Mahomed!

NOISE POLLUTION – VEHICLES - CONTRAVENTION

(No. B/786) Mr C. Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management whether, in regard to noise pollution, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the *Police de l'Environnement*, information as to if –

- (a) the sound level meters that were procured under the Maurice Ile Durable Fund in 2013 are being used for the control thereof, and
- (b) number of vehicles in respect of which contraventions have been booked therefor, since January 2015 to date, indicating the –
 - (i) regions with the highest number of contraventions, and
 - (ii) percentage thereof which had their waste pipe and sound control system modified, indicating the actions taken in relation thereto.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am advised that no sound level meters were procured by my Ministry under the Maurice Ile Durable Fund in 2013.

However, I wish to inform the House that funds from my Ministry were utilised for the acquisition of 10 sound level meters which were procured by the Police Department in October 2011 for the enforcement of Road traffic (Control of Vehicle Emissions) Regulations 2002 for noise emanating from auto/motorcycles by the authorities concerned, namely the Police Department, the *Police de l'Environnement* and the National Transport Authority.

Following several tests carried out, it was ascertained that the sound level meters cannot be used to measure the noise level on auto/motorcycles with modified silencers as no proper reading could be obtained. However, contraventions are being established under section 83 of the Road Traffic Act (Construction and Use of Vehicles) Regulations 2010 which is based on the excessive noise perceived by the ears of the officers establishing the contravention and upon verification of exhaust pipe, that is, if the vehicle has been fitted with an extension or the silencer has been altered of the motorcycles.

I wish to inform the House that these regulations provide that-

“(3) No person shall –

- (a) fit on the exhaust pipe of a motor vehicle any extension or other device likely to cause excessive or unusual noise; or
- (b) alter the silencer in such a way that the noise caused by the escape of the exhaust gases is made greater by the alteration.”

The same legislation also provides that any person who contravenes this section of the law, shall commit an offence and may be liable to a fine not exceeding Rs10,000.

With regard to part (b) of the question, 1047 riders using auto/motorcycles with modified silencers have been booked from January 2015 to date.

With regard to part (b) (i) of the question, the regions with the highest number of contraventions established are Port Louis and the northern region.

With regard to part (b) (ii) of the question, all the 1047 contraventions established were due to modified silencers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would also like to inform the House that my Ministry has also initiated the following actions -

- (i) an awareness campaign was undertaken through radio programmes to sensitise the public on the provisions of the law and associated fines related to noise pollution caused by motorcycles;
- (ii) training has been given to the regular Police at the Police Training School on the enforcement of the provisions of this piece of legislation to enable the whole Police Force to take firm actions against contraveners in the future;
- (iii) the strength of the *Police de l'Environnement* has been increased by 15 additional officers to reinforce enforcement of environmental laws and the total strength is now 42, and
- (iv) the Commissioner of Police has been approached with a view to providing stiffer penalties including seizure of auto motorcycles. Today itself, a reminder has been sent on this issue.

Mr Ameer Meea: This issue of noise pollution, I, myself, have canvassed it several times in this House during the years, and this year itself I came with a PQ on the same issue. It is really shocking what I have just heard from the hon. Minister that sound meters cannot be used. This answer was given to me back in January and now we are in October, this problem of noise pollution is aggravating day by day and nothing is being done by your Ministry. The hon. Minister promised *une opération coup de poing* last time.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, please sit down!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea, a question is to seek information, not to give an opinion. Well, I will not accept the question.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my point is that nothing is being done to remedy the situation. If there are no proper sound meters, you should purchase proper sound meters now and not wait for one year. You also said that you approached the Commissioner of Police...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, again!

(Interruptions)

No! You are expressing your opinion on a question.

(Interruptions)

Please sit down when I am on my feet! I have just ruled it out of order. Hon. Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: The hon. Minister has provided a very comprehensive answer which I believe I will need to go through again. May I just ask at source level - garages that modify motorcycles to this end, what is the policy of the Government on this?

Mr Dayal: A very good question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We are taking very bold actions. I have already given directives and I stated in this House itself that in case of contraventions at an unacceptable level, we are going to seize the auto motorcycles. Seizure will be the solution.

Now, concerning your particular question, we are going to investigate. We have the means to investigate where it is being done and we are going to see - because we are *un État de droit* - how best we can enforce the law in that direction. But, I must tell the hon. Member one thing, that we are in a system where we have to make budget provisions so that we can procure equipment. We cannot do it like this out of the blue.

Mr Bérenger: We have been told that *l'action coup de poing*, we are acting and so on. Can I know, since the beginning of the year, how many convictions there have been for that offence?

Mr Dayal: Contraventions I said, 1047.

(Interruptions)

I said for contraventions and convictions, we will have to go for investigation and this takes time.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as rightly stated by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, there is no conviction as at today. The *Police de l'Environnement* by itself won't be able to attend this very acute problem? So, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether he has discussed with the Commissioner of Police to have the support of all the Divisions of the Police, the Traffic Division so that, at least, we must not rely on the *Police de l'Environnement* by itself?

Mr Dayal: I just answered. I stated that we are seeking the support of the whole Police Force today with this issue.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Minister could not answer to the question put by the hon. Leader of the Opposition as to how many convictions there have been. Is the hon. Minister aware that there will be no convictions whatsoever until and unless we have that meter? You

cannot convict somebody just by the ear of a Police Officer. So, can I know from the hon. Minister when he intends to acquire that meter?

Mr Dayal: This is why I stated that because of the intricacies of the issue, we will have to procure additional equipment, but we need a budget for it. I must say it very openly that the last Government did not make even a functional budget. Therefore, how can...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Dayal: So, we are making budget allocations and procuring additional equipment.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Dayal: Now, to answer to the question of the hon. Leader of the Opposition which the hon. Member raised, I stated that investigation is on. Now, we have got various means of ascertaining certain facts and we have got equipment on board right now. Therefore, it is a question of investigation and the Police is responsible for that.

The Deputy Speaker: A last supplementary question, hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Minister if he could confirm the fact that this whole situation is at it is because the last time when these sound level meters were ordered, the order was wrongly done in view of the fact that there was no consultation between the different Ministries, the NTA, the Ministry of Environment and so on. That is why these sound level meters have not been able to be used to book the contraveners. Can I ask him the next time the order is made to see to it that the proper order is made after consultations between all the different Ministries and Departments?

Mr Dayal: I fully appreciate the observation of the hon. Member. I would add that I stated that the equipment was purchased in 2011 when I was not a Minister. Therefore, it is very clear who took the decision, so, I can't be blamed for that.

(Interruptions)

The second thing is that I fully take on board ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mahomed!

Mr Dayal: I fully take on board the suggestion of hon. Ganoo that in the next procurement exercise, we will take all parties on board.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: I just want to add that if those sound meters....

The Deputy Speaker: Sorry, I said next question!

Mr Mahomed: Okay! Thank you.

ISLAMIC CULTURAL CENTRE - UMRAH 2015 - VISA

(No. B/787) Mr C. Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Umrah 2015, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Islamic Cultural Centre, information as to if the visas issued by the Saudi Authorities therefor are subject to charges and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) rate thereof, and
- (b) final rate thereof charged to the pilgrims by the organisers thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all, I wish to inform the House that the Islamic Cultural Centre has not been monitoring Umrah Pilgrimage up to now and is not intervening in the issue of visas for Umrah.

I am given to understand that the pilgrims going for Umrah made their own arrangements to obtain their visas from Saudi Embassy in South Africa through the travel agents or Umrah organisers.

In reply to the question of the hon. Member, I have been informed that the Saudi Authorities do not charge any amount for the issue of Umrah visa.

Regarding part (b) of the question, the pilgrims can only obtain visa by applying through the registered agent with the kingdom of Saudi Arabia who is in turn go through their counterparts for processing of visas through an IT system approved by the Saudi Authorities.

The pilgrims pay a service fee to the agents involved who make the necessary arrangements to obtain their visas from South Africa. There is no fixed fee payable and the amount charged is not the same from one agent to another. I have been given to understand that the fee charged include courier charges, local agency fees and fees payable to their officially registered counterpart in South Africa. The pilgrims are free to choose their agents or organiser and must ensure the amount payable before submitting their passports to them.

I am informed that the final fee payable is in the range of Rs3,000 to Rs4,000 except for the month of Ramadan when the fees claimed range between Rs6,000 to Rs7,500.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have now been made aware and I am asking the ICC to look into the organisation of Umrah and the cost of visas and to ensure that there is no abuse of the system and that the fees charged are fair and reasonable.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: I thank the hon. Vice-Prime Minister for his answer. May we expect this to be applicable to the next Umrah batch which will leave soon?

Mr Soodhun: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am taking Umrah as a whole, even for the airfare. I am having the negotiation with the Emirates Airline to reduce the price, before it was Rs42,000, and I am also taking into consideration the organisations which are charging the fees excessively. I can assure the House because I was not aware, since I have been appointed as the Minister responsible for Hajj affairs, I am now going to take the Umrah affair also.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Under the Islamic Cultural Centre Trust Act the ICC has been given the statutory duty of not only organising the Hajj pilgrimage, but also the Umrah pilgrimage. So, may I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister in what ways would the ICC get involved in the delivery of these Umrah visas? Is there going to be an agreement between the ICC and the authorities in Saudi? I mean how does he intend to implement what he has just mentioned about putting an order in the distribution of visas for Umrah?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I understand the point of my hon. friend. But, I am not in a position to answer this question because I am going to have a meeting on

Thursday next with the ICC to look after all this. But, I agree with all my hon. friends that there is an abuse on it and we have to stop it. It is now to stop.

The Deputy Speaker: Last supplementary to hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The hon. Vice-Prime Minister mentioned the price of air ticket for Umrah and I thank him to have raised this matter in this House. The price of Umrah air ticket is Rs40,000 for a six hour flight whereas Emirates is in a situation of monopoly for Umrah passengers. When you see flights to Europe are sometimes Rs25,000 to Rs30,000 for a 12 hour flight. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to use his good office and his personal contacts in Dubai and the Emirates Airline so as to reduce this sum of Rs40,000 which, for me, is *exorbitant*?

Mr Soodhun: In fact, with the blessing of all the hon. Members maybe, because in the case of Hajj we have been able to reduce the price and I am sure that I am going to take the matter next Sunday with Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, the owner of Emirates Airline and I am going to discuss the price. I am sure I am going to inform my friends when I am going to have the meeting. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over! The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question No. B/793 has been withdrawn.