

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**TROU FANFARON POLICE STATION – POLICING
JURISDICTION, RELOCATION, STAFF, ETC**

(No. B/886) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Trou Fanfaron Police Station, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the regions falling under its jurisdiction, and
- (b) state if he has been made aware of infrastructural, human resources and logistical problems prevailing thereat and, if so, the remedial measures that will be taken.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the Trou Fanfaron Police Station is classified as a Class A Police Station and has a policing jurisdiction of about 5.5 sq kms covering, amongst others, the areas of Immigration Square, China Town, La Citadelle, and Port Louis vegetable auction sale. I am not listing all the areas it covers.

As for part (b) of the question, I wish to refer the House to the reply I made to Parliamentary Question B/635 on 19 June 2007 in respect of infrastructural works. However, there have been developments since then as regards the execution of the renovation works to the Trou Fanfaron Police Station.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the building is a colonial building and is listed as a National Heritage. In August 2006, the National Heritage Fund Board conveyed its approval for the renovation of the Police Station subject to no alterations being made that may affect the outward appearance of the building. Such renovation works would not have been cost effective, it

seems, being too high and not meeting the requirement of the Police in terms of office space.

It is, therefore, now being proposed to construct a new building to house the Trou Fanfaron Police Station on a suitable site. The actual building at Trou Fanfaron will be maintained as a Police Post.

However, some minor renovation has been carried out to the Police Station such as repairs to the roof, painting and partitioning works.

With respect to staffing, I am informed that the personnel posted at the Trou Fanfaron Police Station has been gradually strengthened to 67.

As regards logistical support, the Trou Fanfaron Police Station is equipped with two vehicles, and it also receives assistance of other units such as the ERS, the Traffic Unit North, the *Police du Transport*, the *Police du Tourisme*, the Alpha Squad, *Brigades des Mineurs*, the Divisional Support Unit, the CID and the ADSU.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is also worthwhile to note that there has been a downward trend in the various types of offences within the policing jurisdiction of the Trou Fanfaron Police Station.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether the arrangements he is mentioning will be implemented? Because, as we know, these rooms are 3X3 metres or 3X4 metres, and there is no confidentiality when members of the public come for inquiries. Can we know when they will be able to move to another site?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, last month, they have decided to construct a new Police Station along Abattoir Road, which is about one kilometre from the actual one. I must add that the Police Station is not being closed. They are moving to another station nearby, because here it is not convenient and also because the building is listed as a National Heritage.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to staffing, as per information, there should have been around 94 members of staff on the establishment. There has been a slight improvement, and the hon. Prime Minister has mentioned the figure 67. Because there is a shortage of staff, it is becoming a vicious circle. Members of the staff cannot be released for further training and are stuck until additional staff is provided.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, since 2000 it has never reached 67. In 2000, it was 60; 59 in 2001; 59 in 2002; 58 in 2003; 52 in 2004; 55 in 2005; 59 in 2006; 59 in 2007, and now it is 67. Actually, it is going up.

DRIVING INSTRUCTORS TEST & INSTRUCTORS LICENCE

(No. B/887) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of –

- (a) holders of the instructors licence as at January 2008, and
- (b) driving instructors who have passed the Instructors Driving Test, since February 2008 to date.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, as at January 2008, a total of 141 persons hold an Instructors Licence issued by the Traffic Branch after the Commissioner of Police has given his approval.

The Commissioner of Police is empowered under section 7 of the Road Traffic (Driving Schools and Instructors) Regulations to issue such licences. The exercise takes into consideration the advice of the Traffic Branch.

As regards part (b) of the question I am also informed that, since February 2008 to date, seven candidates have passed the Driving Instructors Test.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker, Sir, following a Cabinet decision in 2005, amendments were to be made to the regulations, so as to make it compulsory for instructors to have the Instructors Licence clearly displayed in the school, and to have a copy with them in the vehicle. Can we know if this measure has been implemented?

The Prime Minister: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. As far as I know, it has been implemented.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker, Sir, does the hon. Prime Minister have information as to the number of arrests of those who are providing services but who are not really qualified as professional instructors?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't have any record of anybody who is actually not allowed to act as a driving instructor but who is driving around. If the hon. Member gives me the information, I will look into it.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker, Sir, my information is that the tracking team is doing a good job. People have been arrested, and it would be good to know how many are sent to Court. Can the hon. Prime Minister give us the information?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't have the information as to how many have actually been arrested and sent to Court, although I can say there have been contraventions, if that is what the hon. Member is referring to. In 2005, there were 17; in 2006: 41; in 2007: 67, and in 2008: 41 so far.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are some steps to be followed before being issued with a licence, the ultimate one being a visit to the building where oral classes will be carried out. Will the hon. Prime Minister state whether there is a time frame between the visit to the building and the issue of the licence? Because I personally know of a case where the visit has been effected since one year, and the applicant has had no answer until now.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't know the time frame between the visit and the issue of the licence. But, there are cases of people who have waited. I am told by the Commissioner of Police that the reason is that they fear there is a mushrooming of too many driving instructors' licences. There have also been cases where relatives of Police Officers have applied and have passed the test. The Commissioner of Police - as well as the former one - is a bit reluctant to allow them to do this. He is analysing the situation and, maybe, there will be a review of the decision first taken.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, in case a candidate has gone successfully through all the steps required to be delivered with an instructors licence, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether the Commissioner of Police can still refuse the licence to that person?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is at his discretion whether to give the licence or not. He is making an analysis of how many there are, how many we need district-wise, and then he will take a decision.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister has talked about regulations. Can he inform the House whether the Police have any control on the fees claimed from the students by the instructors?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware that they have a control on the fees. I know they have to pay fees for the driving licence or for instructor. As far as I remember, I think that for instructor it is Rs1,000 and Rs1,500 for the other one.

Mr Nancy: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, can the hon. Prime Minister state the number of instructors for Rodrigues?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't have the breakdown of how many are from Rodrigues among the 141, but I can give the information to the hon. Member.

CAMP YOLOFF, PORT LOUIS – LARCENY & LARCENY WITH VIOLENCE – CASES

(No. B/888) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to larceny, larceny with violence committed in the region of Camp Yoloff, Port Louis, for the past two years, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) the number of reported cases thereof, and
- (b) the additional measures that are being taken to prevent the recurrence of such acts.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since the year 2006 to date, cases of larceny and larceny with violence at Camp Yoloff have been reported as follows –

YEAR	NO. OF CASES OF LARCENY	NO. OF CASES OF LARCENY WITH VIOLENCE
2006	22	3
2007	37	3
2008 (up 16 July 2008)	22	-

With regard to part (b) of the question, the Police has intensified its presence on ground in the region. Actually, as from 14 July of this year the strength of the Trou Fanfaron Police Station which covers the area of Camp Yoloff, has been increased with the posting of 5 additional Police Constables, including one Woman Police Constable. Additional patrols are also carried out by the Divisional Support Unit, the Emergency Response Service, the Traffic Unit (North), the local CID, the Alpha Squad, the *Police du Tourisme*, the *Police du Transport* and the *Brigade des Mineurs*. During these patrols, stop and search operations as well as road blocks exercises are carried out.

Furthermore, emphasis is laid on the implementation of a Police Public Partnership Policing Scheme in the region. Under this scheme, the Local Police enlists the collaboration of the NGO's and *Forces Vives* of the region with a view to reducing neighbourhood crime and enhancing the quality of life in the community. Meetings, talks and visits to victims of larceny are carried out on a regular basis in the region surrounding Camp Yoloff with a view to sensitizing the public on issues pertaining to personal security and property protection.

In addition, the Crime Prevention Unit has organized a series of sessions with a view to sensitizing the population of Camp Yoloff on potential hazards they may encounter, and how to reduce the likelihood of becoming a victim of crime by identifying and eliminating factors that may promote crime in their region. Members of the public have been encouraged to set up a Neighbourhood Watch which is believed to be an effective way of increasing crime prevention awareness.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been in my Constituency, I have met people in the region. There is definitely an under-reporting. The Prime Minister will understand, for cultural reasons, in cases of sexual harassment, people don't go to the Police. This may be only the tip of the iceberg, because the hon. Prime Minister...

Mr Speaker: I am sorry. I am prepared to give some latitude to Members to introduce the question, but the hon. Member cannot go on. The hon. Member should put the question.

Mr Lauthan: I was on the point of asking the question. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister if Police patrol and the prevention measures can be intensified to avoid creating a sort of a tension in the region?

The Prime Minister: I take note of the matter.

SECTS – PROLIFERATION

(No. B/889) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he is aware of the proliferation of sects, which are creating havoc in many families and, if so, will he state the measures that he proposes to take.

(Withdrawn)

KARO KALIPTIS, BATTERIE CASSÉE – LARCENY, LARCENY WITH VIOLENCE, DRUG AND PROSTITUTION – ARREST

(No. B/890) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to larceny, larceny with violence, drug and prostitution, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of persons who have been arrested in relation thereto, in Karo

Kaliptis, Batterie Cassée, since 2006 to date, indicating the number of families who are at present living thereat.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since 2006 to date, arrests have been made in Karo Kaliptis, Batterie Cassée, in relation to cases of larceny, larceny with violence and drugs as follows –

YEAR	NO OF ARRESTS IN CASES OF LARCENY	NO OF ARRESTS IN CASES OF LARCENY WITH VIOLENCE	NO OF ARRESTS IN DRUG-RELATED CASES
2006	4	1	4
2007	-	5	12
2008 (19 July)	2	3	4

No arrests were made for cases related to prostitution.

I am further informed by the Ministry of Housing and Lands, that the region known as Karo Kaliptis at Batterie Cassée is a State Land on which 66 families live.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that no Police patrol can be carried out within that area of Karo Kalyptis?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware of this. I know that, at one time, it was a no-go area, but I am not aware that this is the case.

Mr Lesjongard: The reason being that there is no road infrastructure within that area. In a reply some time back, we were told that there were only 50 families left within that area. Now I understand that it has gone up to 66. Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm whether there are some 16 more families who have settled in that area now?

The Prime Minister: I am given to understand, Mr Speaker, Sir, there are 66 families in all at the moment who are there now. So, they have increased slightly.

Mr Lesjongard: I have one last question, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm to the House whether Government is envisaging a settlement of families within that area again?

The Prime Minister: In fact, in February 2008, Government approved the regularisation of 66 residential squatters. Approval was also conveyed for the relocation of 44 additional families from Cité La Cure to Karo Kalyptis. Letters of intent for building site leases were issued on 01 April 2008 to 110 families, that is, the 66 plus the 44. But, so far, none of the 44 families has been moved yet.

Mr Bérenger: Clearly the hon. Prime Minister does not know what was and what is the situation at Karo Kalyptis. Before 2005 election, the decision was taken to clear everybody, the *Forces Vives* had social projects, sports and so on, because it is a very difficult area. The Police could not go into that area. Now we are getting back to the same situation. Can I appeal to the hon. Prime Minister to have a thorough look at this problem of Karo Kalyptis, whether Government was right to regularise squatters there and whether we are not going back to the situation where the Police cannot even drive, walk into that area? It is very, very, dangerous.

The Prime Minister: I just want to have a clarification from the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I know it is not for me to ask questions, but did he actually say that they had agreed to move?

(Interruptions)

But then, I will look into the matter.

Mr Bérenger: I did not say that everybody agreed to move. The decision to move everybody to low cost Firinga type had been taken and had started being implemented.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that the *Forces Vives* of that area are dead against any resettlement within the Karo Kalyptis area?

The Prime Minister: If they will agree to move! Everybody should move as it was decided. I will look into that.

BUS – STUDENTS – MISCONDUCT

(No. B/891) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if cases of misbehaviour by students in buses have been reported, since 2006 to date, and if so, the number thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the number of cases of misconduct by students in buses reported to the Police is as follows –

- (i) four cases in 2006;
- (ii) twelve cases in 2007, and
- (iii) eleven cases as at 17 July 2008.

In order to address this problem, the Police has been –

- (i) providing daily policing on major bus terminals and bus stops;
- (ii) carrying out regular crack down operations at bus terminals and stations. Since January 2008, sixty-nine such operations have been carried out;
- (iii) sensitizing students, parents, school staff and bus operators on the need for good behaviour by students in buses; and
- (iv) sensitization campaigns are also being carried out for students in colleges/schools laying emphasis on discipline. Since 2005, 43584 students and adults have been sensitized by the Police.

I am also informed that the Ministry of Education and Human Resources that they had issued instructions to all Zone Directors and the Private Secondary Schools Authority on 04 July 2008, to request Heads of Schools to ensure that order and discipline are observed in buses. The issue of student behaviour in school buses is being taken up at morning assemblies and at meetings with Prefects, Student Councils and the Parents Teachers Associations.

Moreover, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping is having regular meetings with the National Transport Authority, the bus operators, the Parents Teachers Associations, representatives of schools and the Police to follow the situation.

Mrs Grenade: Est-ce que le Premier ministre est au courant qu'il y a des jeunes qui ne sont pas des étudiants, mais qui portent des uniformes, et agressent les élèves aux alentours de l'école ou sur les gares d'autobus?

The Prime Minister: The issue was raised to the Deputy Prime Minister last week. He is looking into it, I think.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether in any of these cases students have been prosecuted?

The Prime Minister: Yes. Out of the 27 cases which I mentioned from 2006, three have been fined, one has been issued a warning, one case has been classified, 9 are in front of the Courts pending Court's decision and for 13, inquiry is still being carried out.

Mr Soodhun: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether there is any monitoring committee set up at the Prime Minister's Office with consultation with the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Minister of Education to monitor the situation closely?

The Prime Minister: It is being done at the level of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Infrastructure.

Mrs Labelle: I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister whether in cases of those students who have been prosecuted there has been any follow-up with the Ministry of Education or in their respective school?

The Prime Minister: Without talking to the Minister, my assumption is yes.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister, with regard to the students who misbehave and who have been caught, whether some sort of counseling is being given so that they get rehabilitated and they don't do this again?

The Prime Minister: I explained some of the measures that are being taken including with them. Sometimes you say if there is no sanction, there is repetition. For example, I say that in some cases, bus operators have ceased to provide school service. They want their buses to be repaired first and in one case where the bus has been damaged by students of Islamic Cultural College, Cité La Cure, there has been a claim of Rs19,050. They have absolutely refused to provide the bus service until this is paid. This claim has been made by UBS and it is being now refunded by instalments by the Parents Teachers Association.

Mrs Grenade: M. le président, est-ce que je peux faire un appel urgent au Premier ministre pour qu'il approvisionne l'équipe des brigades des mineurs en terme de transport en bon état afin que le travail puisse se faire promptement et aussi renforcer les équipes aux alentours des écoles primaires, secondaires et surtout sur les gares d'autobus ?

The Prime Minister: In fact, we are reinforcing the system which is looking into that. I'll look into the transport situation, but we need also to look at the ways to inculcate discipline into our youth.

Mr Jhugroo: Le premier ministre est-il au courant qu'il y a des élèves qui consomment des cannettes de bière durant leur trajet vers l'école ?

The Prime Minister: None has been reported to me.

MELROSE PRISON – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/892) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the construction of a new prison at Melrose, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to –

- (a) the reasons why the site identified at Rose Belle has not been retained;
- (b) if the services of a consulting architect was retained and, if so, how was he appointed, and
- (c) the amount of money earmarked for the project in the 2007-2008 budget which has not been used.

(Withdrawn)

GOVERNMENT CAR POOL - BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/893) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, a list of the persons who have been allocated the use of an official car from the Government car pool, indicating in each case -

- (a) their respective names and status;
- (b) posting, and
- (c) make and model of the car.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled.

I would like to point out that most of the beneficiaries are entitled to the privilege of an official car in accordance with the PRB Report. But it is being compiled.

MBC – PRIVATE NOTICE QUESTIONS - BROADCAST

(No. B/894) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the parliamentary debates, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to if it is now the practice for Private Notice Questions to be broadcast in their integrality and, if so, since when.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that, as a principal medium for the dissemination of information, the MBC provides extensive coverage of parliamentary debates including Private Notice Questions. The length of time that the MBC allocates for the broadcast of such debates depends on the newsworthiness of the subject.

The Director-General of the MBC has informed me that, on 08 July 2008, the Corporation had deemed it appropriate to broadcast at the end of the French news bulletin of 1930 hours the entire debate on the Private Notice Question replied on that day, in view of the newsworthiness of the subject matter which related to law and order.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am further informed by the Director-General of the MBC that, within the re-organisation of the MBC News Department, the Corporation is doing its level best to provide adequate coverage in the news bulletins of items considered as newsworthy. This is not an easy task given the increasing demands for coverage of various items, and the plurality and complexity of the Mauritian society. Notwithstanding these constraints, substantial time is allocated for the broadcast of the debates of the National Assembly in the news bulletins while ensuring that the contents of the news bulletins are fair and balanced.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have reiterated to the House a fortnight ago that I am not at all against the idea of live telecast of parliamentary proceedings. Once the modalities have been finalised, the MBC would be in a position to provide extensive coverage of live broadcast of parliamentary debates compared to the current arrangements where parliamentary proceedings are included as news items in the MBC news bulletins.

Mr Jhugroo: Merci, M. le premier ministre, après trois années depuis que je suis au parlement...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member should stop making statement....

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: I am coming with my question because...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member cannot dispute my ruling. He should address the question to me.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is after three years that we have seen a PNQ broadcast for the first time and I hope that it will not be the last time.

The Prime Minister: It was well received by the population because it was very constructive and it was newsworthy as well.

(Interruptions)

It is a start.

Mr Speaker: No comment!

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, pending the committee that will be set up with regard to the live broadcasting of parliamentary debates, can the Prime Minister ask the MBC to broadcast at least the integrality of the Private Notice Questions as it was done on 08 July 2008?

The Prime Minister: This has been a good test, if I may put it that way. Neither the Leader of the Opposition nor myself knew that it was going to be *in toto* and I was nicely surprised. But not everybody is responsible like the two of us!

(Interruptions)

Sometimes some might play to the gallery and that is what we have to watch out.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, since there is a consensus on televising parts of *in extenso* or *in toto* parliamentary debates, does not the Prime Minister think that it is a matter of urgency to set up this committee presided by Mr Speaker, as it has been done in other countries?

The Prime Minister: I do not think there is a consensus, but there is a majority. I know that some people are not for it, but we have to look at it properly.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: Le premier ministre peut-il nous confirmer si c'est son *special adviser* qui a pris la décision de faire transmettre la *Private Notice Question* du 08 juillet à la télévision dans son intégralité ?

The Prime Minister: He was sick at that time.

PROSTITUTION - INTERNET & MASSAGE SALOONS

(No. B/895) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the prostitution networks using the internet and the massage saloons, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof for the past two years, indicating if inquiries have been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof, in each case.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that from 2006 to date, one case of prostitution using internet has been established by the Police. Three accused parties have been arrested in January 2008 and they appeared before the Rose-Hill District Court under a charge of 'causing child to be engaged in prostitution'. Two of them have been bailed out upon a surety of Rs15,000 and the third one has been remanded to jail.

I am also informed that for the same period, six cases of prostitution in massage parlours have been established by the Police. One case has been referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice. The Director of Public Prosecutions has advised prosecution in three other cases. In the fifth case, the accused has been prosecuted before the Curepipe Court and has been fined. In the latest case, the two accused parties appeared before the Pamplemousses District Court and have been bailed out on 30 June 2008.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that there are web sites where Mauritius is mentioned on the internet and once you get access to them, you are asked to pay with the credit card to contact people in Mauritius.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, order, now!

The Prime Minister: Obviously, the hon. Member has gone quite far in dealing with it!

(Interruptions)

It is not the first time. The hon. Member can provide me with the information.

PRISONS – HIV/AIDS – NUMBER

(No. B/896) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the prisons, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to the number of prisoners in each prison, indicating the percentage thereof who have been diagnosed with HIV and AIDS and the number of males and females concerned.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Acting Commissioner of Prisons that as at 18 July 2008, the prison population stood at 2126, of whom 485 detainees were HIV/AIDS infected, representing the figure that I mentioned and taken by surprise, 22.8 percent, nearly 23 per

cent. Of the total number of detainees who were infected with HIV/AIDS, 465 were males and 20 were females.

I am tabling a statement providing the other information requested by the hon. Member.

Mrs Martin: Can the hon. Prime Minister say whether there is any check-up which is carried out on inmates just before they are released to determine whether they have contracted the virus in prison?

The Prime Minister: In fact, the HIV tests are carried out on the detainees on their admission, but it has to be on a voluntary basis. I discussed this matter with Mr Sterling who was here. I must say that all the NGOs are against a law that will force them to have a compulsory testing. It is done on a voluntary basis. It is meant to be done every three months and also prior to their release from prison.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, clearly that figure of 22.8% of prisoners being HIV positive is very disturbing. I am not going into details and I am not asking the Prime Minister to give any details, but I am sure that in male prisons, the problem of sodomy must be very serious and forced sodomy in many cases. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will agree to have a team to look into that problem very discreetly and say what measures, if any, can be taken to handle this problem?

The Prime Minister: I agree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I will certainly look into the matter discreetly, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Dowarkasing: The hon. Prime Minister has just stated that there are 20 females who have AIDS/HIV positive. May I know whether there are any mothers with their children among those 20 female detainees?

The Prime Minister: I think I had answered a question prior to that, Mr Speaker, Sir, where I mentioned there was. I don't have the figures here. But I did mention in some previous PQs that there are females also who are seropositive and the children also have been tested, but the children don't have it.

Mrs Labelle: With your permission, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to add something regarding the points raised by my colleague, hon. Mrs Martin. Due to the high risk of infection at the prison, will the hon. Prime Minister see to it that it may not be compulsorily but, at least, these people be advised and made aware of the high risk. They can get out of prison unaware that they have been contaminated. May they be advised to make the test for their own benefit?

The Prime Minister: In fact, they have been made fully aware of this and I should add perhaps, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the UNDP has financed a research project entitled 'knowledge, attitude, behaviour and practices'. It is a project again to make them aware, but also to look at statistics.

Mr Jhugroo: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister how many times prisoners have been found in possession of syringes in prisons since January 2008?

The Prime Minister: I don't know exactly how many have been found in possession, but if the hon. Member would come with a substantive question, I will answer.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! Questions addressed to hon. Ministers!

ROAD TAX - REVENUE

(No. B/899) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Road Tax for motor vehicles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to the estimated amount of money that will be collected for this financial year, following the increase thereof, indicating if this revenue will be used to subsidise the bus operators.

The Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations & Employment (Dr. V. Bunwaree):

Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the estimated amount of money that will be collected for this financial year from Road Tax for motor vehicles is around Rs1,005 m. This includes an amount of Rs175 m., representing the increase in Road Tax as from 01 July 2008, which will be used to subsidise the renewal of bus fleet with new generation buses, as mentioned at paragraph 158 of the 2008-2009 Budget Speech.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the Minister has said, this levy will be used for the bus modernization programme as stated in the Budget Speech. May I know from the Minister how many buses are concerned?

Dr. Bunwaree: From the information I have, I think it is about 600.

Mr Bérenger: May we have the amount of money brought in by the Road Tax for the last financial year?

Dr. Bunwaree: I don't have the figure, Mr Speaker, Sir. I'll take note and I'll submit it.

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to the Road Tax being collected, can we know the number of cars and dual purpose vehicles concerned?

Dr. Bunwaree: I don't have the figures offhand, but I can circulate the information at a later stage.

Mr Lesjongard: My point, Mr Speaker, Sir, is: can we know whether we are renewing the whole fleet? Because there are buses which are less than five years, ten years old. Are we renewing the whole fleet or do we have a ceiling with regard to the age of buses to be renewed?

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, first of all, the *modus operandi* of this bus modernisation programme is actually being worked out by the National Transport Authority.

PRB REPORT – PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS

(No. B/ 900) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the implementation of the Pay Research Bureau Report, he will state the estimated amount of money that will be retained as pension contributions for the current financial year.

The Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations & Employment (Dr. V. Bunwaree): Mr Speaker, Sir, the Pay Research Bureau (PRB) has estimated the total cost of implementing the recommendations made in its report, at Rs5.2 billion for Financial Year 2008-09, inclusive the Cost Of Living Allowance (COLA), annual increment and employee's pension contributions integrated in the new salary scales.

The PRB has not provided an estimate of the cost of the pension contributions itself. However, for budgetary purposes, the cost has been estimated at Rs728 m. for the current financial year.

Mr Soodhun: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the 6% pension contribution would be taxable?

Dr. Bunwaree: They are included in the pensionable emoluments.

RATION RICE – QUALITY

(No. B/ 901) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to if the ration rice presently being sold on the local market is of poor quality and, if so, the measures that will be taken to ensure that the next consignment of ration rice that will be offered for sale on the local market be of better quality.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the State Trading Corporation that the rice that is presently being sold on the local market is from the consignment received from Thailand and is one of the best quality that has so far been sold.

As a matter of fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, the quantity of rice sold has increased from 1500 MT to 1700 MT per month. No complaint has been received at the level of my Ministry regarding the quality of rice sold.

Mr Soodhun: Can the hon. Minister inform the House how many tones of rice are still available at the State Trading Corporation?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I understand that this was a consignment of 12,000 tonnes. With regard to the exact amount, I'll have to look into the figures.

Mr Bérenger: The question concerns the quality of ration rice and when the Minister replied - I listened to him - he mentioned the quality of rice, that is, basmati and other types of rice. Does his answer refer to ration rice being sold on the local market?

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, this refers to ration rice. There is a series of tests that have to be done before shipment and I have got the results of the tests done by the STC as well. It does apply to ration rice.

Mr Jhugroo: Est-ce que le ministre peut nous confirmer s'il y a une pénurie de riz ration sur le marché?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I just replied that the usual consumption is 1500 MT and at the moment 1700 MT are being sold. The question of *pénurie* does not arise.

(Interruptions)

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that ration rice is being sold at a price above the prescribed price and this is done by putting the ration rice in plastic bags and so on. Thus the ration rice is being sold above the prescribed price.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have checked a sample and I have seen the quality of the rice. I can understand the concern of the hon. Member. Mr Speaker, Sir, the rice is being sold at Rs5.40; should there be somebody selling it over Rs5.40, please report to the CPU or to the Ministry of Commerce and we will take action.

Mr Cuttaree: The hon. Minister asked us to report. Can I ask him whether he does not consider it better for him to send his officers in the supermarkets in Rose Hill behind the market? Ration rice is put in packets of 5 lbs which is being sold at Rs7 a pound, that is, Rs35 a packet.

Dr. Jeetah: I thank the hon. Member. Can I just remind him that this concerns the Consumer Protection Unit? I will pass on the message to my colleague who will certainly look into the matter.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister just informed the House that there has been an increase in the consumption of ration rice. Does he not fear that the stock that we have might not be sufficient before we obtain the next consignment of ration rice?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have replied - I think it was last November - that I made a request to the Indian authorities and they have agreed to provide us 10,000 tonnes of ration rice. I have made a request for an extra 15,000 tonnes, and we are following the matter.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the question makes mention of “next consignment”. Can the hon. Minister inform the House where matters stand as to the *appel d’offres* which was made recently concerning ration rice and when will the tender procedure be finalised?

Dr. Jeetah: The prices quoted by the tenderers were not accepted because we have got a very good offer from the Government of India, in fact, it was nearly half the amount. So, the question of the tender does not arise. As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have made a request for an extra 15,000 tonnes that should last till some time next year.

Mrs Perrier: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the quality of ration rice, can the hon. Minister confirm whether the criteria of the 25% of *brisure maximum* has been removed in the last tender exercise?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think I should table documents which are related to the quality of rice. But with regards removing the 25% criterion, I recall we did give authorisation to rice importers. We allowed them to import rice of any quality because we had fears of *pénurie* at that time. But this rice contains 25% broken and I am tabling a series of parameters which characterise the ration rice that is consumed in Mauritius.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, following the reply that has been given by the hon. Minister regarding the arrangement he has made with India, may we understand that there will be no increase in the prices on the local market for the next consignment of ration rice?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, that is another matter.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, my question relates to the one asked by hon. Dowarkasing. Are we to understand, since the question of tender does not arise, that Government itself will import the ration rice, and, if yes, when is the next consignment due?

Dr. Jeetah: I don't have the specific answer, but I can certainly give it if the hon. Member asks a substantive question.

Mr Guinness: Can the hon. Minister give the assurance to the population and to the House that there will be no shortages in the months to come?

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am giving the assurance.

Mr Nancy: The hon. Minister just stated that the price is Rs5.40. Could he confirm that the same price applies for Rodrigues?

Dr. Jeetah: The hon. Member ought to note that there are extra costs for rice going to Rodrigues.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister how many tons of ration rice have been imported by local importers as just mentioned earlier?

Dr. Jeetah: It is the State Trading Corporation that imports ration rice offered at subsidised rates in Mauritius.

**UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS - EVENING COURSES -
TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS**

(No. B/902) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the University of Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the University, information as to the number of students –

- (a) attending the University;
- (b) enlisted for the next academic year, and
- (c) if public transport arrangements have been made for the students attending the evening courses.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the University of Mauritius as follows –

- (a) 7833 students have been attending the University, during Academic Year 2007/2008;
- (b) the total enrolment for Academic Year 2008/2009 is projected to reach 9343 students;
- (c) in general, full-time programmes are run up to 6.00 p.m and public transport is available until 6.45 p.m. As regards part-time students, most of whom are employed, they make their own arrangements when lectures finish after 6.45 p.m;

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister give some clarifications concerning public transport for students attending evening courses? Is the hon. Minister also aware that for the time being they are facing a lot of problems? For example, Mr Speaker, Sir, for students residing at Flacq, GRSE and Rose-Belle, how are they going to attend the evening courses? Has the hon. Minister given thought to it and whether any provision has been made for public transport?

Mr Gokhool: I have mentioned that the full-time programmes end at 6 p.m. and the students can have transport facilities till 6.45 p.m. But I think the hon. Member will agree that the University cannot give customised,

tailor-made transport facilities to each and every student. However, having said that, the University does take into account whenever there are transport problems; it liaises with the NTA, the bus companies and the relevant authorities to find solutions.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, according to my information it is not the exact answer which the hon. Minister is giving. Can he inform the House how many students are following the evening courses at the University?

Mr Gokhool: I don't have the figures but, as I said, even students who follow the evening courses do usually take ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I understand the predicament of the hon. Member. Insofar as the transport situation is concerned, I think he will better address the question to the Minister in charge of public transport to see how public transport can be put at their disposal.

Mr Soodhun: Last time, when I put the question to the hon. Minister at Budget time, he answered that a Monitoring Committee has been set up. Now the hon. Minister is changing the answer. He said that it is not the Monitoring Committee which is looking at it. According to my information, nowadays the students are getting lots of problems after 6 o'clock. The fact that the hon. Minister has just mentioned that they are going to have evening courses, the problem will be acute and those students would not be able to go to the University.

Mr Gokhool: Since the hon. Member seems to be so genuine, I would request him to submit the facts which I will transmit to the University and I will ask the University to look into it in the committee that usually meets.

LRT SYSTEM – LAND ACQUISITION

(No. B/903 Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the land acquired for the purpose of setting up park and ride facilities and terminals along the alignment of the proposed LRT System, he will state where matters stand, indicating if the land has been reallocated and, if so –

- (a) the purpose thereof, and
- (b) the names of the beneficiaries

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that no land has been acquired for the setting up of park and ride facilities and terminals along the alignment of the former railway track.

RICHE MARE – MR S. P. – BUILDING PERMIT

(No. B/904) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to one Mr S. P. of Riche Mare, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Moka Flacq District Council, information as to if he was issued with a building permit for the extension of his residential building and, if so –

- (a) when, and
- (b) if the Council has received any complaint from his neighbours in connection therewith.

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Moka/Flacq District Council that a development and building permit was issued on 08 August 2006 to Mr S. P. of Riche Mare in respect of the first floor extension to his residential building.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that a complaint has been received by the Council from one of the neighbour of Mr S. P. to the effect that the construction of the first floor has been made at less than the prescribed building line setback from her site boundary.

The Council has, therefore, decided to prosecute Mr S. P. for construction contrary to approved plan.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister when the decision to prosecute was taken?

Dr. David: I have got no precise date. That must be quite recently known.

At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.30 p.m with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair

PAUL TOUREAU & STE CROIX – PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLE (TAXI) LICENCES - ISSUE

(No. B/905) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port North and Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Authority, information as to if Public Service Vehicle (Taxi) Licences have recently been issued for the regions of Paul Toureau and Ste Croix and, if so, indicate the names and addresses of the holders thereof.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am placing in the Library of the National Assembly, the following –

- (a) a list of applicants for a Public Service Vehicle (Taxi) licence to operate from Ste. Croix and their addresses;
- (b) a list of applicants who failed to attend the meeting of the Licensing Committee of the National Transport Authority;

- (c) a list of persons who appealed against the decision of the National Transport Authority to refuse their applications, and
- (d) a list of persons who have been granted a licence.

No Public Service Vehicle (Taxi) Licence have been invited for the locality of Paul Toureau.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon., Deputy Prime Minister how many people from the region of Carreau Lalo have applied for a taxi licence?

Dr. Beebeejaun: They are from Ste. Croix. I am submitting the list and the hon. Member will see.

VICTORIA HOSPITAL – DECOMPRESSION CHAMBER

(No. B/906) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the decompression chamber at the Victoria Hospital, Candos, he will state if it is operational and, if not, why not.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the answer is yes.

Mrs Martin: Can the hon. Minister since when it is not operational?

Mr Faugoo: It is operational since 2004.

Mrs Martin: It was operational since 2004. May I ask the hon. Minister when was the last servicing done?

Mr Faugoo: Servicing was done in June 2007, but it is operational since 2004.

Mrs Martin: In a former answer he said exactly that in June 2007 the servicing work has been done at the cost of Rs3.5 m. by foreign experts I believe. Has anything been done to form Mauritians from the ESD in order to take care of the after sales servicing to avoid such costly reparations?

The Deputy Speaker: The question relates to the fact that if the decompression chamber is operational or not and not the one who is going to operate it. That is another question.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE - NURSING STAFF

(No. B/907) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the nursing staff, he will state the number thereof –

- (a) recruited at his Ministry, since July 2005 to date,
- (b) who have left the public service temporarily or permanently to join the private sector or to take employment abroad.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that since July 2005 to date, 306 candidates, selected by the Public Service Commission have been offered enlistment as student nurse but only 221 have accepted the offer and are currently undergoing training.

A new batch of 166 student nurses is due to be enlisted in the near future. The Public Service Commission has already initiated action for the enlistment of this batch. Another batch of 200 will be enlisted as from March 2009.

On the other hand, I wish to point out that, as from July 2005, 527 student nurses have qualified as nursing officer.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b), I wish to point out that it is not the policy of my Ministry to grant leave without pay to nursing staff to join the private sector or to take up employment abroad. However, I wish to inform the House that some 157 officers in the nursing cadre have left the service since 01 July 2005. We have no indication of whether they have joined the private sector or have taken employment abroad or simply have ceased to work.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are as at to date 286 vacancies in the grade of Nursing Officers and 170 student nurses will qualify as Nursing Officers by the end of August 2008. Another batch of 138 Student Nurses will qualify in July 2009.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have seen some figures of the number of nursing staff which the new Apollo Hospital will be targeting. Has there been any impact assessment, or what impact with the coming into operation of Apollo or any other hospital could have on the nursing staff of the Ministry?

Mr Faugoo: Not as yet, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but what I can say is that we have, as a matter of policy, encouraged private nursing schools to be opened and we have granted licences to four of them already which are actually working out to be operational in the near future. Apollo Group is one of them.

FOOTBALL - MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE

(No. B/908) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Ministerial Committee on football, he will state –

- (a) the dates on which it met;
- (b) if it has taken stock of the performance of the football clubs, region-wise and at national level, and
- (c) when it proposes to submit its report.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, ...

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister should be in Parliament, because there is only one day where Parliament sits. It is a mockery of Parliamentary democracy not to be here when questions are being put to the Minister.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: I tend my apologies for not being here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ministerial Committee on football met twice officially in October 2005 and, subsequently, had several meetings to review the situation prevailing in football and to discuss remedial measures, more particularly issues pertaining to boosting of football at grassroots and school levels and setting up of football academy. Members of the Committee have planned to have a final meeting by the end of this month before coming forward with a report which is scheduled to be submitted by the end of September.

However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must point out that the causes of the ills in our football are very deep and need deep probing. We cannot, therefore, rush with decisions which will have only a short-term effectiveness.

I would like to inform the House that during the course of its meetings the Ministerial Committee has identified a plethora of measures to boost up our football in primary and secondary schools as well as the clubs at national levels.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the measures to be announced will be very bold and I am ready to take my responsibilities. However, we should await the outcome of the report.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this question comes at the appropriate time. I consider it very shameful after what has happened, our shameful defeat recently against Seychelles with a 7-0 and

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question!

Mr Bhagwan:..... that the hon. Minister is still in office and the national coach, Mr Chundunsing. Sir, I won't go into the failure of the Ministerial Committee. This is our opinion, this is the public opinion. With your permission, I have asked several questions since 2006 on the issue of football. If I can quote PQ No. B/508 –

“Poor performance of the national football team.....”

The Deputy Speaker: This should be a matter for a statement at the end of Government business.

Mr Bhagwan: No, it is not a statement; I am just asking the hon. Minister ...

The Deputy Speaker: This is Question Time.

Mr Bhagwan: ... if he can go back to what he replied on 16 May ...

The Deputy Speaker: I've allowed the hon. Member to set the picture for his question. He should come with his question now!

Mr Bhagwan: How can the hon. Minister reconcile the long statement he has made following the Parliamentary questions on the poor performance and his repeated intentions of making better our football? How does he reconcile it with consecutive defeats we have had during the past months?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House will be aware that in the context of the African Cup of Nation in June 2003, Mauritius got beaten by 7 to nil in the same score. The national team was then under the responsibility of the French technician, Mr Patrick Parizon.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: Everybody in Mauritius knows that the national coach, the Minister, the Government and even the MFA have failed in their responsibilities. May we know what concrete actions the hon. Minister intends to take? Can the hon. Minister inform us when Mauritius will have a full-time national coach and can he also inform the House whether it is a part-time or a full-time national coach?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have even envisaged an immediate decision by withdrawing, if required, all the financial assistance to the Mauritius Football Association, pending the identification of the relevant remedial measures. Concerning a DTN, let me assure the House that we have the responsibilities to review the whole structure of the technical development of football and to harmonise the work of the national coaches.

I have already established contact in France and Germany to secure an expert in football and to act as DTN. A few names of potential candidates have been proposed and are being examined.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: This is the same reply which the Minister has given in 2006; he was going to look for a DTN. He has not replied to my question.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, I know.

Mr Bhagwan: I would like to know whether the national coach is a full-time or a part-time one?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Of course, he will be considered as a full-time DTN.

Mr Bhagwan: How does the hon. Minister reconcile the fact that the national coach is a full-timer and is also an adviser to one of his colleagues, the hon. Minister of Arts and Culture?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: I don't think it is the time to play politics here, but I can assure...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Hon. Dowarkasing, you can ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order, I said!

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, here, I mean business.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is a simple one: whether the coach is a full-timer or a part-timer?

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: How does the hon. Minister reconcile the fact that the coach is on a full-time job and yet he has another full-time job as adviser at the Ministry of Arts and Culture?

(Interruptions)

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Shame, *c'est eux! Ils n'ont rien à dire!*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Respond to the question, hon. Minister!

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Leader on the Opposition said 'shame'. That's all he knows about!

The Deputy Speaker: This is not the question. The question was: how can he be full-time in your Ministry and in the Ministry of Arts and Culture?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me reassure the House that I decide for sports in Mauritius and not the Leader of the Opposition!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order, I said! I have said, order!

Mr Lesjongard: M. le président nous aimons tous le football. C'est le sport roi. Actuellement, le football se trouve au niveau de l'ICU, M. le président.

What we are asking the hon. Minister is: what are the concrete actions that he is going to take with regard to our football in this country? *Il a dit beaucoup d'intentions depuis la dernière fois.* What we want to know in this House today: what are the concrete actions and when is he going to take them?

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

(Interruptions)

I can! I give my word as a gentleman. I have already been in contact with France and Germany concerning this matter....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Let me hear the hon. Minister!

Mr Tang Wah Hing: ...and the problem concerning football does not date back now, but a long time ago.

Mr Bhagwan: In trying to put the blame on the MFA and in stating that he will remove the subsidy from the MFA, isn't the hon. Minister, who has been three years in office, putting the blame '*pas moi, li sa*' on the MFA, it is not his responsibility? Is it not his Ministry that gives fund to the MFA?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will take full responsibility. I can assure the House that, as from now on, Government means business as far as football in Mauritius is concerned.

(Interruptions)

Mr Soodhun: Can the hon. Minister confirm to this House, whether a promoter of an industry in this country proposed to the Minister that he was going to give financial support to the Ministry to organise a national team permanent at his own cost and the Minister refused?

(Interruptions)

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member is being political bias on this.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I am on my feet! Hon. Minister, every question is political here. If ever you think that you don't have the answer to all the questions that are being asked, there is no need to say that it is political bias. Either you have the answer or you have not been provided with one. But if you have got the answer, for the sake of parliamentary democracy, please give it.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me reassure the hon. Member. When we take somebody's money, we must think about *le retour de l'ascenseur*. We cannot do things as if we were '*mendiants*'. Money can be evil. We need to treat our sportsmen in Mauritius like such.

Mr Bhagwan: M. le président, étant donné que le ministre a lamentablement failli à ses responsabilités, ne serait-il pas dans l'intérêt public ainsi que celui des sportifs que l'entraîneur national, M. Ashok Chundunsing, ainsi que lui-même soumettent leur démission ?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what have they done in 2003 when they were in power?

Mr Guimbeau: M. le président, 7:0 est un triste constat. En 2010, ce sera 60:0. Le ministre des sports a achevé le sport roi en complicité avec l'Alliance Sociale. Est-ce que le ministre peut dire s'il va revoir les facilités financières – les *grants* – offertes aux équipes de première et deuxième divisions à l'île Maurice ?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just want to reassure the hon. Member. We are going in that direction as a responsible Government.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister say when he is going to review all the grants to football teams?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is already on.

Mr Jhugroo: M. le président, le ministre peut-il nous dire quand nous aurons un match amical entre la sélection de Rodrigues et la sélection mauricienne ?

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister just said a few minutes ago that now onwards we mean business with regard to football. Can we know what has he been doing for the last three years, after setting up a Ministerial committee concerning football?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have already replied.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has stated that he has contacted some French and German experts. Will he inform the House whether he will take on board the suggestion I made in this House, namely that he himself, as Minister, goes to England, France and many other European countries, without Mr Chundunsing and the MFA - because his statute allows him to do it - and asks the teams from the 1st and 2nd and even 3rd Division to take on board some youngsters of the age of 13 to 14 from a

proper *école de foot* in Mauritius, to take them under their wing, so that, at least, within ten years as from now, we are guaranteed to have not only *une ossature* but a complete team that would be professional and able to do honour to the Republic of Mauritius?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am agreeable to the suggestion of the hon. Member.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has not stated what he intends to do with the national coach. The nation needs a reply.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the competition is still going on. I think the hon. Member should, at least, wait for the return of the national team. As he knows very well, it's not my doing. Normally, it's the Federation that normally appoints and, in this case, it is Mr Ashok Chundensing. When the national team comes back, they will take the final decision.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that our national hero, Mr Chundensing, is facing disciplinary action vis-à-vis the International Federation for bad conduct at the stadia?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, does the hon. Member want to replace FIFA?

The Deputy Speaker: Is the hon. Minister aware of that?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: No, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not aware.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Minister inform the House or enlighten all the hon. Members here? Would it be correct to say that already the MFA has contacted other potential coaches to replace Mr Chundensing? Would that information be correct?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: No, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

STREET VENDORS – PITON BUILDING - CUREPIPE

(No. B/909) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the sixty street vendors operating near the piton building in Curepipe, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, information as to if they have been asked to vacate the premises and, if so –

- (a) when, and
- (b) if any alternative location has been identified for them to continue their activities.

Dr. David: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that 65 street vendors were as from December 2002 allowed on a purely temporary basis to ply their trade near the Piton Building in Curepipe. One of the clauses of the contract stipulates that the licence issued to them may be revoked by giving one month written notice in case the site is required for any development purpose.

Given that the Municipal Council had decided to construct a new building on the site, which will also comprise a new market, the street vendors were requested to vacate the site on 26 May 2006. The street vendors refused to abide to the notice and, subsequently, they lodged a case against the Council in the Supreme Court. The judgment delivered in the case was in favour of the Council.

Subsequently, following representations received at my Ministry from the street vendors, I chaired a meeting on 08 August 2007 with representatives of the Municipal Council and the street vendors, in order to find a solution to the problem faced by them. During the meeting, it was agreed that these vendors would be allowed to operate on the site pending the construction of the new building.

In the matter before the Supreme Court and following the judgment in favour of the Council, the street vendors had applied for leave in January 2008 to appeal to the Privy Council. When the appeal case was heard, the street vendors presented a motion, through their lawyer, to allow them to trade up to 31 August 2008. The lawyer of the Council did not raise any objection to the motion and the plea was allowed.

In the circumstances, the Council has no option than to abide by the Court judgement. Consequently, any extension is a matter to be determined by the Court.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as matters stand, the question put up at part (b) does not arise.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in reply to PQ B/937, the hon. Minister said that he was certainly going to find a solution for those street vendors.

Dr. David: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is what was done. In fact, I chaired a meeting and, on humanitarian grounds, I asked the representatives of the Council of Curepipe to allow them to stay until the construction of the new market in Curepipe. But they went to Court, and the Court gave a judgement. In their plea, they said they would stay until 31 August 2008. I have to abide by what the Court says. If they need any extension, they have to go back to Court.

Mr Guimbeau: Does the hon. Minister mean that, as from end of August 2008, they will stop working?

The Deputy Speaker: The answer has already been given.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I just request the hon. Minister if he could, on humanitarian ground, chair another meeting and find a solution for these people anew? Since now there is a case in Court, maybe we could find some way out to find a place where these people can continue their trade?

The Deputy Speaker: A judgment has already been delivered and there has been an agreement. They will have to abide by the agreement that they are a party to.

SOLITUDE – OMNI SPORT COMPLEX – LAND ACQUISITION

(No. B/910) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to a portion of land of an extent of 4.22 arpents which was compulsorily acquired from the Harel Frères Ltd., for the construction of an omni sport complex in Solitude and in respect of which a letter of reservation was issued to Padkam Investment Holdings Ltd., he will state where matters stand

Mr Dulull: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, further to my replies to PQ No. B/1193 on 27 November 2007, PQ No. B/1336 and PQ No. B/1369 on 11 December 2007, the current position is that the project plan and the relevant permits are being examined in depth at the level of the different Ministries concerned. In this context, consultations are still on between the promoter and the Planning Division of my Ministry for the finalization of the development plan, following which a letter of intent will be issued to the company subject to the promoter satisfying all the terms and conditions including the planning guidelines.

I can assure the hon. Member that no flimsy projects can pass the test of technical scrutiny after issue of the letter of reservation, and this is applicable in all cases indiscriminately.

Mr Guimbeau: Can the hon. Minister explain to the House how a State land, which has been compulsory acquired with taxpayers' money in the public interest, is leased to a private investment holding company?

Mr Dulull: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have already answered all these questions. Once again, I am going to spell it out. The land was acquired for a public project on 22 December 1999. The land was vested in the Ministry of Youth and Sports in January 2000. The land was undeveloped until 04 June 2004 - four years later. Then, the land was returned back to the Ministry of Housing and Lands and has remained idle until an application was made for a project. Instead of the land remaining idle, it has to be used for...

(Interruptions)

The application was meant for a useful project. We are in the process of considering the project and we want to optimise our land resource.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether there has been a study to evaluate the sports needs of the youth of this region, whether it has been decided that the youth of this region does not need such a sports complex?

Mr Dulull: I suppose the hon. Member should know this better than me. For four years she had been in Government and I suppose that following the report they decided to do away with the land.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Labelle, that is the question that you did put, to see whether there are not other uses which could be done with the land and this is the answer you are getting actually. You requested the answer that you are getting, it is neither me nor the Minister.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when Government compulsorily acquires a plot of land for a specific purpose, that is, in the context of the public interest or when Government wishes to change the purpose of that land or allocate that land, it has to inform the former owner of that plot of land. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether this has been done and, if this is the case, has the former owner accepted? Will the hon. Minister table a copy of the correspondence addressed to the former owner of that plot of land?

Mr Dulull: Being a former Minister of Housing and Lands, the hon. Member is quite right in raising this issue. Being a responsible and caring Government, we will ensure that all steps and procedures are looked into. When Government acquires a plot of land for a public purpose, in case it no longer requires the land, it should offer the land for sale to the original owner at market price. We did write to the owner, we informed him: "We no longer require the land, do you have any objection that the land be used for other purpose?" And we have the reply of the owner that he does not have any objection. I am tabling a copy of the letter.

(Interruptions)

Mr Guimbeau: Can the hon. Minister say if there has been any public tender to allocate the land?

Mr Dulull: I wonder if public tender was the practice before. Allocation of land is based on the merit of the project. To my mind, I cannot recall any plot of land allocated during 2000-2005 on public tender.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I know whether the land that has been given to a third party has been sold or allocated to the third party?

Mr Dulull: State land, except for those of ex-CHA houses which have been put on sale, is on lease and not on sale.

Mr Guimbeau: I want to know the extent of the land which has been leased. Is it 8 *arpents* or 4 *arpents*?

Mr Dulull: It is 8 *arpents*.

(Interruptions)

For the 8 *arpents*, the rental is Rs1.6 m. annually. It is based on market rent.

TOUR DE L'ILE CYCLING COMPETITION – NATIONAL TEAM

(No. B/911) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the *Tour de l'Ile* cycling competition to be held in September 2008, he will state if Mauritius will be represented by a national team.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the very outset, I must inform the hon. Member that I am surprised with this situation. It has always been a tradition for the Republic of Mauritius to be represented by a national team in the *Tour de l'Ile* cycling competition since 26 years. We are at the 27th edition.

I have taken up the matter with the president of the Federation, and I have advised him to review the position of the Mauritius Cycling Federation regarding our participation in the Tour. However, I am informed that there has been an evolution at international level regarding the fielding of teams in cycling competitions.

Presently, participation of clubs are favoured rather than national selection. I am also informed that there has been a consensus among all Cycling Clubs concerned and within the Cycling Federation which has adopted the same principle for this edition of the *Tour de l'Ile* on a trial basis.

Mr Jhugroo: Can I know from the hon. Minister how many Mauritian teams are taking part in this *Tour de l'Ile* 2008?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Normally, the national team is funded by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and a second team (*Espoir*) is usually sponsored by the MCB.

ATHLETES (HIGH LEVEL) - ALLOWANCES

(No. B/912) **Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Youth & Sports whether, in regard to the high level athletes, he will state the names thereof, indicating the allowances paid to each of them.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is currently providing financial assistance to 47 high level athletes in 10 sports disciplines under the High Level Sports Allowance Scheme.

The quantum payable to the athletes ranges from Rs1,000 to Rs20,000 monthly depending on the level of their performance at regional, continental, intercontinental or world class level.

The purpose of the financial assistance is to provide an incentive to the athletes to make maximum effort in order to achieve excellence. However, it is a support towards expenses such as personal equipment, food support supplement and transport for their preparation.

For the month of June 2008 a total amount of Rs182,000 was disbursed.

I am tabling the list of athletes with the respective allowances paid to them.

I wish to inform the House that for the last financial year my Ministry had disbursed a total amount of Rs2,198,000 under the scheme.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister at what frequency those allowances are reviewed and when were they reviewed for the last time?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Sir, normally this is done by a technical committee and it is being reviewed every quarterly.

Mr Lesjongard: When was it last done?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Maybe last month.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, apart from these allowances, can I know from the hon. Minister whether our national heroes – I take the example of Mr Buckland and Mr Milazar - have any facilities with our national airline when they go and participate in the various competitions...

The Deputy Speaker: No, the question does not relate to this issue.

Mr Bhagwan: It relates to allowances.

The Deputy Speaker: No, it is completely different. If the hon. Member has a substantive question, he can come with it.

Mr Lesjongard: Sir, with regard to those athletes who are participating in the Olympic games to be held next month, can we know the allowances being drawn by those athletes?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for high level athletes, they are provided with Rs15,000 every month since April 2008.

Mrs Martin: Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister whether allowances are still payable in cases where athletes are injured?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Yes, even the expenses regarding the surgical fees are covered.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I heard the Minister say that it is a technical committee that reviews at regular intervals the allowances being paid. Is it the same technical committee that has to decide which athletes will get what sum because I understand that it varies from one athlete to the other? If this is the case, can we know who chairs that committee and who are the members?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerning this matter, it is a technical and independent committee which is chaired by Mr Ram Lollchand. The Minister has no say on it and it is purely technical because when one athlete is recommended, it is based on the minima.

Mr Lesjongard: Again with regard to the delegation of athletes going for the Olympic games, I understand that each one of them is benefiting from an allowance of Rs15,000 per month and the Minister said that the maximum allowance is Rs20,000. Does he mean that none of these athletes draws an allowance of Rs20,000? Are all these athletes considered at the same level?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: I think it depends on the technicality of the request itself. For example, Stephen Buckland gets nearly Rs15,000 plus Rs20,000 which amount to Rs35,000 per month, but there are some cases where the athletes can normally get Rs8,000 plus Rs15,000, that is, Rs23,000.

SCHOOLS - BLACKBOARDS/CHALKS - USE

(No. B/913) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state if he will consider the advisability of reviewing the use of blackboards and chalks in primary and secondary schools.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I presume the hon. Member is referring to the physical replacement of blackboard and chalk by whiteboards and markers. If that is so, I wish to inform the House, that there is already a gradual process of replacement of blackboard and chalk by whiteboard and markers and all Parent-Teachers' Associations (PTA) are encouraged to participate in this process. To date, there are 36 out of 69 State Secondary Schools and 171 out of 259 primary schools which are equipped with whiteboards.

Beyond the utilisation of chalks and board, my Ministry is also implementing a policy of integrating the use of ICT in teaching and learning. At primary level, each school has a minimum of 10 computers whereas at secondary level all schools have fully functional ICT labs with access to internet through ADSL.

In addition, projects like the NEPAD e-school demo or the physics data logging project whereby schools, equipped with added and more advanced technologies, are meant to support and uphold the use of ICT in teaching/learning. In the medium to long term, we aspire to have a fully ICT based approach in the education sector.

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Minister has given statistics for State secondary schools and primary schools. Can he provide statistics for private secondary schools and say how we are moving ahead with this project?

Mr Gokhool: Presently, there are 138 private secondary schools and blackboards have been replaced in almost all laboratories, specialist rooms and audio-visual rooms. Concerning the other question, I do not have this information.

MRA – VAT - ARREARS

(No. B/914) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Value Added Tax, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to –

- (a) the amount of tax unpaid by the small, medium and large tax payers, as at to date,
- (b) the measures taken to recover the arrears, indicating if any prosecution has been initiated.

The Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations & Employment (Dr. V. Bunwaree): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

I am informed by the Mauritius Revenue Authority that the amount of VAT unpaid as at 30 June 2008 by the small, medium and large tax payers stood at Rs967 m., out of which Rs630 m. is in respect of large taxpayers and the remaining amount of Rs337 m. relates to small and medium taxpayers.

With regard to part (b) of the question and as the House may be aware, the MRA implemented a Tax Arrears Payment Incentive Scheme (TAPIS) last year. Under this scheme, taxpayers who had arrears of VAT were allowed a 75 per cent waiver on accrued penalties provided that the outstanding amounts were settled within six months. The penalty rebate was a one-time concession. During the year ended 30 June 2008 an amount of Rs406 m. was collected as arrears of VAT.

In addition, the enforcement actions that were taken are in line with the provisions as laid down in the VAT Act which are -

- (i) attachment of monies in the hands of third parties, e.g. banks;
- (ii) distress and sale of goods, chattels and personal effects;
- (iii) inscription of privilege on immovable properties;
- (iv) constraint Order for sale of immovable properties of the taxpayer, and
- (v) prosecution for failure to pay tax

I am also informed that there were 186 cases that had been referred to the Police for prosecution for failure to pay tax as at 30 June 2008.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister say whether he has figures to show what has been the trend over the past three or four years in respect of the debt relating to VAT?

Dr. Bunwaree: I do not have the figures, but with regard to the work that has been done by the MRA - the figures prove it - I think we are on the right track now.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister the amount of any sum that is not enforceable because of representations that have been made to the Assessment Review. Does he have the figures?

Dr. Bunwaree: If a proper question is put, we can give the figures. I need notice of this question.

The Deputy Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ Nos. B/938, B/946 and B/947 have been withdrawn.

ARTIFICIAL TURF – SETTING UP

(No. B/915) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Youth & Sports whether, in regard to the project for the setting up of an artificial Turf, funded partly by the FIFA and by Government, he will state –

- (a) the amount of public funds allocated thereto, giving details thereof, and
- (b) if the services of any consultant have been retained for this project and the amount of fees paid, if any.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the installation of an artificial turf at St François Xavier Stadium is totally funded by FIFA, to the tune of Rs30 m.

However, the host country benefiting from such facility is required to ensure that the stadium be of an acceptable standard in line with the conditions set down by FIFA.

Accordingly, after consultations with the Mauritius Football Association, necessary arrangements have been made for the reconstruction of the stadium.

An amount of about Rs77.4 m. has been earmarked for the financial years 2008/09 and 2009/2010 to that effect.

The stadium can provide for a seating capacity of 5000 persons. However, due to budgetary constraints, the project will comprise the construction of stands with a seating capacity for 2000 persons, in the first instance, parking facilities and all the required finishes to render the stadium operational.

Pending the reconstruction of the stadium appropriate action has already been taken by my Ministry for the demolition of existing stands and the construction of a new block wall along the main road of the stadium.

With regard to part (b) of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to inform the House that, after obtaining the approval of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED), the services of a consultancy firm, have been retained for the project for the agreed fixed sum of about Rs4.3 m. inclusive of VAT, which represents 6% of the project costs and is in line with the normal rate applicable for such cases.

As at date, an amount of about Rs500,000 has been paid to the consultancy firm for the preparation of the designs and drawings.

Mr Dowarkasing: I did not get the hon. Minister well. Has he stated the amount of public funds that has been earmarked for this project?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: An amount of Rs77.4 m. has been earmarked for the financial years 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 for this project.

Mr Dowarkasing: May I, therefore, ask the hon. Minister whether it is the MFA that is going to implement this project on behalf of Government?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Not really, because at this point in time we are looking for the CTB to allocate tenders.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister what is the time frame for the completion of this stadium as per FIFA recommendation and has it been adhered to?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, maybe the hon. Member is mixing issues. Concerning the artificial Turf, there is a time frame to be respected, but as for the installation of the stands, Government will look into it.

Mr Dowarkasing: May I know from the hon. Minister whether any amount has been earmarked or has been released for the payment of any consultation fees to any consultant?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: I have already replied to this question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Dowarkasing: May we know the amount that has been forwarded and when was it paid?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have already replied to this question.

Mr Dowarkasing: Can the hon. Minister therefore say whether the same consultant, who was initially appointed, is working on this project or has a new consultant been appointed?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: There was a tendering exercise and the same person has been allocated the tender.

Mr Bhagwan: Can we know who is that consultant?

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

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Regarding the question itself...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members should listen to what I have to say! The question has been so set where it is said: 'if the services of any consultant have been retained for this project'.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: It is DLPG architects.

TRAFFIC SIGNAL EQUIPMENT - PURCHASE

(No. B/916) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to traffic lights and lights at pedestrian crossings, he will state the number purchased in each case, since July 2005 to date, indicating where they have been installed.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to this question.

Since July 2005 to date, 8 sets of traffic signal equipment have been purchased for signalised junctions and 16 sets for pedestrian crossings.

27 sets have been installed during the same period including 3 sets previously purchased. I am placing the list of locations where they have been installed in the Library.

Mr Dowarkasing: May I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether any pedestrian traffic light has been included for corner of Ceré and Abbé La Caille streets?

Dr. Beebeejaun: In the list that I have here, in the Constituency of the hon. Member, two have been installed, but I cannot say where.

Mr Dowarkasing: May I just bring to the attention of the hon. Deputy Prime Minister that, in 2006, he promised that he was to look into this matter and do the needful but, up to now - we are in 2008 - nothing has been done so far?

Dr. Beebeejaun: The promise still stands, Sir.

Dr. Mungur: For the traffic lights, we are using light-emitting diodes which consume 40% less of electricity. May I ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether we are using or we are going to use light-emitting diodes (LED)?

Dr. Beebeejaun: I mentioned it in the Budget. There are already 14 sets installed. It is our policy to install more.

OUTGOING TOURISTS – SURVEY

(No. B/917) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether, in regard to the survey on outgoing tourists, conducted every two years and due to be conducted this year, he will state if it is proposed to have it carried out and if not, why not.

The Minister of Information & Telecommunications (Mr E. Sinatambou): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

I am informed that the survey on outgoing tourists will, in fact, be carried out as from January next year.

I am further informed that the survey is normally carried out every two years and that the last survey was carried out for the period January to December 2006.

My understanding, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that it has been decided that this year, the survey will be carried out after a period of three years, being given that it has been observed that there have not been any significant changes in the findings of the past consecutive surveys.

I am advised that a decision will be taken as to whether to carry out next surveys every two or three years in the light of the findings of the forthcoming survey.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question!

Mr Valayden: I believe that the Chair has been informed that PQ No. B/918 will be answered by the Prime Minister.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Dayal!

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member has heard what I have myself heard. I am not going to indulge in this one. According to information that I have this question is going to be replied by the hon. Prime Minister.

.....

Mr Guimbeau: On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this question was put to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister said that the question should be addressed to the Attorney-General.

The Deputy Speaker: Listen to me, hon. Member! When Cabinet decides that a question should be answered by one Minister instead of another, the Chair cannot do anything about this.

(Interruptions)

This is the information that I have.

Mr Guimbeau: Two questions have been put to the Prime Minister, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

MONT ORY, MOKA – RETAINING WALLS

(No. B/919) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he will state if he will consider the advisability of having retaining walls constructed on both sides of the road at Mont Ory, Moka, leading to the Highway and provide access roads to the region.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Sir, I am informed that officers of the Road Development Authority (RDA) visited the site on 18 July 2008 and confirmed that there is no risk of landslide.

A study carried out by GIBB (Mauritius) Ltd. in 2004 estimated the cost of construction of retaining walls on both sides of the road at Rs25 m. The RDA will implement the project according to availability of funds.

I am referring the request for access road to the local authorities concerned.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will very humbly request the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to effect a site visit and see *de visu* the hardship faced by the inhabitants. In case of emergency no car can have access. If ever they buy a car, they have to leave it on the main road *et par les temps qui courent* we understand the risk which this involves. That's why I will request very humbly to the Deputy Prime Minister if he can effect a site visit along with officials of his Ministry?

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to point out to the hon. Member that I have visited without him and once with him. I know the site very well. I realise the difficulty, *ce que j'appelle l'enclavement de cette région*. I realise that the topography is very difficult. We are looking at it. There will be a major development from Mon Désert in that region; we will address the issue at the same time.

Mr Dayal: I don't know if the hon. Deputy Prime Minister has understood where I really mean. It is the road leading to the national highway. It is through no fault of theirs, because of the road the topography of the soil has changed, the soil is eroding and the narrow path is getting narrower.

NATIONAL COLLEGES - NUMBER

(No. B/920) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the National Colleges, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof as at
 - (i) January 2007;
 - (ii) January 2008
- (b) if other regional colleges will be converted into national colleges as from January 2009, and
- (c) the criteria used for such conversion.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information is as follows -

- (a) there were nine and 12 colleges admitting students in 2007 and 2008 respectively, on the basis of merit;
- (b) for January 2009, three additional colleges have been upgraded to the status of National Colleges namely Piton State Secondary School, France Boyer de la Giroday SSS and Sir Leckraj Teelock SSS, and
- (c) as regards the last part of the question, the overriding criterion is to create opportunities for students with the best results to access the high demand schools on the basis of merit. Given that the education system is a dynamic one, and that, on account of the on-going educational reforms and the quality initiatives, more and more students are doing better and better and are expected to do better, my Ministry has to enlarge opportunities for them. In designating the National colleges, a proper school mapping exercise is carried out where my Ministry looks at the public demand and supply of seats, the geographical position, the quality of the infrastructure and availability of educational and recreational facilities.

As a matter of fact, although admission to a National college is made on the basis of performance, nowhere is it provided that access thereto should be limited to only those obtaining the maximum grade of 24 units. Enlarging access to National colleges, not exclusively on the basis of a 4 A⁺ (i.e. 4 x 6 = 24 units) but also accommodating students who do not achieve the 4 A⁺ but have nevertheless put in the required efforts, should be encouraged. Overtime, this will result in higher achievements of the many as opposed to higher achievements of the few.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have heard the hon. Minister mentioning the criteria to get into the National colleges, that is, 24 units and so on. What I am interested in is: what criteria have been used to upgrade these regional colleges into National colleges?

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. Minister mean part (c) of the question?

Mrs Labelle: Yes, the criteria used.

The Deputy Speaker: In fact, your question is quite clear.

Mr Gokhool: I have already given the answer, I can repeat it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr Gokhool: What I said is: as regards the last part of the question, that is, part (c), the overriding criterion is to create opportunities for students with the best results to access the high demand schools on the basis of merit. Given that the education system is a dynamic one, and that, on account of the ongoing educational reforms ...

(Interruptions)

Well, this is the answer I have given.

The Deputy Speaker: The criteria for conversion.

Mrs Labelle: I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Once again, the hon. Minister has repeated the criteria to get into this school. He has talked about providing higher level and so on. My question is: what criteria have been used to upgrade these regional schools into National colleges and why France Boyer de la Giroday SSS and Sir Leckraj Teelock SSS? I suppose some criteria have been used.

Mr Gokhool: I cannot undertake this exercise without criteria. I have just said that I will read the relevant part of it: in designating the National colleges, a proper school mapping exercise is carried out and the Ministry takes into account the public demand and supply of seats. The statistics are available. When we do the school mapping, we project, we know the statistics, and also the geographical positioning, the quality of the infrastructure and the availability of educational and recreational facilities.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has, on a number of occasions, mentioned in the House that there is no difference between a National college and a regional college as far as infrastructure and the teaching are concerned. May I ask the hon. Minister whether there has been any change in this policy?

Mr Gokhool: In fact, there is a public document, when I answered the question of the hon. lady, which is available. And we follow the same policy. It is the admission on the basis of merit. Otherwise, the human and physical resources are similar. In fact, some of the regional colleges have got better facilities in terms of infrastructure.

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, now that three new colleges will be National colleges, can I know from the hon. Minister how many seats will be available for national colleges - how many for boys and girls respectively - and out of the three colleges, which one will be for boys and which one girls?

Mr Gokhool: I will give the figures as I have them. Seats in Form I in 2009: 7,985 in the State Schools, both in national and regional colleges. In the National colleges: 1,890 with 945 boys and 945 girls. These are the projected figures and we have to wait for the results of exams. And for private colleges, the figure is 11,502.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister why this change in policy? Because, at the start, when he came with his reform or counter-reform, he mentioned that all students will not be forced into the rat race and that some students might choose not to ask for seats in the national colleges. Then, why are we forcing children to enter the rat race? Because when we convert the regional college into a national college, students from the region will not have the option of choosing to get admitted into a regional college?

Mr Gokhool: First of all, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a continuity of the policy, there is no change. Because as from 2007 we have moved on to the establishment of national colleges and this policy is being maintained. At present, there are students who are in regional colleges and who stay in the regional colleges. The process is going on whereby every school, whether it is national or regional, will emerge as a quality school on its own merit and it will have its own characteristics. For example, certain schools will emerge in terms of academic achievements and also in terms of excellence in science or academic brilliance, excellence in languages. This is the process we have engaged upon. They may not agree, that is their business, but we are going ahead with the policy of the Government.

(Interruptions)

They will never agree!

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must say that the hon. Minister is quite confusing in his answers. Since he says that the quality of education is the same in all the schools and that the schools have the same infrastructure, on what basis does he choose to put one college as a national college and another one as a regional one?

Mr Gokhool: I think I will go back to where we started then if they want to open the whole debate. What we wanted to do is honour a pledge taken to the nation that we will have Form I to VI colleges and put in place the policy is addressing that issue, and we are continuing the same policy.

Mr Guinness: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister whether he has projected any figure of national colleges? How many national colleges, at the end of the day, we will have?

Mr Gokhool: As I said, this is a situation which evolves. If we look at the statistics, if the demand goes on, we have to accommodate the demand of the students. But, at some point, a point will be reached where this process will have to stop.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister mentioned earlier that he is against the competition at CPE level, and that at one point in time we expect the CPE to get phased out. May I ask him what will be the basis of admission - whether we are going to have a competitive exam for admission in National colleges or whether we will eventually have all colleges converted into national colleges with admission on a regional basis?

Mr Gokhool: Let me, first of all, tell the hon. lady that we believe in fair competition on the basis of merit. If she thinks that there can be a world without the competition, she is just dreaming. The other thing I want to say is that, with regard to the second part of the question, I have already given the explanation on many occasions.

Mr Jhugoo: Can I know from the hon. Minister why all his answers are so confusing today?

The Deputy Speaker: No.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, we are all getting confused with the different answers. At one time the Minister is saying that one criterion is quality of infrastructure and when we asked for the difference he said that there is no difference. He now talks about the demand. How far is the hon. Minister proposing to go regarding the demand? What does the hon. Minister mean by the demand? Is it the only criterion of having 4A+ and something like that?

The Deputy Speaker: It is not only the hon. Minister who is confused!

Mr Gokhool: If the hon. lady is confused for three years, I am not responsible for that. She has to live with her confusion!

The Deputy Speaker: Next question!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Mrs Labelle! Hon. Mrs Labelle!

(Interruptions)

This has to stop now!

(Interruptions)

This has to stop now!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Mrs Labelle, I am asking you to withdraw from the House!

(Interruptions)

At this stage, the Opposition Members left the Chamber

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Next Question!

ENTERPRISE MAURITIUS – EMPLOYEES - CONTRACTS

(No. B/921) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprise, Commerce and co-operatives whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Enterprise Mauritius, information as to if some 20 employees thereof, mostly at senior management level, have had their contracts of employment terminated and, if so, indicate –

- (a) when and the circumstances thereof, and
- (b) if, prior to the termination of the contracts, a performance appraisal in respect of the employees had been carried out.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been advised that there are presently 51 employees at the Enterprise Mauritius, 36 employed on contract basis and 15 are employed on a permanent and pensionable basis.

I have also been informed that the contract of no employee has been terminated. The contracts of these employees which have expired have been extended.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the Minister say that no contract has been terminated. According to my information, the contracts are to be terminated for some and certain posts have been advertised and interviews are to be held shortly. Can the hon. Minister confirm this?

Dr. Jeetah: My understanding is that their contracts have expired and some of the contracts might expire, but none of them has their contract terminated. I also understand that there is a new HR structure which is being worked out by the Board of Enterprise Mauritius.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether these officers were employed in ex-Mida and EPZDA and reckoned an average of 15 years of service. My information is that the contracts are about to expire and they will be laid off. Is the information correct?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to look into the average time that they had served in other institutions. But from the information I have, the previous Government decided to rationalize these institutions so that they can offer a better service.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister if he can categorically inform the House whether at Enterprise Mauritius there would be any laying off, whether they are employees on contract or not?

Dr. Jeetah: I can never give this categoric answer because the reason why these gentlemen and ladies are paying offered salaries is to make sure that we get value for money and the Board is totally independent of Government and they have to make sure that our country gets the best of service.

Mr Bundhoo: May I, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, ask the hon. Minister whether for the last three years this highly paid staff has been giving satisfaction to Enterprise Mauritius?

Dr. Jeetah: In general, I can say that the industry last year had an output of Rs43 billion. I am sure Enterprise Mauritius did have something to do but, as I said, this is a totally independent Board and it has to take its decisions to the best interest of the nation.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask another question? Is the hon. Minister satisfied ...

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member is asking for the Minister's opinion.

Mr Bundhoo: Can I put the question differently, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? Can the hon. Minister confirm that these officers have been giving results in the textile sector and other sector within the Enterprise Mauritius?

Dr. Jeetah: I have just replied, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that in general we had a good year. In fact, we had a ninety year record, but as I said this is an independent Board. We have to make sure that we use resources that we have to get the best for the country.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Minister kindly inform the House, given that the Mauritius Enterprise falls under his Ministry, whether there will be a performance appraisal of the officers of the Enterprise Mauritius?

Dr. Jeetah: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there has not been a performance appraisal. I think that is a valid point and it will have to be considered.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether all the employees whose contract are about to be terminated have equivalent vacancies in terms of profile which have been advertised? If not, does the hon. Minister intend to cater for those who are not eligible for a re-application?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said, we have an independent Board and it has got very clear indications of what the requirements of the Government is. I do not get in the day-to-day activities of Enterprise Mauritius and I rely on the performance of the Board. In fact, I would just add that the members who sit on the Board are people like Mr Currimjee, M. de Grivel, Mr Parker, M. Jean Suzanne, representatives of my Ministry and representatives of the Ministry of Finance. I take it that these people are very knowledgeable in what they are doing.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister when will a performance appraisal be carried out with regard to the employees on contract or on not at Enterprise Mauritius?

Dr. Jeetah: I will have to raise this issue with the Board, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, so that we can do it as quickly as possible.

Mr. Bundhoo: May I ask the hon. Minister if he could ask the Board, under such powers given to him under the Act, to suspend all decisions of terminating the contracts or advertising for new jobs pending an appraisal performance is being done at Enterprise Mauritius?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to seek guidance from the Attorney-General. I understand that Government does not have a majority on that Board. I have to seek the views of the Attorney-General before taking any decision.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware of any conflict between the Chairman and the Executive Director of Enterprise Mauritius?

Dr. Jeetah: I have answered in the past, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that there have been conflicts which in a sense might be a good thing as well as there are people with very strong character. But what matters to me is results. Also that industry is getting the best that it deserves from Enterprise Mauritius.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, already 20% of the salary are based on performance appraisal and technically the officers who are employed on contract basis draw this salary and are performing well. Can the hon. Minister explain the rationale behind reassessing these officers who have served for three years? They are going to be reassessed in an interview of 15 minutes. If they were not good, they could have been sanctioned earlier. Why they should be called again for an interview of 15 minutes to be assessed again!

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member has made his point.

Dr. Jeetah: As I have said, Mr Deputy Speaker, I can only give a general view of what is happening. I do not hold any control on the Board because, as I said, Government does not have a majority on the Board. As I said, I also need to seek the views of the Attorney-General to see how best to move forward. There was one point that was raised with regards the performance of these officers. I think the Board will have to make sure that we get once more, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the best value for the country.

Dr. Mungur: May I ask the hon. Minister how the Board members were selected? What is the lifespan of

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Mungur, this has nothing to do with the question.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister give the assurance to the House that, in fact, the conflict between the Chairman and the Deputy Director of Enterprise Mauritius...

The Deputy Speaker: This also is out of the scope of the question.

Mr Varma: In fact, the hon. Minister has said that there is a conflict, but he wants results. But can the hon. Minister inform the House whether this is not having any negative impact on the performance of Enterprise Mauritius?

Dr. Jeetah: Is the hon. Member asking for my opinion, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

Mr Varma: I would like to know whether this impacts on the performance.

Dr. Jeetah: As I said, I did mention the results of last year. We did have an exceptional year in spite of all the difficulties.

The Deputy Speaker: It is impacting positively.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to make a humble request to the hon. Minister to consider whether, under the Act, he has got any power to request the Board to give priority to these 21 officers who are under contract and who have served for 15 years previously under MIDA and other institutions of similar nature in view of their experience? Can he use his power or whatever power he has without consulting the Attorney-General?

The Deputy Speaker: It cannot be by whatever power; it should be power accorded by Statute only.

Dr. Jeetah: Can I just for the benefit of the hon. Member inform him that these officers were recruited at Enterprise Mauritius in June 2005? I have had a meeting with all officers of Enterprise Mauritius and I would use whatever powers which fall under my Ministry to convey the message of the hon. Member.

The Deputy Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ. Nos. B/923, B/924, B/925, B/926 and B/946 have been withdrawn.

ENTERPRISE MAURITIUS - PROJECTS

(No. B/922) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce & Cooperatives whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Enterprise Mauritius, information as to if a plan of action for the projects to be implemented in the financial 2007-2008 was submitted for consideration to the Board and, if so, indicate –

- (a) when;
- (b) the number of projects approved and disapproved, and
- (c) how these will impact on the performance of the company.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been informed that the Board of Enterprise Mauritius has approved, in two parts, a plan of action containing projects to be implemented by the organisation in 2007 and 2008.

An initial document was circulated to Board members on 30 August 2007, in respect of which consultations had to be ensured with concerned stakeholders. The Board requested for the document to be submitted in two parts, that is, covering period January to June 2008 and period July 2008 to June 2009.

A first series of 17 out of 26 projects, covering period February to June 2008, was approved in February 2008. The projects focused mainly on capacity building and export development in sectors such as –

- Textile
- Agro-Industry
- Jewellery
- Wood & Furniture
- Printing and Publishing
- Entertainment, and
- ICT

The Board has, in May 2008, approved the second leg of the Action Plan, covering projects to be implemented over period July 2008 to June 2009. Out of 47 projects submitted, 38 were approved. An additional five projects were inserted.

These projects will contribute in enhancing the visibility of the Mauritian products and help operators secure orders and thereby facilitate market penetration.

Information pertaining to the progress of implementation of these projects is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a plan of action is the lifeblood of any organisation. A plan of action was submitted in August 2007, but the Board did not consider it for six months. In February 2008, the Board asked management to reformat and resubmit the plan. The following session, seven out of fifty projects...

The Deputy Speaker: What is the question?

Mr Dayal: Now, I am coming to the question. Seven out of fifty projects were approved. The result being that Enterprise Mauritius spent 18% of its annual budget. Does this demonstrate a commitment for an institution like Enterprise Mauritius, which is instrumental in contributing towards the industrial development as per its mandate? Can the hon. Minister confirm that the decision not to decide on the action plan emanates from a deliberate attempt to paralyse the institution?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I replied to the question. I said that 17 out of 26 were approved and 38 out of 47...

(Interruptions)

This is the answer that I have got. I don't know from where the hon. Member got the figures. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I took the liberty to go and find out why certain projects were not approved. I would like to take a few. For example, there was a suggestion to make a market survey in Czechoslovakia and Poland. In its wisdom, the Board decided that Poland and Czechoslovakia were small countries with relatively low income and they suggested Scandinavian countries and Russia. I don't see anything wrong here. I have reasons for each project that was rejected. As I said, this is good. It is not as if we have a bunch of 'yes' men who just accept any

project that is being presented. Another example was a “Forum on status of non-sugar export-oriented products and way forward.” This was rejected because it fell under the ambit of the Ministry of Agro Industry & Fisheries and we are collaborating in other ways with this Ministry. I have all the information should the hon. Member wish to have more details.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether all the projects which have been rejected have been analysed and whether there is a common thread in all the projects which have been rejected?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in all fairness, I have not analysed, because this is not what I normally do, but I did request some information as to why they were rejected and I can seek some further information if the hon. Member has any specific projects where he thinks that we ought to put some more effort on.

Mr Dayal: Does the hon. Minister consider it in line with corporate governance for a chairman to unilaterally and in a cavalier way to decide and choose the item at his whims and caprices to be included in the agenda and prioritise them?

Dr. Jeetah: I am not sure about what the hon. Member is referring to. I think if he has a substantive question about something that has been done and which goes against good corporate governance, I am willing to look into.

The Deputy Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ. Nos. B/927 and B/936 have been withdrawn.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise a point of order as to whether it is in order for Members of the Opposition, especially the hon. Leader of the Opposition, while staging a walkout to make some derogatory and unwarranted remarks towards the Chair, showing disrespect, especially to the Deputy Speaker, while still in the House.

The Deputy Speaker: If the hon. Minister has heard anything derogatory against the Chair there are certain procedures that should be followed and which are found in the Standing Orders. It is up to the hon. Minister if he wants to raise the matter by way of motion. Next question!

SPEED CAMERAS – PURCHASE

(No. B/923) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state if Government proposes to purchase speed cameras and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the number thereof, and
- (b) the places where same will be installed.

(Withdrawn)

AIR POLLUTION – MONITORING

(No. B/924) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to pollution, he will state if a monitoring of the air across the country is carried out and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the places, and
- (b) the frequency and, if not, does he consider it advisable that needful be done.

(Withdrawn)

**MON TRÉSOR HOUSING ESTATE
- INHABITANTS - RELOCATION**

(No. B/925) **Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether, in regard to the relocation of the inhabitants of the Mon Trésor Housing Estate to the land at Des Places, he will state if he has been made aware by the Mauritius Sugar Authority of the problems concerning the land thereat and, if so, the remedial measures that will be taken.

(Withdrawn)

DES PLACES AND CARREAU ESNOUF - ROAD RESURFACING

(No. B/926) **Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the surfacing of the road linking the villages of Des Places and Carreau Esnouf in the Constituency No. 12, Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

**L'ETENDRIE BRANCH ROAD, PETIT VERGER, ST PIERRE
- DRAIN WORKS**

(No. B/927) **Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he will state if he will consider the possibility of carrying out upgrading and resurfacing works, along with drain works, at l'Etendrie Branch Road, Petit Verger, St Pierre.

(Withdrawn)

PQ. Nos. B/928 to B/935 - See 'Written Answers to Questions'

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (2008) - FORECAST

(No. B/936) Dr. R. Mungur (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the forecast for the Gross Domestic Product for the year 2008, he will state –

- (a) if it has been revised downwards and, if so, the reasons therefor, and
- (b) the measures taken to maintain the original forecast.

(Withdrawn)

PQ. No. B/937 – See ‘Written Answers to Questions’

RODRIGUES – PIGLETS – E-COLI EPIDEMIC

(No. B/938) Mr J. R. Spéville (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries whether he is aware of a recent epidemic of E-Coli which has resulted in the death of many newly born piglets in Rodrigues and, if so, will he state –

- (a) the cause of the disease;
- (b) the number of piglets which have died;
- (c) the number of breeders affected, and
- (d) the measures he proposes to take to prevent the resurgence of the epidemic.

(Withdrawn)

CJSOI, SEYCHELLES – RODRIGUES VOLLEYBALL REGIONAL COMMITTEE - SELECTION

(No. B/939) Mr J. R. Speville (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the two young Rodriguans, namely one B. P. and one I. L. C., who were selected to form part of the volleyball team to participate in the CJSOI in Seychelles, he will state if they had been left out and, if so, when and why.

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the national coaches for volleyball who have been designated by the Mauritius Volleyball Association had, since last year, scouted around 20 boy and 20 girl players in view of constituting the pre-selected volleyball teams for the forthcoming CJSOI Games to be held in Seychelles.

Subsequently, a training camp was conducted by the national coaches in Mauritius from 18 to 25 June so as to provide further specific coaching and thereafter to evaluate again the performance of the players.

18 boys and 18 girls, including the following four players from Rodrigues, were convened for the training camp –

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---|-------|
| • Ivan Luke Casimir | } | |
| • Brian Perrine | } | Boys |
| • Marie Antoinette Jolicoeur | } | |
| • Charline Roussety | } | Girls |

The Mauritius Volleyball Association sent the assistant national coach to Rodrigues from 26 June to 04 July to do further scouting of potential volleyball players. The assistant coach detected Bertrand Samoisy, a talented and versatile player to join the under 17 national volleyball selection.

After the scouting and evaluation exercise was completed on 12 July 2008, only 12 boys and 12 girls best players have been retained for the final selection, including Bertrand Samoisy, who is a player of the Roche Bon Dieu Volleyball Club in Rodrigues

I am further informed that the Rodrigues Volleyball Regional Committee was included in the selection exercise. However, only the best players have been chosen, and the four Rodriguan players as well as 13 players from Mauritius invited for the training camp do not form part of the final selection.

Mr Spéville: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware of the correspondence of the president of the Mauritius Volleyball Association dated 21 June addressed to the Volleyball Regional Committee of Rodrigues, confirming that Ivan Luke Casimir and Brian Perrine have been duly selected?

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

RODRIGUES – TRUST FUND FOR THE VULNERABLE GROUPS – RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

(No. B/940) **Mr A. Nancy (First Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development whether, in regard to the responsible officer of the Trust Fund for the Vulnerable Groups in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Trust Fund, information as to if –

- (a) his contract has lapsed and the post is vacant, and
- (b) he is also an office bearer of a non-governmental organisation, indicating if the said non-governmental organisation has recently benefited from funds disbursed from the Trust Fund and the quantum thereof.

The Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment (Dr. V. Bunwaree): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the contract employment of the responsible officer has, with the agreement of his substantive employer, been renewed exceptionally up to 30 September 2008, to enable the Trust Fund to recruit another officer to replace him as from 01 October 2008. Action has already been taken to advertise the post. This arrangement has been made in order not to disrupt the smooth functioning of the office in Rodrigues.

As far as part (b) of the question is concerned, I am also informed that the responsible officer was the president of the '*Association pour le Bien-être des Rodriguais*' and that he resigned from office on 11 February 2008 to avoid any conflict of interest.

Concerning the amount disbursed to this NGO, I wish to inform the House that the main objective of the Trust Fund for Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups is to assist, with the active participation of NGOs, the needy and less privileged groups in improving their living conditions. Thus, the latter's collaboration is critical to ensure the successful implementation of community based projects. In this connexion, I am informed that two projects relating to the provision of school materials to children were implemented through the '*Association pour le Bien-être des Rodriguais*', namely –

- (i) The first project related to the provision of school materials to 26 children of 18 ex-employees of *la voirie* workers for the sum of Rs37,033. This project proposal was initially submitted by the '*Association Rodrigues Entreprendre Aux Féminins*' for the same amount, that is, Rs37,033, and was approved by the Trust Fund in December 2007. However, that Association withdrew from the project, which was subsequently taken over by ABRO.
- (ii) The second project concerns the provision of school materials to 269 children for the sum of Rs296,701, approved in April 2008.

RODRIGUES – BASILE ATLAS GOVT. SCHOOL – DONATION ACTIVITY

(No. B/941) Mr A. Nancy (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Education & Human Resources whether he will state, if on 04 July 2008, while the students of the Basile Atlas Government School, Port Mathurin, were taking their examinations, the officer responsible for the Trust Fund for the Vulnerable Groups organised a donation activity thereat and, if so, indicate if –

- (a) music was played and speeches were delivered on that day and by whom, and
- (b) complaints have been made by the parents in relation thereto.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commission for Education and Training in Rodrigues that there was indeed a donation of school materials to needy students at Basile Atlas Government School on 04 July 2008, from 0900 hours to 10 o'clock.

I am also informed that music was played before the start of the ceremony only, and speeches were delivered by –

- (i) the Deputy Chief Commissioner & Commission for Education;
- (ii) the Chairman of the Trust Fund for the Integration of Vulnerable Groups,
- (iii) and the responsible officer for the Trust Fund for the Integration of Vulnerable Groups in Rodrigues.

According to the Commission for Education and Training, no complaint was made by parents in relation to the function, and that the pupils did not take part in the school assessment during the function, but at the end thereof after 1000 hours.