



EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 05 MAY 2026

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Hon. Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack Mohamed, GCSK	Minister of Housing and Lands,
Hon. Rajesh Anand Bhagwan, GCSK	Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change
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Hon. Gavin Patrick Cyril Glover, SC	Attorney-General
Dr. the Hon. Mrs Jyoti Jeetun	Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning
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Hon. Dhananjay Ramful	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade

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Hon. Sayed Muhammad Aadil Ameer Meea	Minister of Industry, SMEs and Cooperatives
Dr. the Hon. Mahend Gungapersad, PDSM	Minister of Education and Human Resource
Dr. the Hon. Avinash Ramtohol	Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation
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Hon. Ranjiv Woochit, OSK	Minister of Local Government
Hon. Mahendra Gondeea, OSK	Minister of Arts and Culture

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MAURITIUS

Eighth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 08 of 2026

Sitting of Tuesday 05 May 2026

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis, at 11.30 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

ANNOUNCEMENT**OBITUARY****DR. ABU KASENALLY**

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, it is with deep sadness that we learnt of the demise of Dr. Abu Twalib Kasenally on 27 April of this year.

Dr. Abu Kasenally was born on 10 August 1941 in Rivière du Rempart. After his secondary education at the Royal College of Port Louis, he pursued medical studies in the United Kingdom, specialising in vascular surgery at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland.

He returned to Mauritius in the early 70s' and became a pioneer in vascular surgery. His cutting-edge surgical prowess and commitment to healthcare earned him the high esteem of his colleagues and patients alike.

His work not only saved lives, but also significantly enhanced the standard of specialised medical care in Mauritius. He joined the Ministry of Health as a Specialist in Surgery in 1974, and rose through the ranks to serve as Regional Health Director, and subsequently, as Principal Medical Officer.

Madam Speaker, Dr. Abu Kasenally was always driven by a strong sense of national duty. He devoted his life selflessly to the well-being of the public.

After resigning from the health service, he joined the Mauritius Labour Party in 2000, and he was a candidate at the general elections in Constituency No. 3 under the banner of the Alliance Parti travailliste-PMXD, but he was not returned. He took part in the 2005 general elections, in Constituency No. 15 under the banner of Alliance Sociale, and was elected as the First Member.

On 07 July 2005, Dr. Kasenally was appointed Minister of Public Utilities, a portfolio he held until September 2008 when he was appointed Minister of Housing and Lands, a post he held until May 2010.

In 2010, he again stood as a candidate for the Alliance Parti travailliste-PMSD-MSM in Constituency No. 13, and was elected as Second Member of the said constituency.

On 11 May 2010, he was appointed Minister of Housing and Lands, a portfolio he held until December 2014.

Dr. Abu Kasenally has always served his professional and ministerial responsibilities with distinction. His integrity, diligence and vision have contributed meaningfully to our country's development.

Not only was Dr. Kasenally a very able and competent Minister, but he also displayed a sense of profound humanity. He leaves behind a legacy of professional achievements, generosity and compassion that has touched countless of lives, irrespective of their origin or their religion.

With these words, Madam Speaker, may I request you to direct the Clerk to convey the deep condolences of the Assembly to Mrs Kasenally, the family and all those afflicted by his passing.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, Leader of the Opposition!

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr G. Lesjongard): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On behalf of the Opposition, I fully associate myself to the tribute paid by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister to late Dr. Abu Twalib Kasenally.

Madam Speaker, may I kindly request you to direct the Clerk of the National Assembly to convey our deep condolences to the bereaved family.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Members, I associate myself with the tribute paid to the memory of late Dr. Abu Twalib Kasenally, former Member of Parliament, by the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Leader of the Opposition. It happens that I have known Dr. Kasenally as a doctor and also as a minister.

I, therefore, direct the Clerk to convey the deep condolences of the Assembly to the bereaved family.

Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition, your Private Notice Question.

PAPERS LAID

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the Papers have been laid on the Table –

A. Prime Minister's Office**Ministry of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications****Ministry of Finance****Ministry for Rodrigues and Outer Islands**

- (a) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Civil Service Family Protection Scheme Board for the year ended 30 June 2025.
- (b) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Gambling Regulatory Authority for the year ended 30 June 2022.

B. Ministry of Tourism

- (a) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Tourism Employees Welfare Fund for the year ended 30 June 2024.
- (b) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Tourism Authority for the year ended 30 June 2024. (In Original)

C. Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Children's Council for the year ended 30 June 2024.

D. Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Competition Commission for the year ended 30 June 2025.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**LABOUR DAY CELEBRATIONS 2026 – ACTIVITIES/EVENTS
ORGANISED – CONTRACTS AWARDED**

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr G. Lesjongard) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether in regard to the Labour Day celebrations 2026, he will state the –

- (a) activities and events organised in connection therewith, giving a breakdown of the total expenditure incurred and the source of funding, and
- (b) names of the companies to which contracts were awarded for the podium, sound system and lighting and ancillary services for the live concert held at the Esplanade of the Municipal City Council of Port-Louis on 01 May 2026, indicating in each case the procurement method used.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Minister!

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, the International Labour Day is celebrated globally on 01 May to commemorate the struggles and achievements of workers and labour movement to improve the working conditions of workers. It is an occasion to pay tribute to the hundreds of thousands of workers of our country, who everyday toil hard to feed their families and contribute to the economic development of our nation. It is also an occasion to remind ourselves of the workers and leaders of trade union movement, who devoted their entire life to the cause of workers, including martyrs like Mrs Anjalay Coopen.

As regards part (a) of the question, this year, to mark the International Labour Day, my Ministry organised a series of activities spanning over 10 days as follows –

- (i) We effected a visit to Rodrigues Island from 22 to 23 April 2026. The delegation comprised myself, the Directors of Labour, Employment, and Occupational Safety and Health Department, and an Assistant Secretary.

We had very constructive working sessions with the Commissioner and officers of the Commission for Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment as well as workers' representatives. Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, in the past, little consideration had been given to consulting the Commission in Rodrigues on

Labour Reforms, which would affect workers in Rodrigues, and trainings were not always extended to them.

We also discussed the problems which workers from Rodrigues faced when having to sue their employers in Mauritius. We also agreed on a protocol in relation to employment of foreign labour in Rodrigues. Priority will be given to workers in Rodrigues before any foreign worker is allowed to work in Rodrigues.

- (ii) On 27 April, Monday last, a 5th job and training fair was organised by the Employment Division of my Ministry at the Cascavelle Mall, whereby 20 employers and five training institutions were present. The objective of the job and training fair was to bring jobseekers and employers and training institutions in one place to facilitate job matching, and sensitise jobseekers of training opportunities available. The event was well attended by jobseekers.
- (iii) On 29 April 2026, Wednesday last, my Ministry organised two meetings, one with representatives of workers' organisations, and the other one with representatives of employers' organisations. The first meeting was attended by eight confederations of workers, and the second one was attended by nine organisations of employers.

The objectives of these meetings were to receive their feedbacks on improvements that can be brought by my Ministry to further enhance services offered by the different departments of my Ministry. We also discussed about labour reforms, which would be shortly considered by the National Tripartite Council.

- (iv) On 30 April 2026, Thursday last, my Ministry organised a one-day symposium with some 150 tripartite stakeholders and social partners. The themes for discussion were chosen carefully in line with the topical issues in the world of work. The objective of the symposium was to raise awareness and to further discussions on the following three topics through panel discussion –
 - (i) Mental health at the Workplace and Dependency, which is aligned with the 2026 theme set by the International Labour Organisation for the World Safety and Health Day, “Let’s ensure a healthy psychosocial working environment.”
 - (ii) The second topic was on Promoting Workplace Inclusion, and in particular, ensuring a greater participation of persons with disabilities in both public and private sectors, and

- (iii) The third topic was on Employability in Mauritius by 2050: Prosperity, Inclusiveness and Sustainability, where we discussed the major challenges facing the labour market, including our ageing population, global labour mobility and the disruptive forces of technology and Artificial Intelligence.

The turnout was very encouraging, and the event was a success.

- (v) During the morning of 01 May 2026, on Friday last, a wreath-laying ceremony was held at the Anjalay Coopen statue at the Children's Court in Port Louis. On the same day, a visit at the dormitory of a manufacturing company in Curepipe was effected, which was followed by a lunch with a group of around 100 migrant workers of the company.
- (vi) Madam Speaker, to conclude our week of activities, Government agreed to organise a concert on the Labour Day to be held at the Esplanade of the Municipal City Council of Port Louis.

I have to confess, Madam Speaker, that my Ministry does not usually organise such activity. Thus, the collaboration of the Ministry of Arts and Culture, and the Municipal Council of Port Louis were sought.

I co-chaired a preparatory meeting with my colleague, the hon. Minister of Arts and Culture, in the presence of the Lord Mayor of the City Council of Port Louis, and with relevant stakeholders. The purpose of the meeting was to identify the most suitable option for organising the concert, taking into consideration the venue, time, programme, transport and parking facilities, traffic management, public safety, marketing aspect and financial consideration. The Municipal City Council of Port Louis agreed to make arrangements for the provision of podium, sound system and lighting.

Madam Speaker, with regard to the expenditure incurred in connection with the above event, the breakdown is as follows –

- (a) For the trip in Rodrigues, the total cost incurred for the visit amounted to Rs162,500, comprising air ticket and accommodation;
- (b) For the job and training fair: Rs132,295 (incl. VAT) met from the budget vote of the Employment Division of my Ministry. This amount comprises Rs22,827.50 for logistics arrangements, Rs18,055 for printing of brochures, posters and banners,

Rs30,000 for Press Communiqué and Rs61,812.50 for refreshments and meal for the employers, trainers and staff servicing the job and training fair;

- (c) For the meetings held on 29 April 2026, with the representatives of workers and employers, the only cost incurred was an amount of Rs3,000 for refreshments provided to attendees which was met from the budget of the Ministry.
- (d) Concerning the symposium at Ravenala Attitude Hotel, an aggregate amount of Rs762,989.40 (incl. VAT) was incurred, comprising Rs9,839.40 for three banners on stand and Rs753,150 for provision of venue and catering services and logistics. Madam Speaker, I have to pause here to state that my Ministry explored other venues, such as the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation (Civil Service College) but unfortunately, same was not available for the date. Therefore, a Request for Sealed Quotation was launched by my Ministry, and the award was made to the lowest responsive bidder, in this case, Ravenala Attitude Hotel.
- (e) For the wreath laying ceremony held on 01 May 2026, 12 bouquets were purchased for an aggregate amount of Rs3,600 from the budget of the Labour Division of my Ministry.
- (f) As regards the visit at the dormitory of the company on 01 May, and the lunch amounting to Rs24,075, these were met from the budget of my Ministry.
- (g) With regard to the concert, I am informed that the aggregate cost amounted to Rs1,590,588 (incl. VAT) and my Ministry will be meeting expenditure amounting to around Rs300,000 from its budget. The Ministry of Arts and Culture agreed to provide an amount of Rs350,000 to meet the costs of artists and the Municipal City Council of Port Louis committed an amount of Rs500,000 for the podium, sound system and lighting. Four sponsors agreed to contribute around Rs450,000 towards the organisation of the event.

As regards part (b) of the question, for the concert, the names of the companies to which contracts were awarded and the procurement method used are as follows –

- (i) for the stage/podium including structure, stage lighting and sound system, I am informed by the Municipal City Council of Port Louis that it conducted a Request for Sealed Quotation and the award was made to Glints Production Ltd;

- (ii) for the artists and performers, a technical committee comprising representatives of my Ministry, the Ministry of Arts and Culture and the Municipal City Council of Port Louis, finalised the list of local artists and performers. Quotations were sought for their services, and were recommended and the following artists participated –
- (a) Bhojpuri Boys;
 - (b) Desiré François and Cassiya Group;
 - (c) Group Latanier;
 - (d) Komiko;
 - (e) DJ Emran Production Ltd;
 - (f) Group Trioco, and
 - (g) The Magician and Illusionist, Mr Krish;
- (iii) for the media coverage, advertising and animation, I am informed by the Municipal City Council of Port Louis that the Low Value Procurement method was used, and the award was made to Défi Media Group Ltd;
- (iv) for metro services, Metro Express Ltd was approached through the Ministry of Land Transport, and
- (v) as regards bus services, the services of the National Transport Corporation were retained.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Leader, your first supplementary.

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker.

Let me start with the concert that was held at the esplanade of the Municipality of Port-Louis. So, will the hon. Minister indicate the estimated number of persons who attended the concert which was held at the esplanade of the Municipal Council of Port Louis?

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister. Do you know?

Mr Uteem: I am not very good at estimate. I have to confess, Madam Speaker, that we did not get the turn out that we expected and people came quite late. In fact, the peak was reached when groups like Latanier and Cassiya, Désiré François came. In fact, you would like to know that those who did attend the concert insisted on these groups continuing to sing. So,

Latanier had to sing other songs after the famous ‘*Krapo Kirye*’ and, Désiré François and his group were very nice to sing additional songs after what they had agreed to sing.

I am informed, Madam Speaker, that the physical onsite presence at peak – this is reported from Radio Plus/Défi Media, not my Ministry – was 1,700 persons. Online views –

- Facebook Défi Media: 116,000 people;
- Facebook Radio Plus: 30,100;
- YouTube Channel Défi Media: 19,500;
- TikTok: 180,000.

The total online views: 345,600.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Lesjongard: I am surprised, Madam Speaker. Official figures have it that only 200 persons attended that live concert.

Madam Speaker: No comments!

Mr Lesjongard: And the hon. Minister should not refer to TikTok, Facebook or whatever ...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition. Please, Leader...

Mr Lesjongard: It was meant to be a live concert...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No comments! No comments!

Mr Lesjongard: ... by top artists of this country.

Can I ask the hon. Minister to inform the House whether Members of this National Assembly were invited to attend, and how many Members attended that concert, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member should know...

Madam Speaker: No, the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Uteem: Yes, the hon. Leader of the Opposition should know that when we organise a concert there are those who would come there physically, but the majority of the people, including principally the young, who are interested by people like DJ Emran, they don't come.

They look at their mobile phones. So, that is why it is very important... And we got official figures from Défi Media.

Madam Speaker: No, please, hon. Minister.

Mr Uteem: So, with regard to the question of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I did not keep track of how many Members of Parliament came in and out the concert, unfortunately.

I was present, the hon. Minister of Arts and Culture was there, with our families as well as the Lord Mayor and several councillors.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, please, don't make comments. We have young people sitting today, and I would very much like you to stick to your normal sweet questions. However hard they are, but questions. They may be hard but they must be questions.

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether his Ministry spent funds that were not approved through the normal parliamentary process?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister!

Mr Uteem: Absolutely not! In fact, Madam Speaker, I have given the whole figures and the hon. Leader of the Opposition would like to note that we actually underspent. For example, we received financial clearance for the concert to the tune of Rs1.5 million. We ended up spending only Rs300,000 thanks to a number of private donations.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, your third supplementary.

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to free buses, we understand that free buses were provided all around the island, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Minister inform the House how many buses were provided on that particular day and the total cost incurred, and under which authority such transport arrangements were made?

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, I do not have the actual number of buses which came in and my officers have informed me that we have not yet received the claim. So, I do not know how many buses came in total and how many people they transported. Initially, the idea was to award the contract to CNT because we contacted different buses across the island; they were not responsive because we are talking about 01 May, we are talking about evening.

NTC agreed to provide up to 29 buses, but as I said, you know, it is obvious that many of these buses did not come to the concert or did not bring the number of people to the concert. We are still waiting for NTC to give us the final figures about the cost.

Madam Speaker: I think you have got a little piece of a paper.

Mr Uteem: Yes, it says up to 29 buses for CNT, not two buses.

Mr Lesjongard: Is he aware that most of those buses came to Port Louis...

Madam Speaker: Next question!

Mr Lesjongard: ...empty, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: Next question!

An hon. Member: *To ti laba?*

Madam Speaker: Okay, you finished? You finished?

Mr Lesjongard: Is the hon. Minister aware that most buses came empty?

Mr Uteem: This is what we have just answered, Madam Speaker. We are waiting to get figures. I mean we are Tuesday; the event was on Friday. Friday, Saturday, Sunday were holidays. So, let us give some time to the National Transport Corporation to send me their figures.

Madam Speaker: Next question! No comments! No comments!

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to the Metro Express services, will the hon. Minister inform the House of the cost incurred by Government on that day?

Mr Uteem: Again, the cost has not been finalised. The total cost was going to be Rs214,642. This is the figures that we have received today from Metro Express. So, the cost for Metro Express is Rs214,642.

Madam Speaker: I think it is your fourth or fifth question, I am not sure.

Mr Lesjongard: Now, in relation to security and essential services, will the hon. Minister indicate the number of police officers who were deployed on that day and what amount of overtime was paid to those officers?

Mr Uteem: Unfortunately, the hon. Leader of the Opposition should come with a substantial question to the hon. Prime Minister.

Madam Speaker: Let me just...

Mr Uteem: I have absolutely no details. We had a technical committee; we had meetings with the representative of the police officers but I do not know how many police officers actually worked on that day.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr Lesjongard: I see we spent some Rs1.5 million for that concert, Madam Speaker. Does the hon. Minister agree that celebrating workers is best achieved by directing resources to their material well-being rather to an event production cost, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: It is a matter of opinion.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, I have gone through the pain of explaining the series of activities that we had. It was not one event; there was a series of activities including our brothers and sisters from Rodrigues Island. We thought it would be a good idea that workers will have the benefit of local artists and those local artists...

Madam Speaker: Of workers.

Mr Uteem: A lot of them are, you know, *chanson engagée*, we are talking about the Grup Latanier in the 80s and all their powerful militant songs. We are talking about Désiré François and Cassiya talking about rights of workers and as I said, you know, when we look at the number of people who watched the concert online, we cannot talk about money not well spent.

Madam Speaker: In any case...

Mr Lesjongard: And we have...

Madam Speaker: In any case... May I please?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: You are not supposed to ask for an opinion. You are not supposed; you asked him for his opinion.

Mr Lesjongard: But it is for him to decide whether he will reply.

Madam Speaker: No but you are not supposed to ask for an opinion.

(Interruptions)

Question! Question must arise out of the main question that you put.

Mr Lesjongard: Now, in the same vein, Madam Speaker, in the context of the current economic pressures including rising food and energy cost linked to the conflict in the Middle East, can I ask the hon. Minister, how does he justify the allocation of scarce public resources to a single day event while vulnerable workers of this country are facing rise in the cost of living?

Madam Speaker: Encore!

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, as I explained, the concert in total cost Rs1.5 million and I am sure that the 350,000 viewers and the 2,000 people who came in, for a while, you know they spent a good time stress-free and forgot a lot of their daily activities. So, the idea was not wrong. The idea was not wrong, we did things for the benefit of workers and I am sure those workers appreciated a live concert.

Madam Speaker: C'est encore une opinion.

Mr Lesjongard: ... a été un fiasco, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: Ask him! Ask him!

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Minister confirm whether an invitation was extended to the hon. Prime Minister to attend the live concert at the esplanade and he did not turn up because of the poor attendance?

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, the invitation was an open invitation and I have to confess that after the event, several people came up to me, even from my own constituency and told me that they were not aware that there was a concert. I think this is something that we, you know, we have to...

Madam Speaker: Il faut tirer des leçons.

Mr Uteem: *Tirer une leçon mais* also, we have to understand that the contract... because we tried to do everything in a transparent way. Radio Plus was only awarded the contract on Wednesday; they had only two days to really diffuse the invitation to the general public. So, maybe if we had awarded them the contract a week before, maybe the turnout would have been better.

Madam Speaker: The question was: did you invite the hon. Prime Minister?

Mr Uteem: We invited a lot of people; I was not the one...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Shh! Do not give the answers!

Mr Uteem: Yes, if the hon. Leader of the Opposition would listen to my answer.

Okay. Unfortunately, there was a lot of events on that day. There was a technical committee set up at the level of my Ministry with officials from the Ministry of Arts and Culture and the City Council of Port Louis. It is the technical committee which decided whom to invite or not to invite. I do not know. Maybe the hon. Prime Minister was invited, maybe he was not. Unfortunately, I do not know.

Mr Lesjongard: ... hon. Prime Minister was invited?

Mr Uteem: I do not know! But in any event, Cabinet knew about this event. That was an event approved by Cabinet.

Ms Anquetil: Oui, justement!

Madam Speaker: It was an event approved by Cabinet he said. But did you...

Mr Lesjongard: Tout le monde sait que l'honorable Premier ministre avait rebroussé chemin ce jour-là, Madame la présidente. Will the hon. Minister confirm now that, that event was a total fiasco, confirming the...

Madam Speaker: Oh no, no, no!

Mr Lesjongard: ...unpopularity of the actual Government?

Madam Speaker: I am not... Do not answer!

Mr Lesjongard: And it is for this reason that the population of this country did not turn up, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: No, this is... Hon. Minister!

Mr Uteem: I am informed by my officers that the hon. Leader of the Opposition was invited. So, you could have come and seen for yourself those who did go to that concert how enthusiastic they were and you know those who were present and they stayed, they stayed till the end.

Now, as I said, when we look at the outreach, there is a lot of young people here. I am sure many of them followed the concert live on their own telephone.

Mr Lesjongard: Madame la présidente, je suis enclin de dire, c'était une mauvaise symphonie de la bande des quinze, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: Non, vous êtes en train d'abuser...

Mr Lesjongard: This is my last question, Madam Speaker....

Madam Speaker: Mais vous abusez un peu.

Mr Lesjongard: Will the hon. Minister now acknowledge to the House that the organisation of such an event was ill-advised, especially when...

Madam Speaker: Again, do not answer!

Mr Lesjongard: ... when the population of this country is facing severe hardship, Madam Speaker?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Mais c'est un *opinion*. You are asking for an opinion once more. This is the third time.

An hon. Member: Same question.

Madam Speaker: There is no need to answer!

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: Why? ... ask for an answer.

An hon. Member: Incroyable!

Mr Lesjongard: You are telling the hon. Minister there is no need to answer.

Madam Speaker: But you are asking for his opinion.

Mr Lesjongard: They are wasting public funds, Madam Speaker.

An hon. Member: *Tou bliye...*

Mr Uteem: *Tou sa ban artis ki noun paye la.*

(Interruptions)

Ein tou sa ban artis la !

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: *Zon fer artis...*

Madam Speaker: I have already ruled. Do you question my ruling? Are you going to question my ruling? Does anybody want to question my ruling?

Okay! Then, we proceed. Now, we proceed with PMQT.

Madam Speaker: Now, we proceed with PMQT.

Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ B/600 will be replied by the hon. Prime Minister, time permitting.

Hon. Third Member for Port-Louis North and Montagne Longue, Mr Caserne!

RESIDENCE PERMITS APPLICATIONS – AFFIDAVITS SWEARING IN

(No. B/563) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to affidavits in respect of applications for residence permits, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether consideration will be given for the possibility of the swearing in thereof in Mauritius and, if so, when same will be effective and, if not, why not.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, Section 7 of the Immigration Act provides for the eligibility criteria for temporary residence permit for a non-citizen who has married a citizen of Mauritius.

Section 7(1) states that, I quote, –

“a non-citizen shall be eligible for a temporary residence permit where he is –

- (a) civilly married to a citizen and he was not a prohibited immigrant at the time of becoming such a spouse.”

Section 7(4) stipulates that –

“Where the marriage between a non-citizen and a citizen is celebrated outside Mauritius, no application for a temporary residence permit shall be entertained unless the non-citizen submits –

- (a) his marriage certificate certifying that he is civilly married to his citizen spouse,
and
- (b) an affidavit or any other document, duly sworn or affirmed by him before a court of law in his country of residence, attesting that, on the date of his marriage to the citizen, he was not married to any other person.”

Madam Speaker, I am informed that some non-citizens are not able to obtain an affidavit or any other document duly sworn or affirmed by them before a court of law in their countries of residence, as such mechanism, in fact, is not available in their countries of residence. My

Office is working together with the Attorney-General's Office to amend Section 7 of the Immigration Act with a view to allowing a non-citizen to submit another official document attesting that on the date of his marriage to the citizen, he was not married to any other person.

I must say there was a demand and we are also looking at this. The Attorney-General's Office will give consideration to the possibility of including Rodrigues as well in that amendment that we are bringing.

The Bill will be introduced in the National Assembly shortly.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Hon. Caserne, are you okay? Right!

The hon. Third Member for Pamplemousses and Triolet!

CASINOS OF MAURITIUS – FINANCIAL SITUATION

(No. B/564) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Casinos of Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Investment Corporation Ltd., information as to the current financial situation thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed that the casinos have made operating losses of Rs272 million for the financial year ending 30 June 2025 and Rs121 million for the six-month period, that is, from July 2025 to December 2025.

I should also highlight that the total losses that have been accumulated for the period 2015 to 2025 amounted to Rs1.9 billion.

The model that casinos have been operating in Mauritius is clearly flawed, Madam Speaker.

The chronic losses made by casinos are attributable mainly to the following –

- (i) The Casinos of Mauritius closed Sun Casinos and Beach Casinos Ltd, which resulted in massive redeployment of 111 staff to other already overstaffed casinos. So, we had a problem of overstaffing;
- (ii) Despite that the Casinos of Mauritius was systematically making huge losses every year, on 02 September 2024, that is, on the eve of the General Election, the management of the casino signed a collective agreement to provide a 14th month bonus as productivity bonus, and this, Madam Speaker, was backdated to 02 July

2022. The company was making losses, yet they decided to pay a productivity bonus on the eve of the election and backdated it to 02 July 2022.

This is how the MSM operated! It is not their money. They could not give a damn. Sorry, I do not know whether it parliamentary. They could give a care, but they just spent. This the method of the MSM. This was the level of incompetence and irresponsibility by the previous regime which, therefore, naturally further made the situation worse. All they cared about was to lure voters by dishing out public funds!

With a view to maintaining casino operations, SIC has injected funds to the tune of Rs1.3 billion during the period 2015 to 2025. The latter had to contract debts amounting to Rs771 million to finance this injection. In addition, I am informed that casinos have arrears amounting to Rs262 million as at March 2026.

Now, this model of financing the losses of the casinos is clearly, Madam Speaker, unsustainable as it entails massive transfers of funds from profitable entities of the SIC to loss making ones. This mechanism will rapidly reach its limit and the SIC will have to ultimately borrow to finance the deficits of the casinos. This will have a direct bearing on public sector debt and which should be avoided at all costs.

Madam Speaker, it is not the business of Government to run casinos, especially when it has clearly been making losses over so many years. As I have already stated in the House, Government is in the process of disposing the casinos.

I am informed that, as of today, a Transaction Advisor, namely Price Waterhouse Coopers, has already been appointed since February 2026 to provide advisory services for the disinvestment process. The Transaction Advisor has completed the first phase of the disinvestment process by working on an estimated valuation for the casinos. The Transaction Advisor has also prepared an Information Memorandum and an Expression of Interest. The launching of the Expression of Interest is scheduled for May 2026.

The SIC, Madam Speaker, will have to come up with bold options to address the related human resource issues arising out of the disposal process of the casinos, including the possibility of elaborating an Early Retirement Scheme.

Madam Speaker: Mr Rookny, yes!

Mr Rookny: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Could the hon. Prime Minister inform the House if the companies owning the Casinos in Mauritius continue to remain solvent? And up to when will the Government continue to inject funds in the lossmaking casinos?

The Prime Minister: As I said, Madam Speaker, I do not know. Maybe I am mistaken; maybe the hon. Leader of the Opposition seems to know how many people attend whatever. I think this is the only country in the world where casinos actually lose money!

(Interruptions)

You started the bid. I just told you how many millions you lost when you were in power.

But this is precisely why we are relooking at it. This is why we appointed Price Waterhouse Coopers, and these are the steps we are doing because it is unsustainable.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, before we proceed with the next question, I had the feeling that my previous ruling on the question of giving opinion did not meet the consensus in this House.

I have just checked – because I do not know everything by heart – Standing Order 22 (1) (g) –

“a question shall not ask for an expression of opinion, (...).”

That is all I have to say!

Next question! Hon. First Member for Vacoas and Floréal!

GOLDEN VISA SCHEME – INVESTMENT CRITERIA & IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(No. B/565) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the proposed Golden Visa Scheme, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Economic Development Board, information as to –

- (a) the objectives thereof and categories of foreign nationals targeted;
- (b) the rights and incentives attached thereto;
- (c) the minimum investment thresholds, qualifying sectors and due diligence mechanisms applicable, and
- (d) whether an assessment of the likely impact thereof on housing affordability for Mauritian citizens, land ownership patterns, money laundering and illicit financial flows risks and job creation and productive investment have been carried out.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, recently, the Economic Development Board (EDB) has received multiple enquiries from foreigners who have expressed interest to relocate together with their families to Mauritius.

To respond to this demand, we are introducing a Golden Visa to better meet the requirements of high-net-worth individuals wishing to relocate to Mauritius.

The Golden Visa will be a multiple-entry visa granted to successful applicants and their immediate dependents, that is, their spouse and dependent children. The visa will be processed within five working days from the date of application and it will be valid for a period of up to two years and it can be renewed, if need be, if there is a new application.

As regards part (a) of the question, the objective of the Golden Visa Scheme is to encourage high-net-worth individuals to relocate physically to Mauritius together with their families.

The aim is to maximise the economic benefits to Mauritius through long-term stay of Golden Visa Holders and subsequently encourage them to relocate their funds and channel investments to different sectors of our economy.

In this context, the EDB has set up a dedicated concierge service to assist the high-net-worth non-citizens in relocating their businesses to Mauritius, leveraging on our financial services sector, the freeport sector and existing investment schemes. There are also potential benefits in terms of increased foreign direct investment, especially in emerging sectors of our economy such as artificial intelligence and digital services.

Madam Speaker, high-net-worth individuals exploring investment opportunities in Mauritius in high-value sectors such as FinTech, global treasury, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and renewable energy will be targeted.

As regards part (b) of the question, Golden Visa holders will be able to –

- (a) enrol their children in private educational institutions in Mauritius;
- (b) import their personal belongings and bring their pets;
- (c) open bank accounts in Mauritius, and
- (d) pay their taxes in Mauritius if they spend 183 days or more in Mauritius while benefitting from tax exemption on expenditure in Mauritius made through foreign credit or debit cards, and on income remitted and deposited into a Mauritian bank

account, provided a declaration is made that the applicable tax has already been paid abroad.

Holders of Golden Visas will not automatically be entitled to enter our labour market as they will be expected to invest in qualifying sectors.

As regards part (c), Madam Speaker, Golden Visa Holders will be required to provide a written undertaking at time of application that they would invest a minimum amount of USD 1 million within the first 12 months of their stay in Mauritius, and the EDB will be closely following up on the progress of their investment.

An application under the Golden Visa will be subjected to a first screening by the EDB where a due diligence exercise is carried out, including different checks, the World Check and so on. The Passport and Immigration Office will perform further due diligence process prior to issuing the Visa but all this will have to take place within five working days.

As regards part (d) of the question, Madam Speaker, I am informed that the EDB has assessed the potential benefits and risks of the Golden Visa Scheme.

The EDB has estimated that some 100 Golden Visas could be issued annually.

The target of the Golden Visa Scheme would be mostly, as I said, high-net-worth individuals, who will later be encouraged to relocate their funds and investment into different sectors of our economy.

In this respect, the Ministry of Financial Services and Economic Planning is working on measures to facilitate the relocation of corporates, re-domiciliation of global companies and funds to Mauritius, as well as family offices, and facilitating the opening of bank accounts.

As regards housing affordability and land ownership, Golden Visa Holders will only be allowed to acquire residential properties strictly under the EDB property schemes such as Property Development Scheme, Invest Hotel Scheme and Smart City Scheme.

Golden Visa holders would initially be staying in hotels, or renting residential properties under the EDB schemes. There is therefore, spare capacity in the high-end property rental market to accommodate these individuals without affecting housing affordability for Mauritian citizens.

With respect to the risks of money laundering and illicit financial flows, a robust, risk-based due diligence framework is already in place. The framework is aligned with our Anti-Money Laundering and Combatting the Financing of Terrorism Framework.

There is also, Madam Speaker, a strong inter-agency coordination involving the Financial Crimes Commission, the Financial Intelligence Unit, the Financial Services Commission, the Bank of Mauritius, the Passport and Immigration Office and other enforcement agencies that will work effectively to address any risks relating to money laundering and illicit financial flows.

Currently, Madam Speaker, all our Visa Schemes are compliant with the standards of the Financial Action Taskforce and the OECD's guidance on potentially high-risk residency and citizenship by investment schemes.

Accordingly, my Office, the Ministry of Finance, and the EDB will jointly monitor the scheme, its outcomes will be looked at, and if need be, corrective measures will be taken to ensure that it delivers maximum benefit to the economy and our citizens while safeguarding our national interests.

Madam Speaker: Yes?

Ms J. Bérenger: Merci. Concernant le *due diligence*, l'honorable Premier ministre peut-il nous dire la différence dans le mode d'opération de l'actuel gouvernement et celui de l'ancien régime ? Autrement dit, quelle garantie il peut donner à la Chambre qu'on ne verra pas des cas similaires à ceux de Sobrinho ou Ravatomanga venir cacher leur fortune mal gagnée à Maurice ? Quelle est la différence dans le mode d'opération de l'actuel gouvernement et celui de l'ancien régime ?

The Prime Minister: It is a very good question. We are going to have a different approach with different people involved. One of the things we are doing is for the passports – it will all be digitalised. We will immediately know whoever person is coming through to Mauritius. If they have any problem with them, we will immediately know. This is available in many countries including Seychelles today, but we do not have it here, unfortunately. I do not know why. This is one of the things.

Secondly, the Criminal Agency that we are setting up will have a special section dedicated to justice to ensure that no – if I may use the word – crooks manage to go through the net.

Madam Speaker: Yes, second question!

Ms J. Bérenger: L'honorable Premier ministre a parlé d'éventuels *corrective measures* dépendant du succès ou pas de ce *scheme*. Peut-il nous dire quels indicateurs seront utilisés ?

Quels seront les *KPIs* pour évaluer le succès ou non de ce *scheme* ? Est-ce que ils seront évalués la quantité d'emplois créés, l'investissement productif contre l'investissement spéculatif ? Comment est-ce que le succès sera évalué ?

The Prime Minister: This is already being done at the moment but we are strengthening the issue. I was especially mentioning in case of people who try to launder money to come here and this is what we are putting a lot of emphasis on. We want to ensure that we do not have similar cases as when the MSM was here with the Sobrinho cases like this. We have to avoid them.

Ms J. Bérenger: Est-ce qu'un plafond sera imposé sur le nombre de biens ou sur la superficie de terre pouvant être acquis par un détenteur de *Golden Visa* ?

Madam Speaker: Superficie!

The Prime Minister: I think, I might have mentioned, maybe I did not. They will be only allowed one residence and it will be within the framework that the EDB has already set up for different foreigners who want to buy property in Mauritius. It is the same.

Madam Speaker: She mentioned *superficie*, hon. Prime Minister. Hon. Prime Minister, the question was on *superficie*. Dans le *scheme* il n'y a pas ?

The Prime Minister: In the scheme you have whatever the...

Madam Speaker: There is already...

The Prime Minister: Yes, it is already there.

Madam Speaker: It is taken care of. Okay, good? Next question, hon. Beejan, Second Member for Grand Baie and Poudre D'or!

CONSTITUENCY NO. 6 – LAW & ORDER DETERIORATION – MEASURES

(No. B/566) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to Constituency No. 6, Grand Baie and Poudre d'Or, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether he is in presence of information regarding an alleged deterioration of the law and order situation in several localities thereof and, if so, indicate the additional measures being taken or being envisaged to address same.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, Constituency No. 6, that is, Grand Baie and Poudre d'Or, comprises a mixed coastal, touristic, commercial and residential corridor. It extends from Grand Baie, Pereybère, Cap Malheureux, Goodlands, Grand Gaube, Calodyne coastal settlements to Poudre d'Or.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, within this spatial configuration, most of the reported cases are concentrated in the more high-footfall areas, particularly Grand Baie and its surrounding tourist and commercial zones, Goodlands and its adjoining areas, as well as certain parts of Cap Malheureux, Grand Gaube and Poudre d'Or. These cases relate mainly to larceny, anti-social behaviour, breaches of public order and drug-related activities, including possession, trafficking and distribution, as well as illegal cultivation in some areas.

To address the situation, the Police have further reinforced their intelligence-led policing strategy across the constituency –

- (i) they have increased high-visibility patrols in identified hotspots, tourist zones and commercial corridors;
- (ii) there are regular stop-and-search operations and roadblocks;
- (iii) there are targeted enforcement operations conducted by composite teams comprising the Criminal Investigation Division, the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit, the Special Mobile Force and the Special Supporting Unit;
- (iv) the continuous monitoring of persons of interest and habitual offenders;
- (v) the systematic use of the Safe City surveillance system for detection and deterrence purposes, and
- (vi) sustained community engagement through structured Community Policing Forums and sensitisation programmes.

Madam Speaker, through these measures, the Police have taken firm actions against perpetrators of various offences across the constituency. These include the arrest of individuals involved in a range of criminal activities, the disruption of distribution networks, the seizure of drugs such as cannabis, heroin and synthetic drugs, as well as the detection and dismantling of illegal cultivation sites in isolated areas. I am informed that for the period 01 January 2026 to 30 April 2026, a total of 3,658 cases have been reported in this constituency, comprising 153 crimes, 1,112 misdemeanours, 2,354 contraventions and 39 drug-related offences.

Madam Speaker, the Mauritius Police Force is making continuous efforts and taking all possible measures to maintain law and order across the country. In this daunting task, we always say that the active collaboration of members of the public is essential, particularly through the prompt reporting of suspicious activities and the sharing of credible information to assist in the prevention and detection of crime. I should also add, Madam Speaker, that they work with the new National Agency for Drug Control, which we have just set up.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. One question!

Mr Beejan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister to request the Commissioner of Police to allocate, at the earliest possible, a minimum of two riders, from Traffic Branch, to each Police Station, namely Goodlands and Grand Baie on a permanent basis so that police officers can intercept motorcyclists or riders evading control in the region? Thank you.

The Prime Minister: I just want a clarification. You said two drivers or?

Madam Speaker: Riders.

The Prime Minister: Now, this will depend on whether it is available. I know they are about to launch tenders for motorbikes.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, hon. Ramkalawon!

MAUBANK LTD – FINANCIAL SITUATION – TRANSFERRED FUNDS

(No. B/567) Mr C. Ramkalawon (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to MauBank Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the financial situation thereof, indicating the amount of –

- (a) funds transferred to the Consolidated Fund therefrom during the current financial year, and
- (b) loans contracted by same since its establishment to November 2024.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, MauBank Ltd is a subsidiary of MauBank Holdings Ltd, which, in turn, has the Government of Mauritius as its sole shareholder.

With regard to the financial situation of MauBank Ltd, I am informed that the bank reported a profit after tax of around Rs829 million for the year ending 30 June 2025. It had

total assets amounting to Rs57.6 billion, total deposit liabilities of Rs50.8 billion, and equity and reserves of Rs5.2 billion.

Now, Madam Speaker, when you look at these figures, you can see that the bank has recorded a profit in 2025, but MauBank Holdings Ltd, which is the main shareholder, registered a deficit of Rs220 million and had a negative equity of Rs2.5 billion, resulting from accumulated losses since its inception in 2015.

At the outset, MauBank Ltd had inherited a toxic loan portfolio of approximately Rs5.1 billion. In 2018, this was transferred to a sister company owned by MauBank Holdings Ltd, namely EAMC Ltd. This carve out allowed MauBank Ltd to show to the public a clean balance sheet with profits by removing the non-performing assets.

Over the years, MauBank Ltd became a den of corruption. A den, Madam Speaker, and mismanagement resulting in the paradoxical situation of negative equity in MauBank Holdings Ltd.

Let me give you a concrete example, Madam Speaker. Various loans amounting to a total of Rs675 million – I hope you are listening, Leader of the Opposition, because you put a question on 01 May – listen to this! A total of Rs675 million was granted to Kuros Construction Ltd and the latter was allowed to provide as collateral, believe it or not – what was their collateral? – a State Land given by the Government at Bel Ombre. No proper diligence was carried out prior to the allocation of these loans to Kuros Construction. Hence, such an astronomical loan was granted by the bank against State-owned asset without any personal collateral or whatsoever from the owner/s. All this was allowed by the duo Premchand Mungur and Vishuene Vydelingum. Today, people are asking why it has been removed. Listen to this!

Today, Kuros still owes. They borrowed Rs675 million. How much do you think they still owe? Rs675 million! In other words, they paid nothing! No collateral and they paid nothing. And now, they are in default with MauBank Ltd. This is the type of largesse which was common under the former regime at the MauBank Ltd. We all know who was pulling the strings from behind considering the nexus between Kuros and the former Finance Minister Padayachy.

Hon. Members: *Savat dodo!*

An hon. Member: *Alias savat dodo!*

The Prime Minister: With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that no funds have been transferred by MauBank Ltd to the Consolidated Fund during the current financial year.

On the contrary, Madam Speaker, it was Government that injected Rs4.1 billion into MauBank Holdings Ltd since its inception in 2015 up to November 2024.

(Interruptions)

In addition, MauBank Holdings Ltd had to contract a loan of USD 100 million from the African Development Bank Ltd to enable the bank to expand its loan to the SME sector.

Furthermore, an additional amount of Rs1.1 billion has been injected into MauBank Holdings Ltd during this fiscal year to allow it to meet its debt obligations towards the African Development Bank Ltd, where it borrowed the money before the elections.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that MauBank Ltd did not contract any loans. All borrowings were contracted by the holding company, which is MauBank Holdings Ltd.

Madam Speaker, it is clear that MauBank Holdings Ltd has been the entity shouldering the burden. The dividends paid by MauBank Ltd to MauBank Holdings Ltd were largely insufficient to cover the financial costs of the loan and the servicing obligations. This has resulted in a serious deterioration in the financial position of MauBank Holdings Ltd.

For the financial year ended 30 June 2025, based on unaudited financial statements, MauBank Holdings Ltd had a negative equity of Rs2.95 billion.

Madam Speaker, taken together, the financial position of MauBank Ltd and MauBank Holdings Ltd reflects a situation where operational profit at the bank level was made at the cost of the Holding Company and public finances. Thus, MauBank Ltd was showing a profit while the holding company's financial situation was really precarious.

In this context, several measures are being taken to restore the financial viability of the MauBank group of companies. These include –

- (a) the restructuring of existing debt obligations;
- (b) improving the profitability of MauBank Ltd to enhance its dividend payment capacity;
- (c) the disposal of non-core assets, and

(d) the recovery of the carved out non-performing loans.

Madam Speaker: Yes, one question.

Mr Ramkalawon: Can the hon. Prime Minister state whether Government has appointed a Transaction Advisor to find any potential buyer of MauBank Ltd., and if any potential buyer has been identified? Thank you.

The Prime Minister: I believe they are looking at this. But who would want to buy a bank with that kind of debt?

Madam Speaker: Yes, Dr. Aumeer, last question!

Dr. Aumeer: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister, in the light of the disturbing information that he has shared in the House regarding Kuros Ltd., whether he intends to have a specific forensic enquiry about it and in the meantime, freeze the assets of that company?

The Prime Minister: The assets are already frozen. We are looking at all the things I mentioned because we cannot let people get away with murder like this. They will have to answer for their deeds.

Madam Speaker: Time is, unfortunately, over!

Now, the Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/568, B/569, B/570, B/571, B/572, B/576, and B/577.

Questions addressed to hon. Ministers!

Yes, Hon. Third Member for Port-Louis South and Port-Louis Central.

E-HEALTH PROJECT – IMPLEMENTATION & OPERATIONALITY

(No. B/578) Dr F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the E-Health Project, he will state –

- (a) whether provision has been made for the incorporation therein of the full clinical cycle of the patients, and
- (b) the public healthcare institution, if any, where same is fully operational and the expected date of deployment and operationalisation thereof in all the public healthcare institutions.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, the e-Health Project is currently being implemented by my Ministry under a comprehensive portfolio approach in close collaboration with the United Nation Development Programme.

The project is being implemented in phases with a view to improving healthcare delivery, strengthening data management and enhancing service efficiency across public healthcare institutions.

Madam Speaker, it is important to recall that e-Health Project was initially launched in 2022, following the signature of a portfolio agreement with the UNDP, which was appointed as implementing partner with full responsibility for the procurement process as well as the overall project management. In this context, the UNDP has, since inception, and to date been managing the procurement cycle of the implementation of the project with dedicated technical and administrative personnel deployed for this purpose in accordance with the agreement entered into by the previous government.

While the project was intended to support the digital transformation of the public health sector, its implementation was marked by a number of operational, technical and coordination challenges due to gaps in planning, insufficient ground work, and limited oversight by the previous government.

It is to be noted that these challenges were compounded by unresolved operational issues, particularly in relation to site readiness, including electrical works and connectivity. These constraints had been flagged by the UNDP to the previous administration. However, they remained largely unaddressed, thereby contributing to delays in the implementation of the project.

When I assumed office in November 2024, I observed that despite the lapse of nearly two years since the official launch of the project, progress remained limited and the initiative was still at the stage of user requirement gathering. This clearly indicated delays in moving the project towards actual implementation.

Upon assuming office, my Ministry took immediate and decisive actions to salvage the project and accelerate its implementation. The user requirement phase was expedited and concrete steps were taken to transition the project into its implementation phase with a clear focus on delivery and tangible outcomes.

Madam Speaker, Phase 1 focuses on the deployment of foundational modules that establish the necessary digital infrastructure to support patient and health service management.

The core modules include Patient Administration System (PAS), manages the administrative life cycle of patients, including registration, admission, discharge and transfer process.

e-Health portal and mobile application provide a digital interface for patients and healthcare providers to access health services, personal medical information and appointment scheduling. Blood Transfusion Service (BTS) and donor management application support end-to-end management of blood donations, donor records and transfusion processes.

Reporting analytics facilitate real-time data aggregation, dashboard and performance monitoring to support evidence-based decision-making and health system governance.

Laboratory information management system integration with the e-Health system and deployment across wards to enable electronic test ordering with automated transmission of results from laboratory analysis to wards and patients where required. The testing phase started on 23 August 2025 at New Flacq Hospital, which was the most advanced in terms of site preparedness. The system is already live at the hospital and in several associated primary healthcare facility for that region, including Bel Air Mediclinic, Bélvédère Mediclinic, Bramsthan Area Health Centre, Medine Camp de Masque Community Health Centre.

Madam Speaker, an inter-ministerial committee, co-chaired by my colleague, the hon. Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation and myself, meets on a regular basis and is attended by representatives of my Ministry, Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation as well as the consortium with a view to fast-tracking implementation and addressing operational challenges in real time.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that provision has been made for the incorporation of a full clinical cycle of outpatients within the e-Health system. The system had been designed as a comprehensive digital health solution to manage patient journey from registration up to appointment scheduling, clinical consultation, laboratory investigation, medication and follow up.

From the very beginning of our mandate, my Ministry in coordination with the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation, engaged with UNDP and successfully renegotiated scope of Phase I to include three critical modules at no additional cost to government with a view to providing a fully paperless patient experience at the earliest possible stage.

As such, nurses, doctors and pharmacy modules have been incorporated to ensure a fully paperless patient experience at the earlier possible stage, namely vitals capture, the physician module and the pharmacy module.

In the present phase, the system's architecture and deployed modules include *inter alia* patients' registration and identity management, appointment scheduling, outpatient clinical consultation, capturing of doctors' notes, chief complaints, medical examination, vital signs and clinical data, pharmacy and medication list, medical files tracking, hospital workflow, including admission, discharges and transfers, as well as integration with the laboratory information management system.

The system also includes specific clinical templates for departments, such as cardiology, dermatology, general medicine, general surgery, nephrology, and other speciality to cater for specific departmental and clinical requirements. The overall objective is to establish a single source of proof for patients' records so as to ensure continuity of care, facilitated clinical decision-making and improved patients' outcome.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the e-Health system, as I have just described, is presently live and operational in selected public healthcare institutions across different regions. However, at this stage, no public healthcare institution is fully operational in all aspects of the full clinical cycle as implementation is being carried out progressively and in a phased manner.

It is important to note that based on experts' advice and international best practice, a project of this scale and complexity cannot be implemented in a single step or at one point in time. Such systems are typically rolled out progressively in phases across multiple sites to allow for proper testing and user training system stabilisation and continuous improvement before full nationwide deployment.

As at 30 April 2026, the system has been deployed in selected facilities across regions, New Flacq Hospital, Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital and Victoria Hospital. The application has so far recorded more than 126,000 patients' registrations, 225,000 patients' visit and 221,000 doctors' consultation.

Madam Speaker, roll out has also started in other facilities including those in region four, Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital, region five, Victoria Hospital while preparatory activities have been initiated in region one, Dr. Jeetoo Hospital, and two, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital including champion user training and configuration exercises.

The roll out schedule depends on site readiness and electrical works, UPX installation, power points connectivity, Government internet and networking services, provisioning cyber security audit and retesting requirement as well as operational resource gaps.

Madam Speaker, the roll out is expected to be completed in –

- region three – New Flacq Hospital by May 2026;
- region four – Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital by September 2026, and
- region two – Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital in March 2027.

The timeline for region one, Dr. Jeetoo Hospital, and region five, Victoria Hospital, are expected by December 2027 subject to the completion of electrical works and connectivity requirements.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, one supplementary, please.

Dr. Aumeer: I have two, if you allow me, please.

Madam Speaker: Two is okay.

Dr. Aumeer: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he could indicate to the House if the clinical data and the electronic records that would be generated with the E-Health systems will be legally admissible in our court system particularly in the world of medical litigation in which we are living right now, and if so, under which legal provisions? Thank you.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, well I am not a lawyer but definitely, we seeking the advice of the State Law Office.

The State Law Office will have to advise us on the step that we have to take but as far as I am aware, for the time being, they are not doing anything illegal.

Madam Speaker: You will do the needful. Yes.

Dr. Aumeer: Last one. Thank you, hon. Minister. Could you inform the House of the specific measures or specific sensitisation campaign and communication strategies that have been put in place so that the public at large may benefit from the usage of the E-Health services, particularly, our hon. Minister of ICT who could help with having an App so that every single person at home can definitely have access not even to his medical records but, particularly, to all the medical test that he has conducted so that they can take efficient measures to correct that.

Thank you.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, it is fact anything new that we do, anything new that we introduce, we are met with certain opposition in the beginning. My first step has been to win over the doctors, first of all, – doctors and the medical and paramedical staff. Once you get them in confidence, then everything becomes possible. So, I get the feeling now that doctors, the paramedical staff, the medical staff are for the project. In the beginning there was stiff resistance.

Secondly, patients also, in the beginning when they come, they had to wait a little bit but slowly, and slowly, now, they are getting accustomed to it and with the support of the hon. Minister of Information Technology.

Madam Speaker: IT.

Mr Bachoo: I do hope, I am going to attain. I can assure the House that this has been going on for years, and years, and years. That started in 2013 when our hon. Prime Minister, when he had started that project, up till now nothing has happened but I can assure the House by next year if you ask me the same question, I will tell you we are nearing completion.

Madam Speaker: On va vivre avec notre temps.

Ms Anquetil: C'est intéressant seulement.

Madam Speaker: Yes. Yes.

Mr François: One.

Madam Speaker: Yes, but you ask me, do not show me a piece of paper because I do not understand. I think, you are asking someone to get a message.

Mr François: Okay, thank you. Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Minister whether, in the user requirement gathering process, there is or there has been discussion with the Health Commission in Rodrigues especially with regard to the transfer and admission of patients from Rodrigues and whether, the existing E-Health in Rodrigues is compatible with the one in Mauritius.

Mr Bachoo: No, not necessarily. We had discussions with my colleague, the hon. Minister of Information Technology, and in our forthcoming meetings, we are going to raise up the issue and I can assure the hon. Member that Rodrigues is also in our heart.

Madam Speaker: Okay, good.

Mr François: Thank you.

Madam Speaker: I am not. Well, let us see. Let us see. You have one more?

Dr. Aumeer: One last.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Dr. Aumeer: Very important.

Madam Speaker: Otherwise, I will be told that I am one sided.

Dr. Aumeer: May I ask the hon. Minister the issue of confidentiality when it comes to e-Health which has been implemented in the private sector for the last 6-7 years, in particularly one group, has faced enormous difficulties and concern about the personal records of patient that is being shared out.

Madam Speaker: Your question!

Dr. Aumeer: Can the hon. Minister ensure the House and public at large how confidentiality of patient can be preserved particularly, with the number of hackers that we have in the community.

Mr Bachoo: This issue was raised on many occasions but I was given assurance by my colleague, the hon. Minister of Information Technology and also, by the expert of UNDP that everything will be done to see to it that the privacy of the patient will not be disclosed.

Madam Speaker: Okay, hon. Ramdass!

**OVERSEAS MEDICAL TREATMENT – FUNDS COLLECTION –
AUTHORISED INSTITUTION/ORGANISATION**

(No. B/579) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to patients requiring overseas medical treatment, he will state whether any institution and/or organisation is authorised to collect funds on behalf of the said patients to fund the said medical treatment.

Madam Speaker: That would be the last question for the morning.

Yes. Oh, hon. Minister, this is the question where you want to put three in one?

Mr Bachoo: Three in one, yes.

Madam Speaker: I think, maybe...

Mr Bachoo: Please bear with me, I will be very fast.

Madam Speaker: I do not think you will manage in five minutes. No. Why do we not break now.

Mr Bachoo: Yes.

Madam Speaker: And then, you can do that at the beginning when everybody has eaten and everything.

Mr Bachoo: Okay, thank you.

Madam Speaker: Let me break now, please. Thank you very much. We come back at 2.30 p.m.

At 12.55 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

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

The Deputy Speaker: Please be seated!

Hon. Bachoo, you had the floor. Yes, hon. Bachoo! The question has already been put.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am replying to Parliamentary Questions B/579, B/589 and B/615 together as they relate to more or less the same subject matter.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry provides financial assistance to patients requiring medical treatment not available in Mauritius as follows –

- (a) Child Cancer Scheme with unlimited financial assistance to young patients up to the age of 25 years suffering from cancer,
- (b) Paediatric Scheme with similar assistance to children up to the age of 25 years requiring treatment for other diseases and financial assistance up to Rs1,300,000 for treatment overseas to patients who cannot be treated locally, to all patients irrespective of age, subject to the household income not exceeding Rs200,000 a month.

The financial assistance is granted to patients based on the recommendation of a medical board whose mandate is to assess the condition of the patient and to submit a report to determine if treatment is available in our public health institutions locally or whether same warrants treatment in private health institutions locally or abroad, the urgency of treatment required and whether the patient will benefit from the treatment. Prior to sending patients

abroad, my Ministry seeks treatment plans and quotation from all hospitals with which we have Memorandum of Understanding in India.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there are private organizations that provide assistance to Mauritian patients who may not be eligible for financial assistance, that is, in cases where the household income exceeds Rs200,000 monthly or the treatment may be available locally or may not be beneficial to the patient.

I am also informed that these organizations also send Mauritian patients for treatment abroad, although the medical board has not recommended such treatments due to their medical conditions, particularly their fitness for travel abroad.

With regard to organizations collecting funds on behalf of patients, I am informed that such collection is governed by Public Collections Act and as such all applications for public collections must be made to the Commissioner of Police.

There are a number of organizations which are exempt from the provisions of the Act. However, institutions sending patients abroad are not exempted. I am further informed that before granting permission for collection of funds, the Commissioner of Police seeks the views of my Ministry. My Ministry informs the Commissioner of Police as to whether any financial assistance has been granted or otherwise. I am also informed by the Commissioner of Police that applications to raise funds for patients requiring treatment are entertained only by individuals and not by Corporate Bodies.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as a Minister, I have personally received several complaints about some associations which sent patients abroad for treatment and I cannot ignore those complaints. Some of those complaints relate to terminally ill cancer patients being sent abroad with little realistic prospect of benefit, only for their families to be confronted with astronomical and unsustainable costs.

Patients spending their final days in foreign countries, away from their loved ones and in distressing circumstances where families must struggle both financially and administratively, to repatriate the deceased.

Undisclosed commission being received by these organizations from foreign hospitals in addition to the fees charged locally, allegations of collusion with certain specialists leading to patients being misled regarding treatment options and being sent abroad. A total lack of transparency in pricing, referral pathways and outcomes and instances of illegal public collection of funds exploiting vulnerability and goodwill of the population. My Ministry is

taking action to refer these complaints to appropriate competent authorities for necessary action.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these are not isolated anecdotes. They point to a systemic weakness and potential abuses in a sector that directly affect the lives and dignity of our citizens. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must state with a sense of responsibility and urgency that at present, these organizations operate in a completely regulatory vacuum. It is regrettably yet another area which has been left unregulated for years, a veritable jungle as a consequence of the lack of foresight and policy direction of the previous administration.

Their approach, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, was to encourage the development of a lucrative private health facilitation ecosystem often at the expense of strengthening our public health services and without putting in place the necessary safeguards to protect patients. As matters stand today, my Ministry has no statutory oversight over the operations of these organizations. They do not fall within the existing legal definition of regulated health institutions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is precisely for these reasons that urgent action is required. I wish to inform the House that my Ministry will approach the Attorney General's Office and all relevant ministries with a view to bringing forward appropriate legislative amendments to regulate these activities.

In particular, it is being considered that the appropriate Private Health Institutions Act must be amended so as to bring these organizations within a formal regulatory framework and there will be discussions for these provisions to be introduced for the forthcoming Finance Bill 2026, given the urgency and the financial implications involved. Failing that, a stand-alone amendment will be introduced without delay.

This reform is not merely administrative; it is about protecting vulnerable patients, restoring trust and ensuring that no Mauritian is exploited at a time of illness and distress. The situation as it stands, is untenable. We cannot allow a system to persist where life and death decisions are influenced in an opaque, unregulated and potentially exploitative environment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to late E.G.N. also known as Ras Natty Baby, aged 72 years, I am informed that he was admitted at Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital on 23rd March 2026 with a serious medical condition along with comorbidities. The late patient was admitted in the Medical Intensive Care Unit and was managed by a multi-disciplinary team of five specialists. He was kept under close observation and appropriate treatment was administered.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, during his admission at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital, a number of visitors including Junior Ministers, hon. Fabrice David, hon. Veronique Leu-Govind, hon. Marie Anabelle Savabaddy visited him. In addition, I also contacted him to inquire about his health status. The Regional Health Director was also constantly overseeing the treatment provided to the patient.

Due to the seriousness of his condition in the Medical ICU, the treating doctors recommended to refer the case abroad after he is completely stabilized. I would like to inform the House that even the hon. Prime Minister inquired from me, about the health status of late Ras Natty Baby. The hon. Prime Minister also spoke to the patient on phone to reassure him of all assistance that Government will provide him with.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that on or about 6th April 2026, several members of a private organization visited the patient in MICU at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital during visiting hours. On 08 April 2026, while the patient was still in ICU awaiting medical fitness for air travel, one of his close relatives unexpectedly signed a discharge against medical advice, that is, DAMA.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that the Overseas Medical Care Assistance, OMCA, made arrangements for the transfer of the patient to Park Hospital, Haryana, India where he was admitted on 9th April 2026.

The patient was certified fit to travel by a medical practitioner from OMCA and was transferred without any accompanying relative because in such cases, in extreme cases, they are bound to be accompanied by one of their relatives. But here, there were no relatives who accompanied the patient. The close relatives have complained that they were not made aware of the treatment given to late Ras Natty Baby, nor was their consent sought for any surgical intervention. Unfortunately, late Ras Natty Baby passed away on 26 April 2026.

On 27 April 2026, my Ministry received a request from our High Commission in New Delhi for a No Objection Certificate to facilitate the repatriation of the mortal remains. The said certificate was issued by my Ministry on 28 April 2026 to Eli and Sons Funeral Services without delay. I was also made aware that OMCA had launched a public collection through social media to meet the cost of repatriation amounting to some Rs200,000. On the other hand, the family members of late Ras Natty Baby contacted a Member of Parliament on our side to seek financial assistance from Government regarding the repatriation.

On 27 April 2026, at around 4.00 p.m., one Member of Parliament, hon. Junior Minister, Mrs Leu-Govind, who was in close contact with the relatives of late Ras Natty Baby, informed that the relatives were seeking financial help from Government for repatriation of his remains. On the same day, Government agreed to take charge of all the expenses. On 28 April 2026, around 12.45 hours, I received a note from the Parliamentary Member that OMCA expressed its inability to pay the hospital fees, being given that only Rs100,000 was collected for his treatment. That is according to OMCA. At around 1.00 p.m., Government, acting in good faith, agreed to pay for the total hospital and repatriation fees in respect of late Ras Natty Baby.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is also noted that the estimated cost of medical treatment claimed by Park Hospital amounted to some Rs1,120,000, while additional amount of Rs80,000 was quoted by Arham Ambulance Services for repatriation of the body to Mauritius. On 28 April 2026, our High Commission in New Delhi was informed that all costs relating to the repatriation would be met by my Ministry. It is also to be highlighted that Mission had already instructed its bank to make necessary arrangements to effect the relevant payment to Park Hospital. It is only at this stage, when this information was already made public, that OMCA informed Park Hospital that since it had sent the patient for treatment, it would take charge of all expenses, including the repatriation of the corpse.

However, on 29 April 2026, our Mission in New Delhi informed my Ministry that Park Hospital would hand over the corpse to OMCA Foundation, which admitted late Ras Natty Baby and that arrangements for repatriation would be coordinated by OMCA accordingly. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following subsequent communication from the hospital, our Mission instructed the bank to withhold the payment pending further clarification. The bank is taking necessary steps to ensure that the transaction is reversed and that the funds are restored to the Mission's account.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ramdass first! Then, I will come to you.

Mr Ramdass: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I understand from the hon. Minister's reply that due consideration will now be given to the introduction of a legal framework to regulate the activities of these organisations. However, in view of the number of complaints received, as stated by the hon. Minister himself, if there have been any malpractices, and it would appear that there have been, would the hon. Minister consider the possibility of having the matter referred to the investigative authorities, such as the FCC or the Police in order for a proper investigation to be carried out and for action to be taken, if any?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the beginning, we were having rumours everywhere. People were murmuring against that institution, but no one had the guts and the courage to come forward. I was also informed that a few cases – this is the information I have – were reported to the FCC, but no action up till now had been taken. But after the death of late Ras Natty Baby, after his death, then, I have seen there have been many complaints coming up, and people have even started writing letters.

Well, I cannot pass judgment on those allegations which are being made, but, definitely, I can assure the hon. Member that all these letters will be submitted to the authorities concerned. I can assure the House that no stone will be left unturned in order to see to it that such type of practices do not occur in our country. I get the impression that we are having a parallel Ministry of Health in office in our own country. So, this has to be discouraged. That is the reason why we have to legislate against them.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ramdass!

Mr Ramdass: One last question. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In so far as the patient, late Ras Natty Baby is concerned, I understand that as per the reply of the hon. Minister, the patient proceeded overseas unaccompanied by any relative.

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question! Put your question!

Mr Ramdass: So, in that case, could the hon. Minister enlighten the House as to who signed the consent form in order for the additional treatment to be administered to the patient?

Mr Bachoo: Well, I am informed that, in fact, from Mauritius, a DAMA was signed by his son. But in India, who signed the consent form, we have no information about it. That is not known. But the parents and the relatives have complained that they were not even made aware of what type of operation was being undertaken and what type of treatment was being administered to that patient.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Beehook, yes!

Mr Beehook: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister refer the following matter to the Medical Council, given the fact that five specialists from the Ministry of Health did not give the authorisation for the patient to fly to India for overseas treatment? Another doctor who is employed by the OMCA Foundation gave the authorisation to go abroad for medical treatment. Can this matter be referred to the Medical Council?

Mr Bachoo: I will certainly do it.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Minister, considering the increasing number of unfounded, unrealistic, unproven medical treatments being proposed to innocent victims by many of these organisations, will your Ministry undertake in the short term to have a one-stop shop to advise people as to what sort of treatments are really feasible and what are those that are being taken on a ride just for the purpose of people making money? Thank you.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member being himself an excellent, top-ranking doctor of the country, knows – of course, I am not blowing his trumpet. But this is a fact – very well that when somebody, let us say, has fourth stage cancer, normally, our Government, our authority does not allow him to travel. But here, we find that many dozens of such cases where all of us know what will be the end result. But, unfortunately, they exploit the weakness of these people who really want to save their lives. So, such people fall prey to such organisations.

I can assure the hon. Member that we are going to issue an official communiqué also, till such time that the law is amended to warn the public not to fall into the trap of such organisations. These organisations, I get the feeling, are mushrooming now in our country. Instead of one, there are two, and now, there are three or four.

The Deputy Speaker: You have answered the question. One last question on this topic by hon. Dr. Prayag.

(Interruptions)

No, no! I have asked hon. Dr. Prayag. You have had your chance!

Dr. Prayag: Thank you, Deputy Speaker, Sir. Would the hon. Minister consider, on an urgent basis, to change modalities for visitors to go to the hospital and to visit patients, especially those admitted in the ICU, or to make it formal so that all visitors give their names, so that people know who are visiting ICUs? Especially those who are not immediate relatives. Thank you.

Mr Bachoo: During visiting hours, it becomes a bit difficult to know who is coming, whether he really a doctor or he is a wolf in sheep's clothing. Such people do come! But I will try to assure the House that we are going to keep a register.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. First Member for Rodrigues.

JICA BLUE ECONOMY PROJECT – LIVELIHOOD IMPACT & BENEFICIARY GROUPS

(No. B/580) Ms M. R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the Improvement of Livelihood of Coastal Communities through the Sustainable Development of Blue Economy, JICA Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the

–

- (a) expected outcomes thereof, particularly, in terms of livelihood diversification, food security and inclusive economic growth, and
- (b) fishermen and coastal communities targeted thereunder, in the short, medium and long term, respectively.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, hon. Member.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first and foremost, I wish to pay tribute to those Mauritians, who spared no effort and acted promptly on the forefront to mitigate the negative ecological impact following the grounding of MV Wakashio on 25 July 2020 and the resulting tragic oil spill.

In August 2020, Japan dispatched expert under the Japan Disaster Relief Framework. Recovery efforts were undertaken swiftly. Thereafter, a two-month survey highlighted the urgent need to clean and restore the impacted coastal ecosystem, strengthen inshore fisheries resource management, and improve the livelihood of our fishers and local communities.

In January 2021, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mauritius formally requested Japan's assistance for a project aimed at improving the livelihood of coastal communities through the sustainable development of the blue economy. The project implemented by the Japan International Cooperation Agency was launched in May 2022 and completed in April 2026. It delivered on four major outcomes –

First, practical option to improve livelihood were introduced. An intensive seafood processing training programme was implemented to ensure a major shift from traditional fishing models to the diversification of the skills of fishers and their families. Fishers received training in fish freshness control, after catches and the onward filleting, salting, vacuum packing, and overall quality management.

A fully equipped mobile kitchen trailer was also donated to fishers, allowing the marinating of fish or squids, and making fries for on-sale of high-end fish products. The fishers participated in the regatta in Trou d'Eau Douce and Mahebourg. The trailer and other equipment have been handed over to the Ministry and is under the responsibility of the Fisheries Protection Service.

The Mauritius Fishermen Cooperative Federation will coordinate with the Fisheries Protection Service for daily operation and management, booking and scheduling, cleaning, supervision, and reporting to the Ministry.

81 fishers participated in the seafood processing training. In this context, a certificate award ceremony was held on 27 April 2026 to mark the successful completion of the training.

Second, diversification of fishery resources was pursued. Being given the vulnerability of the lagoon, training in offshore fishing techniques was imparted to 47 fishers of the region, using the newly provided vessel to the Ministry to tap into deep sea species such as the diamondback squid.

Kitchen gardens and seaweed-based composting was also introduced in Bambous Virieux. Sea urchin fattening and seagrass paper production were also undertaken.

Third, fishery resource management in the lagoon was strengthened. The project prioritised community-specific strategies for ongoing projection of videos at fisheries posts, reaching 894 registered fishers, with 29,800 cumulative views.

Sensitisation ecosystem approach to fisheries, fishery sustainability coupled with intense awareness campaign on associated legal framework were also carried out.

Fourth, the comprehensive livelihood improvement plans were drafted for key regions to ensure the unique cultural and geographic strength of each village were utilised. Now, these included fish processing, sea urchin fattening, kitchen gardens, composting, seagrass paper production, and integration of fisheries with tourism ensuring women's participation and community level value addition as follows –

- (a) A “catch less, earn more” approach has been developed for Mahebourg region through the fish processing and distribution, sea urchin fattening in collaboration with divers.

- (b) For Bambous Virieux kitchen garden, seaweed-based compost, fish processing and distribution have been recommended.
- (c) In the case of Grand River South East, it has been proposed to transform fisheries from a secondary activity to a primary activity, through fish processing and distribution, sea urchin fattening, kitchen garden, and seagrass paper.
- (d) Value addition fisheries, integration of fisheries and tourism, catch and cook experiences and women-led processing activities have been recommended for Trou d'Eau Douce.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in future, JICA is expected to scale up the successful pilot projects being carried out. Opportunities also exist for the Ministry to submit further proposals to JICA for funding and assistance. JICA, along with local communities in Vieux Grand Port, are working together to establish a model eco-village. This project includes the greening of the village, sensitisation on marine environment, promoting handicraft and establishing mangrove and kayak trails.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, the fishers and coastal communities, targeted in the short, medium and long term, are those in Mahebourg, Bambous Virieux, Grand River South East, and Trou d'Eau Douce. 81 fishers and their families have been successfully trained under this project. This batch include 26 fishers from Mahebourg and same number from Bambous Virieux, along with 20 fishers from Grand River South East, and nine from Trou d'Eau Douce. 47 fishers have also been trained in off-lagoon fishing, aiming tuna and squids.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes!

QUATRE BORNES – TRAFFIC SCHEME REVIEW

(No. B/581) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the persistent traffic congestion in the town of Quatre Bornes, he will state whether consideration will be given for the preparation of a comprehensive Master Plan to review the traffic scheme thereat and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, why not.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is clear that the current traffic situation in Quatre Bornes is inextricably linked to the light rail system which operates at an at-grade, meaning ground level, with the local traffic. We must candidly acknowledge that the impact of this corridor on the town's traditional traffic flow is now irreversible. At this stage, our focus must be on the strategic implementation of palliative measures designed to mitigate these disruptions and restore fluidity to the region.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the public will vividly recall the intense debate that surfaced during the construction of the light rail system in Quatre Bornes. There was a profound sense of apprehension among residents and business operators alike, who feared that an at-ground level configuration would fundamentally disrupt their daily lives. These concerns were not unfounded.

Indeed, myself as an elected Member of Opposition, on 24 September 2019, I stood up in this very House and addressed three consecutive Parliamentary Questions to the then Minister, Mr Nando Bodha. My first Parliamentary Question on that day, PQ B/886, specifically challenged the positioning of the track along Saint Jean Road. I had, with unfortunate accuracy, foreseen the traffic segregation and the adverse socio-economic impacts we are forced to navigate. The warnings were clear then, but they were ignored.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must underline that Quatre Bornes was historically the most modern of our towns, bearing the hallmark of superior urban planning and a pleasant living environment. Was the construction of the light rail line a result of total lack of foresight regarding traffic repercussions or was it an inconsiderate attempt to demonstrate for political mileage that the project could be completed at lower cost?

Most of the railway runs from Curepipe to Port Louis, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on ex-railway tracks. One would, therefore, think that the more logical alignment for the light rail in the region of Quatre Bornes was to follow the old railway line, stretching from Avenue Sodnac to the market fair, to connect to Promenade Roland Armand. However, because that region is a densely built-up area, an alternative alignment, running partially parallel to the M1 at Trianon and cutting into Saint Jean, was chosen.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the TMRSU of my Ministry that despite micro-level traffic analysis undertaken at various junctions to optimise operational

performance, severe traffic congestion and delays persist along key sections of Saint Jean and adjoining streets.

Several recurrent traffic congestion locations have been identified within the town of Quatre-Bornes, particularly during hours, notably along Saint-Jean Road, from La Louise to Trianon, Hillcrest Road towards Motorway M1, and the transit signal priority system junction of Victoria Avenue and Sir Guy Forget and Belle Rose Avenue, and also Remy Olier Avenue and Pasteur Avenue and Ythier Avenue, as well as the town centre of Quatre-Bornes, including the market area and surrounding school zones, where high pedestrian and vehicular traffic are observed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are maximising the utility of existing infrastructure for public safety. In the event of a major accident, the light rail track at Saint Jean has been designed to serve as an emergency corridor for first responders. This was put to test in the evening of 10 December 2025, five months ago, when Metro Express Limited successfully conducted its first ever emergency situation at the request of the hon. elected members of Constituency number 18. Hon. Ms. Anquetil, hon. Dr. Boolell and yourself, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

No. 18, so sorry about that. I purposely made that mistake so that I know whether you are following or not.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in relation to the request to elaborate a master plan, I am informed that the Road Development Authority, in its capacity as the highway authority, has worked on a draft Strategic Road Master Plan, which is being discussed at different levels, and is pursuing a series of infrastructure interventions aimed at improving traffic flow and regional connectivity within and around Quatre-Bornes. Accordingly, the Saint-Jean A1 constitutes the principal arterial corridor within Quatre-Bornes, accommodating significant traffic for regional connectivity. The RDA has also implemented the construction of the Hillcrest interchange together with the duelling of Hillcrest Road, which has upgraded the existing road infrastructure, increased network capacity, enhanced connectivity, and provided alternative routes for road users.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to further highlight that these measures taken by the RDA to address the following traffic burden are as follows in bullet points –

1. Upgrading the Ebene flyover;
2. A slip lane which streamlines the transition towards the M3, successfully diverting a significant volume of traffic that previously saturated the Saint-Jean interchange;
3. Pellegrin-Trianon Link Road, currently at the implementation stage to enhance regional connectivity;
4. Strategic pipeline projects, and here I have in mind a new link road connecting the M1 at Hillcrest to the M3 at Trianon, and decongestion strategy in terms of infrastructural bypasses specifically engineered to draw traffic away from Quatre-Bornes town centre.

I can assure the hon. Member that the TRMSU will continue following up with the TRMSU and will intervene as and when required.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we must acknowledge that any improvement to the two-lane section of Saint-Jean Road will be marginal unless we reduce overall traffic volume.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

Mr Osman Mahomed: To this end, I am pleased to announce that the park and ride with at Quatre-Bornes, which can accommodate 45 cars, is almost ready. This facility will be commissioned very shortly, potentially by the end of June, providing a secure space for commuters to leave their cars and board the trams. By encouraging this modal shift and implementing the proposed engineering solutions, we aim to restore at least some of the mobility that the people of Quatre-Bornes so rightly deserve.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Ms Anquetil : Je vous remercie M. le président. Je remercie le ministre pour sa réponse. Le ministre peut-il expliquer à la Chambre pourquoi les rails du Métro Express ont été implantés en plein centre de Quatre Bornes, provoquant une congestion chronique et pénalisant lourdement la circulation des habitants de Quatre Bornes, alors que des aménagements moins contraignants ont été retenus à Curepipe, à Vacoas et à Port-Louis ? Merci.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Well, I do believe for two reasons, they did not follow the original alignment of the ex-railway track because the region is already heavily built up. There would have been huge impact on demolition cost. This is what I think. And also, they could have gone for a better solution but then like I explained in my substantive reply, I think they had to cut cost in order to be politically correct.

The Deputy Speaker: Last one.

Ms Anquetil: Last one. J'ai beaucoup, mais bon.

M. le président, alors que le métro est censé contribuer à la décongestion routière, le ministre peut-il indiquer à la Chambre quelles sont les solutions immédiates qui sont prévues pour les automobilistes alors qu'une série de carrefours sur la route principale de Saint-Jean impose des détours lourds et excessifs aux habitants, une véritable punition imposée par nul autre que l'ancien gouvernement MSM avec la complicité de l'ex PPS et de l'ancien ministre au numéro 18 ? Merci.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have listed a series of mitigating measures that the RDA, together with my ministry, are envisaging but then the modal shift, that I explained earlier, people favouring leaving their cars at the park and ride and using the trams, would greatly facilitate, especially at peak hours. So, I rely on the hon. member to canvass.

The Deputy Speaker: Honourable First Member for Piton Rivière du Rempart.

**CONSTITUENCY NO. 7 – FOOTBALL GROUNDS & MINI SOCCER
PITCHES – LIGHTING INFRASTRUCTURE – MAINTENANCE**

(No. B/582) Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the football grounds and mini soccer pitches within Constituency No. 7, Piton and Rivière du Rempart, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether the state of the lighting infrastructure thereat have been assessed and, if so, indicate whether consideration will be given for the repair and upgrading thereof and the expected timeframe within which same will be executed.

Mr Woochit: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Constituency No. 7, Piton and Rivière du Rempart falls under the District Council of Rivière du Rempart and the District Council of Pamplemousses.

A full assessment of the lighting at all football grounds and mini soccer pitches has already been completed. In total, there are 12 football grounds and seven mini soccer pitches. Nine of the football grounds are already in good condition with lighting system fully operational. In some cases, new flood lights have already been installed such as four at Beau Climat in Amaury and 16 at Point de Lascar and these are now fully functional.

However, three football grounds required major upgrading of the lighting system, namely Beau Plato at Cottage, L'Espérance Piton near NHDC and Rohit Boolaky Stadium in Rivière du Rempart. These are not minor repairs but need full reinstatement works. The scope has already been defined, cost estimate has been worked out and the projects have been prioritised. Given that current budgetary allocation is already committed to ongoing and priority works; this project will be taken up in the next financial year subject to availability of fund.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as we go to mini soccer pitch, five are already in good condition and are fully operational. These include the SILWF pitch at Amaury, inaugurated on 25 April 2026, as well as Gandhi Square, Morcellement NHDC and Village Hall Yard at Poudre d'Or. At La Clemence, only minor maintenance works are required and are currently being attended to. At Pierrefond, Plaine des Papayes, the installation of flood lights and electrical components has already been completed and the remaining step is the final connection by the Central Electricity Board, which is expected to be completed by this month.

Following the site visit carried out on 21 January 2026 at Plaine des Papayes, additional upgrading works were proposed for the mini soccer pitch and open gym at an estimated cost of Rs1.5 million and priority components, namely flood lights and electrical works amounting to Rs80,000 have already been approved and implemented.

The remaining items including synthetic grass, conditioning and related works are currently under review to ensure that costs are reasonable before any further commitment of public funds. At Ville Bague, both the Village Hall, Futsal pitch and Petite Julie football ground are operational. Further upgrading works including relocation of poles and installation of 600-

Watts flood lights are already scheduled along site ongoing development works with completion expected by July 2026.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all sites have been properly assessed and categorised.

Urgent and minor works are being addressed, while major projects are being implemented in a phased manner in line with budgetary priorities. This approach ensures that public funds are used responsibly while delivering safe, durable and modern sports facilities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the full list of all football grounds and mini soccer pitch together with their respective status and planned intervention.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes!

Dr. Prayag: Thank you, hon. Minister for your reply. Meanwhile, awaiting the reparation of these lights, can we consider to install street lights lanterns, like we have on the street, in these in these three places where people going to do jogging early mornings when it's still dark, and they can have light facilities in the meantime? Thank you.

Mr Woochit: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will take note of the request for the lighting facilities. I will request the District Council to take necessary actions upon availability of the street lights.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. First Member for Savanne and Black River!

**CONSTITUENCY NO. 14 – MORCELLEMENT BLACK ROCK & BELOGUET
– DRAINS CONSTRUCTION**

(No. B/583) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the flood-prone areas in Constituency No. 14, Savanne and Black River, particularly, in the regions of Morcellement Black Rock and Beloguet, in Tamarin, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to –

- (a) where matters stand regarding the proposed construction of new drains thereat, and
- (b) whether a survey will be carried out to assess the condition of the existing drains, indicating the measures being envisaged to mitigate flooding risks thereat.

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the very outset, I wish to point out the following. First, based on available data, the two places referred to in the question, namely Morcellement Black Rock and Morcellement Beloguet, do not fall in flood prone areas and are neither found in no-go zones nor in no-expansion zone.

Second, Morcellement Black Rock and Morcellement Beloguet are not located along the classified road, Black River Road A3, and, therefore, do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Road Development Authority, which is responsible for the care and maintenance of classified roads, specifically main roads and motorways, including the maintenance, upgrading and construction of new drains along those roads.

Third, Morcellement Beloguet is a private property, as informed by the District Council of Black River.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Land Drainage Authority that there are no ongoing projects being implemented by the RDA in the region.

However, the RDA has, based on the recommendation of the LDA, planned to undertake the reconstruction of the following two culverts at La Gaulette –

- (i) culvert near La Gaulette Community Centre. A works order to the tune of Rs11,221,360.89, inclusive of VAT, has been issued on 08 April 2026.
- (ii) culvert at La Gaulette near the state secondary school, funds have been requested for implementation of the project in financial year 2026/2027.

I am also informed by the Black River District Council that it has one drain project in the region of Black Rock, Tamarin near Oxenham with regard to the construction of two cut-off drains. This project is still at design stage.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Black River District Council that the services of a consultant will be sought to conduct a survey and assess the existing drains in the whole area in a holistic manner to propose flood mitigating measures prior to seeking approval of the LDA and financial clearance for implementing the project.

I am further informed by the LDA and the and the Black River District Council that the latter carries out regular cleaning and desilting of drains to ensure free flow of water. The

cleaning and desilting of the natural drain at Morcellement Black Rock, Tamarin was undertaken last year. Regular cleaning is done as and when required.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

The hon. Third Member for Port-Louis North and Montagne Longue!

PUBLIC SERVICE – PAPERLESS ENVIRONMENT – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/584) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms whether, in regard to the promotion of a paperless environment within the public service, he will state the measures being taken to reduce reliance on hard copies of documents.

Mr Pentiah: First and foremost, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for his question. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the transition towards a paperless public service constitutes a central pillar of this Government's broader digital transformation initiatives aimed at agenda.

My Ministry has been spearheading a range of strategic initiatives aimed at reducing reliance on paper-based processes, enhancing operational efficiency, and improving the overall responsiveness of service delivery across Ministries and departments.

This transition is being pursued through the progressive digitalisation of administrative processes, the development of integrated information systems, and the re-engineering of workflows with a view of embedding more agile, efficient, and sustainable practices across the public service.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House of key initiatives which have been implemented by my Ministry or which are currently underway. The electronic Human Resource System is fully operational. It serves as a centralised digital repository for the personnel and employment records of over 57,000 public officers, and enables officers to apply for various types of leave online. The system also comprises an e-movement module, which allows officers to record their official movements electronically.

My Ministry has also implemented the electronic attendance system. This has eliminated the need for attendance registers through the use of electronic time recorders, recorders, and a centralised attendance management platform.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a major milestone in the digital transformation journey is the implementation of the Electronic Document Management System, (EDMS), introduced with the support of the United Nations Development Programme and funded from the Government of Japan, the system is operational.

It enables the full lifecycle management of documents in electronic form, from creation and processing to storage, retrieval, and archiving. The project shall be scaled up at the level of my Ministry and also rolled out across the public service.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, furthermore, my Ministry has initiated the development of an electronic scheme of service system, which will transform what has traditionally been a manual and paper intensive process into a fully digital workflow.

Following a successful pilot phase, the contract for the implementation of the system was awarded in November 2025. Once operational, it will enable electronic drafting, consultation, approval, and storage of schemes of service while facilitating real-time collaboration among key stakeholders.

In parallel, my Ministry is currently undertaking the review and digitalisation of the Performance Management System in line with the recommendations of the 2026 Pay Research Bureau Report.

This reform will transition performance appraisal processes to an integrated digital platform, enable real-time monitoring, online submission of reports, and data driven decision-making.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these initiatives are being complemented by the Public Service Reform Scheme, which provides a structured framework to modernise administrative processes and promote a more efficient, responsive, and citizen-centric public service.

A key component of the scheme is business process re-engineering, which focuses on redesigning workflows through the use of digital technologies to eliminate redundancies and reduce duplication.

In addition, capacity-building programmes are being implemented to equip public officers with the necessary digital competencies to operate effectively. I wish to inform the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we have worked closely with the hon. Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation to bring in elements in our syllabuses for training and capacity building so that our public officers are well equipped.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, dedicated support is being provided under the scheme of the reforms and innovation units as well, which was under the budget of 2025-2026, established across Ministries and Departments. These units serve as key drivers of change at the operational level and are responsible for identifying, developing and implementing reform initiatives, particularly those aimed at reducing reliance on paper-based processes and accelerating the adoption of digital solutions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also informed by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change that under the greening of the public sector initiative and pursuant to the Digital Transformation Blueprint 2025-2029, several ICT initiatives are being undertaken by public organisations and institutions to achieve the ecological transition of Mauritius to a cleaner and greener Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these measures are being implemented in a phased and coordinated manner and are already contributing to a tangible reduction in the use of hard copy documents across the public service.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Second Member for Savanne and Black River.

HOG PLUM BEETLE INVASION – COMPLAINTS – ASSISTANCE TO PLANTERS

(No. B/585) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the invasion of the Hog Plum Beetle, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of complaints received in respect thereof, indicating –

- (a) the actions being taken or envisaged to counter same, and
- (b) whether a plan is in place to assist planters affected by same.

Dr. Boolell: I thank the hon. Member for putting the question. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the Hog Plum Beetle was first detected in March 2025 in the region of Moka and since then, has spread to several other regions across the island.

It should be noted that the pest has been found to feed only on the leaves of *fruit de Cythère* leading to significant defoliation of affected trees. It is suspected that the Hog Plum Beetle has entered the country through illegal importation of infested *fruit de Cythère* plant.

I am further informed by the Entomology Division of the Ministry, and Food and Agricultural Research Extension Institute that as at 30 April 2026, a total of 765 complaints has been registered in relation to the invasion of the Hog Plum Beetle, out of which 18 cases of mainly grown-up trees have been attended and treated with neem-based insecticide, which is considered to be safe. For the remaining complaints, advice was tendered by officers of FAREI and during site visits to growers by my Ministry since its detection.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, furthermore, approximately 8 media interventions, including television and radio programme, as well as the publication of articles in the local press have been carried out to inform the public about the pest and recommended control measures, which include the application of insecticides such as neem-based products.

With regard to part (b) of the question, actions have been initiated with the help of Foreign Institutions, including the *Centre de coopération Internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement* (CIRAD) and the Centre for Agricultural and Bioscience International, otherwise known as CABI. CABI, which has responded positively, is working closely with officers of the Ministry to identify and introduce potential biological control for the management of the Hog Plum Beetle.

Once, the most promising agent is identified, further studies will be conducted to determine its host range prior to any introduction in Mauritius. Now, this process is expected to be completed before the end of this year. I have also been informed that this pest has recently been detected in Philippines and an Integrated Pest Management Programme, including use of predators and application of biopesticides have been used.

My Ministry is working in close collaboration with Customs authorities at border entry points to reinforce and enhance control measures to effectively prevent the illegal introduction of such pests into the country.

Mr Deputy Speaker: The hon. Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac!

BASIC INVALIDITY PENSION – APPLICATIONS (NOV 2024-APRIL2026) – REJECTIONS & APPEALS – PROCESS EFFICACY

(No. B/586) Dr. Ms R. Daureawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to applications for the Basic Invalidation Pension received since November 2024 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Medical Board, information as to the number thereof rejected, indicating the reasons therefor and the number thereof

allowed on appeal, further indicating the average time taken for the determination of an appeal and measures being envisaged to enhance the efficiency and fairness of the determination process.

Mr Subron: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that since November 2024 to date, my Ministry through the Medical Board has examined 27,308 cases of invalid's basic pension applications, out of which 17,181 have been allowed, which represents 63% allowed out of the total examined cases. And 10,127 have been disallowed, which represents 37% disallowed out of the total examined cases.

The reasons for applications being rejected by the Medical Board are that they do not meet the criteria set out in the present medical guidelines and those vary from case to case.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to Medical Appeal Tribunal, which also falls under the Medical Unit of my Ministry, at present, a person whose case has been disallowed by the Medical Board has the right to make an appeal to the Medical Appeal Tribunal.

The Medical Appeal Tribunal is chaired by a representative of the Attorney General's Office and comprises two members, namely two specialists in relevant fields. I am informed that since November 2024 to March 2026, 7,631 cases have been assessed by the Medical Appeal Tribunal, out of which 2,923 were allowed, which represents 38.3% cases which are examined by the Medical Appeal Tribunal.

I also wish to add that previously, waiting time to determine an appeal was approximately three to five months. Currently, I am informed that waiting time from the moment of application to appearing before the Medical Appeal Tribunal is around one to two months.

Though lots remain to be done, I must say that there has been a slight improvement during the period queried by the hon. Member. The reform on disability pension will further improve and remedy the waiting time, thus reducing the burden of our citizens.

Let me once more inform the House that this Government is not insensitive to the complaints of applicants of invalid basic pension. As part of the reform of disability pension, my Ministry has drafted an update medical guideline as part as part one of phase one of the reform in consultation with medical practitioners and specialists serving the Medical Board and Medical Appeal Tribunal, which has been sent to the Ministry of Health and Wellness for validation.

The phase one of the reform through the updated medical guidelines will introduce functional criteria for a more fair and efficient determination of disability limitations of the different pathologies, as well as introduce new inclusive living allowances for those having a disability estimated in between 40% to 59%.

I am happy to announce in this Assembly that the Ministry of Health has just provided its views and comments regarding the new medical guidelines and same is being looked at the level of my Ministry. I wish to thank the hon. Minister and the Ministry of Health for their rigorous work. After the finalisation of the new medical guidelines, we will go to the Ministry of Finance for financial clearance and change the law for implementation.

I can reassure the hon. Member that measures taken up to now and measures being envisaged in the near future will enhance the efficiency and fairness of the determination process, thus at the same time, putting human dignity and care at the centre of my Ministry's service. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. Ms Daureeawo?

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: Could the hon. Minister specify the main medical conditions or categories leading to rejection?

Mr Subron: I do not have the specific information but the criteria are determined by the medical guidelines and the regulations in the National Pensions Act, that is, the degree of disability needs to be 60% or up.

The Deputy Speaker: Do you have another one? Yes?

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: And could the hon. Minister state whether the composition of the Medical Board is considered adequate in terms of specialist diversity?

Mr Subron: The Medical Board is composed of the doctors employed by the Ministry of Social Security, whereas at the Medical Appeal Tribunal, there are two specialists.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Second Member for Grand Baie and Poudre d'Or!

CONSTITUENCY NO. 6 – PIPE LAYING WORKS & REPAIRS – ROAD REINSTATEMENTS

(No. B/587) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the pipe laying works and repairs undertaken in Constituency No. 6, Grand Baie and Poudre d'Or, he will, for the benefit

of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, the list of the roads concerned therewith not reinstated as at to date, indicating the –

- (a) reasons therefor, and
- (b) expected re-instatement dates thereof.

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, la CWA m’informe que les travaux de remplacement de tuyaux ont été entrepris dans la circonscription numéro 6, à Grand Baie et à Poudre d'Or pour un total de 21,2 km à partir de 2023. Des projets de production ont été réalisés dans le cadre des programmes de petites et moyennes entreprises (PME) et des grands contrats dans des régions telles que Fond du Sac, Grand Gaube, Petit Raffray, Goodlands, Lower Vale, Poudre d'Or et Grand Baie. Pour les contrats majeurs, les travaux de remise en état ont été achevés à Fond du Sac, Grand Gaube et Roche Terre. En ce qui concerne les contrats pour les PME, M. le président, tous les travaux de remise en état ont été achevés en février 2026, cette année-ci, dans le cadre d'un contrat distinct attribué à *Beemanique Stone Crusher Ltd* en octobre 2025. Pour la mise en place des nouvelles conduites d'alimentation et la réparation des fuites, les entrepreneurs sont tenus de terminer la remise en état de la route dans un délai – les nouveaux contrats – de trois jours.

Cependant, M. le président, dans certaines régions, il est vrai de le dire, la remise en service n'a pas encore pu être effectuée en raison des facteurs tel que les conditions météorologiques défavorables ou la nécessité d'interventions techniques supplémentaires. Donc, pour les tuyaux qu'on a fini de mettre, il faudra les éprouver, il y aura des épreuves à faire pour vérifier s’il n’y a pas de fuites. Donc, on parle ici de la région de Goodlands, de Roche Terre, de Grand Gaube, de Sottise, de Pereybere et de Fond du Sac. Ces travaux de remise en état des routes en attente concernent des surfaces de 11 à 36 m² dans différents villages et devraient être achevés d'ici fin mai 2026.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Beejan?

Mr Beejan: Thank you, Deputy Speaker, Sir. Will the hon. Minister inform the House what accountability mechanisms are in place to ensure that contractors under CWA adhere to deadlines?

Mr Assirvaden: Je dois dire qu’effectivement, dans le temps, vous savez, le *Pipe Replacement Programme* de 700 million de roupies par l'ancienne direction et c'est vrai que les contracteurs, il y avait beaucoup de connivence, il faut bien le dire. Et à un moment donné, ils ont même licencié la responsable de l'audit et fermé l'audit.

(Interruptions)

Pour vous dire, la dame, oui, on avait posé une question, je me rappelle, l'honorable Dr. Boolell était leader de l'Opposition. La dame était Madame Joomka et elle a dû partir parce qu'on a fermé l'audit.

Donc, pour vous dire, M. le président, c'est que nous avons revu complètement le nouveau programme de *Pipe Replacement Programme*, déjà nous avons un accord avec le gouvernement indien pour R 1.2 milliard pour changer les tuyaux, le *Pipe Replacement Programme* dans 14 régions qui va commencer dès que nous avons l'accord du gouvernement indien. Nous avons revu le mécanisme et en ce qui concerne *l'accountability*, je dois dire que dorénavant, les ingénieurs, les officiers de la CWA, ceux qui préparent les *tenders* ne seront plus autorisés à signer pour l'autorisation pour le paiement ; une chose.

Deuxième chose, c'est qu'ils ne seront plus autorisés à avoir du *subcontracting*. Cela a été fait dans le passé. Vous savez, ils ont *split* des contrats de 700 millions de roupies en des petits contrats pour pouvoir être alloués. Donc, le *subcontracting* ce sera effectivement, et en ce qui concerne *the payment*, les paiements, dorénavant, le dernier *authorisation* sera au niveau de mon ministère pour le paiement. Vous savez, dans le temps, la direction de la CWA ne répondait même pas au ministère, ne répondait même pas à l'ancien ministre. Donc, pour vous dire, il répondait directement si vous voulez à la cuisine, oui, mais pas au ministère. Et quatrièmement, ceux qui préparent les *tenders* au sein de la CWA ne seront plus autorisés à signer les paiements. Donc, il y a eu cette connivence dans le temps. Et pour dire aussi que nous avons revu complètement le mécanisme au niveau de la CWA, au niveau de l'audit de la CWA et aussi au niveau du ministère.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Beejan?

Mr Beejan: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Minister whether penalties on contractors are applied or will be applied in cases of unjustified delays? Because there has been such a situation where works have not yet been completed for more than three months at Shivaji Lane, Grand Baie. Can you please inform the House? Thank you.

Mr Assirvaden: Et je vais certainement voir la région que l'honorable membre cite ici à l'Assemblée. Mais c'est sûr que les pénalités doivent être appliquées *as per the contract*. Mais vous savez, quand nous avons pris les dossiers au sein de la CWA, la plupart des contracteurs qui étaient là déjà ont dû répondre à la *Financial Crimes Commission*. Et la *Financial Crimes Commission* nous ont dit qu'ils ont des enquêtes, d'arrêter de payer et les enquêtes sont en

cours. A ce moment-là, on s'est retrouvé avec des travaux, avec quelques endroits où ils ont fouillé, il n'y avait pas de tuyaux. Certains endroits, ils ont mis des tuyaux qui n'étaient pas connectés. D'autres endroits, ils ont mis des tuyaux qui ont été connectés mais ils n'ont pas refait l'asphalte.

Donc, on s'est retrouvé un peu partout à l'île Maurice, dans des endroits, chez mon ami l'honorable Bhagwan à Coromandel, donc, on s'est retrouvé avec des dizaines de contracteurs qui ont encaissé des millions et des millions de roupies dans le temps, mais qui n'ont pas terminé le travail. Nous avons eu pas mal de problèmes avec le ministère des Infrastructures en ce qui concerne les chemins qui ne sont pas asphaltés. Donc, nous avons dû, à ce moment-là, attendre que la *Financial Crimes Commission* termine les enquêtes pour pouvoir continuer à payer les contracteurs pour qu'ils puissent continuer à faire le travail. Deuxième chose, nous avons aussi dû demander au ministère des Finances des fonds supplémentaires, parce que les 700 millions de roupies étaient complètement évaporés et le travail n'a pas été fait. Je reçois chaque semaine pas mal de plaintes de mes collègues ici, mais on se retrouve impuissant, une chose de par la *Financial Crimes Commission* et deuxièmement au niveau des fonds au ministère des Finances.

Donc, pour remettre à neuf les chemins, il faudra peut-être demander autour – j'ai fait un calcul au sein de la CWA – demander peut-être 300 millions, 350 millions au ministère des Finances pour pouvoir remettre à neuf alors que dans le contrat initial, c'était prévu dans les 700 millions la pose des tuyaux, fouiller, et asphaltage. Alors que vous avez remarqué, les tuyaux sont posés un peu partout sur le chemin allant à Rivière Noire, à Flic-en-Flac ou à Mont Choisy.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, I think you have answered the question.

Mr Assirvaden: Mais dans le projet, c'était... Vous voyez donc, M. le président et ça me passionne.

The Deputy Speaker: You have answered the question. Thank you.

(Interruptions)

Ms Anquetil: Il est passionné ! On voit qu'il est passionné !

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Third Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle.

NEWBORN K. S. – JAWAHARLAL NEHRU HOSPITAL – NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT – HYGIENE RELATED ISSUE

(No. B/588) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to newborn K. S. admitted at the Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital in or about the month of February or April 2026, he will state whether consideration will be given for the conduct of an inquiry into an alleged incident concerning hygiene in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit on 12 March 2026 and the dispensing of expired medication thereto upon discharge on 14 April 2026 and the taking of the taking of appropriate measures in the light of the outcome thereof.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that newborn baby K.S. was admitted in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) on 16 February 2026 following an emergency Caesarean section at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital. The baby was subsequently transferred to Special Care Baby Unit, site 2 on 27 February 2026.

I am informed that on 18 March 2026, the baby was transferred from Special Care Baby Unit 2 to Special Care Baby Unit 1, Ward 1.5 Nursery. On 14 April 2026, the baby, being stabilised, was able to feed normally and was discharged by the paediatrician.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that an official complaint was received by the Regional Health Director of the Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital on 12 March 2026. According to the complainant, that is, the father of the newborn K.S., few ants were noticed on the side of the incubator and one ant was crawling directly on the newborn baby. Following the complaint dated 12 March 2026, an internal inquiry was carried out and the nursing staff informed that the incubator is daily cleansed and, at no moment, ants were found in any incubator.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 18 April 2026, another complaint was received from the father of the newborn K.S. regarding the previous observation of ants in NICU as well as expired medication provided to the newborn baby. According to the complainant, at the time of discharge, that is, on 14 April 2026, a colic drop was provided by the hospital staff with expiry date 11 April 2026. The complainant, therefore, requested that a full and independent investigation be carried out in the matter.

At the time of discharge, the patient was already in possession of the colicaid drop, used earlier in the NICU, and as such, a new one was not dispensed. An investigation is being carried

out as to why the expired colicaid drop was not returned by the staff, and the same drug prescribed, expiring in July 2026, was not handed over by the relatives.

Following receipt of the complaint, the matter was referred to the Infection Prevention and Control Coordinator. On 30 April 2026, the IPC Coordinator contacted the IPC Registered Medical Officer as well as the Acting Ward Manager of NICU at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital. According to the NICU staff, no ant or insect were observed in the incubators.

As regards the complaint pertaining to the expired colic drops, I am informed that the neonatal ICU had intended colic drops on 15 of March 2026 for baby K.S. for a treatment duration of one week, and that one flask of colic drops was accordingly dispensed to the ward. The expiry date of this batch was 11 April 2026. Subsequently, a new batch of colic drops, with an expiry date of 07 July 2026, was used in the SCBU (Special Care Baby Unit).

I am informed that no issue was raised at the level of NICU at the Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital in relation to hygiene conditions within the unit during the period under reference. It is also to be noted that strict observance of infection prevention and control protocols is permanently enforced in the NICU Department. In addition, no case of multi-drug-resistant organisms were reported during the months of February, March and April 2026. The NICU performance score under the *MoBienet* Application stands at 88%, which is a good score.

I am further informed that a system of regular monitoring of expiry dates is in place within the pharmacy to ensure that no expired medication is dispensed to patients. As an additional measure to further strengthen oversight, instructions have been issued for pharmacists to carry out regular inspections of hospital wards to verify the absence of expired medication. It is however to be emphasised that the primary responsibility for ensuring that no expired drugs are kept in the ward stock rests with the Charge Nurse or Ward Manager.

My Ministry will ensure that the established clinical and pharmaceutical protocols are duly observed in the management of this case, both in respect of infection prevention and control as well as medication dispensing, and will continue to reinforce monitoring mechanism to ensure sustained compliance with best practice standards.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Ramdass!

Mr Ramdass: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Of course, I welcome the investigation announced by the hon. Minister.

As the hon. Minister has stated himself, in fact, there were two incidents further to which an official complaint was addressed to the Regional Health Director by the responsible party, who also tried to meet him. Is the hon. Minister aware that up to this day, not a single response, not a single reply, has been addressed to the responsible party of this newborn baby by the hospital staff or at least the Regional Health Director?

Mr Bachoo: Well, I was informed about the attitude of the Director, and I have also received complaints. I can assure the hon. Member that I am looking into this case seriously.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Second Member for Savanne and Black River!

OVERSEAS MEDICAL TREATMENT SERVICE – ASSOCIATIONS/PRIVATE ENTITIES – COMPLAINTS/IRREGULARITIES

(No. B/589) Mr C. Ramkalawon (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to overseas medical treatment of Mauritian patients being organised by associations and private entities, he will state whether he has taken cognizance of concerns expressed and alleged complaints or irregularities regarding the functioning, governance and service delivery thereof and, if so, having regard to the substantial public and private funds involved therein, indicate whether his Ministry proposes to take any action in relation thereto.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/579)

BLUP ISSUANCE – REVISED APPLICATIONS, CLEARANCES & PROCEDURES

(No. B/590) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the application for the issue of a Building and Land Use Permit, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether, subsequent to an applicant obtaining clearances from all relevant authorities, including the Road Development Authority, the Land Drainage Authority and the Environment authorities, the latter may be required by any such local authority to effect additional amendments thereto and, if so, indicate whether consideration will be given for the limiting of

such amendments to a single instance aiming at enhancing efficiency and legal certainty of the process.

Mr Woochit: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the outset, let me make it clear that application for Building and Land Use Permits, commonly known as BLUPs, are processed under the Local Government Act 2011 through the NELS, that is, the National e-Licensing System. Under the present system, certain clearances from public utilities, namely the CEB, CWA, and WMA are already integrated in NELS and are subject to prescribed timeframes. Where an application is complete and only such clearances are required, the matter may be determined within the statutory period.

However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, many BLUPs applications are not so straightforward. Depending on the nature, scale, and location of the proposed development, the local authority may have to seek the views or clearances of other competent authorities such as the Road Development Authority, the Land Drainage Authority, the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, and the Forestry Service, the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, the Ministry of Health, or the Ministry of Agro-Industry, among others. These clearances are not mere formalities. They are required to ensure that the proposed development complies with road safety, drainage, flood mitigation, environmental health, infrastructure, and planning requirements before a permit is issued.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the difficulty is that several of these authorities are not yet fully integrated into the NELS platform. In many cases, they operate under their own procedures, technical standards, and timelines. In practice, their views may be received at different stages. When those views contain conditions or required changes, the applicant must then be informed and requested to submit revised plans, additional documents, technical reports, or other particular. Therefore, to the first part of the question, the answer is yes.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, even after an applicant has obtained certain initial clearances, additional amendments may still be required by the local authority where such amendments are necessary to ensure full compliance with the requirements imposed by the competent authority and with the law. This is not done to create unnecessary obstacle. It is done to avoid unsafe, non-compliant or legally defective approvals.

For example, the RDA or the Traffic Management Road Safety Unit may require changes relating to access, visibility, or traffic flow. The LDA may require flood mitigation measures

or upgrading of existing drainage systems. The environment authorities may impose conditions to protect sensitive areas. The council must ensure that these requirements are properly reflected to the final approved plans before issuing any permits.

With regard to the second part of the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I fully understand the concern about delays and repeated amendments. It is true that applicants need a system which is faster, clearer, and even more predictable. However, limiting amendments to one single instance in all cases would not always be practical or safe. Technical issues may appear only after revised plan are examined or after another authority has submitted its views. A rigid time of amendment rule could result either in premature rejection of the application, or worse, in the approval of projects which do not properly meet safety, drainage, or environmental or planning standards.

That said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government is fully conscious that the present system must be improved. My Ministry is, therefore, examining measures to make the BLUP process more efficient and more transparent. These include –

- the integration of all major clearance authorities into NELS;
- The introduction of clearer statutory response timelines for relevant authorities;
- better inter-agency coordination;
- real-time tracking of referral and responses, and
- where possible, the issuing of one consolidated list of amendment to applicants to reduce unnecessary back and forth.

Such reforms may require administrative changes, service level arrangement between authorities, and due consideration is therefore being given by my Ministry to prescribe all other relevant authorities, whose views and clearances are required, but who are not presently registered on the NELS.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our objective is clear. To make the BLUP process faster, more business-friendly and more legally certain, while ensuring that we do not compromise on safety, proper planning, infrastructure, drainage, or environmental protection in the public interest.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Jugurnauth.

Mr Jugurnauth: Yes. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that more amendments after all the clearance from all ministries, then again, the promoter has to pay more for the designer, which is unfair?

The Deputy Speaker: What is your question?

Mr Jugurnauth: My question is whether amendment will made to remove this...

The Deputy Speaker: So, you want the hon. Minister to review this system which is unfair?

Mr Jugurnauth: The amendments. Yes, because after...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister...

Mr Jugurnauth: ...NELS, which is unfair for promoter to pay more.

Mr Woochit: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we will look into the matter because anyway, if the hon. Member has any particular case in mind, he can come up and we can see it to it. We will come with these regulations as soon as possible. We are working on it.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes. The hon. First Member for Rodrigues. I understand the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs will answer this question.

**AFRICAN REGIONAL INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANISATION
(ARIPO) – E-FILING SYSTEM – PROCEDURES & SENSITISATION**

(No. B/591) Ms M. R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperative whether, in regard to the African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation (ARIPO) online e-filing system, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand regarding the implementation and effectiveness thereof in Mauritius, indicating the –

- (a) number of applications received, processed, approved and followed up, respectively as at to date, and
- (b) sensitisation missions and capacity-building sessions being envisaged for Intellectual Property agents, attorneys-at-law and technical staff to ensure the effective adoption thereof nationwide.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr D. Ramful): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

First and foremost, allow me to inform the House that Mauritius acceded to the Harare Protocol on Patents, Utility Models and Industrial Designs on 27 May 2025. And our membership to this protocol administered by the African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation, in short form ARIPO, became effective on 27 August 2025.

Henceforth, whenever applications are filed by foreign applicants at ARIPO for the protection of patents, utility models, and industrial designs, and where Mauritius is designated in such applications, the Industrial Property Office of Mauritius is notified of same through the Member States module, a tool designed by ARIPO, and the installation of which was effected by the ARIPO experts during their mission in Mauritius in April 2026.

The MS module is an online notification and document exchange platform between ARIPO and its member states. The notifications are done through the Industrial Property Automation System, a software owned by the World Intellectual Property Organisation, in short form WIPO, and already deployed and being used by the IP Office since 2013. The successful installation of the Member State module required the involvement and contribution of WIPO and ARIPO experts, the Government Online Centre, as well as officers of the IT unit of my Ministry.

The objectives of the ARIPO online services are to –

- (i) enhance the efficiency and flexibility of business processing and other administrative work at the ARIPO office, Member States IPOs, intellectual property agents, and the public at large.
- (ii) facilitate the accessibility and use of intellectual property information in the region and in Africa at large, and
- (iii) strengthen ICT institutional capacity in the ARIPO region and beyond.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me add that the implementation and use of this Member State module is still at an early stage, and I understand that a virtual meeting will be held in the near future engaging all the aforementioned stakeholders to test the practicability and effectiveness of this tool, address any challenges, and thereafter, enable the IP Office to notify ARIPO of the outcome of applications in which Mauritius has been designated.

Having said so, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to also inform the House that my Ministry is seeking the assistance and guidance of ARIPO to domesticate the provisions of the Harare Protocol. This will entail the amendment of the existing legal framework on industrial property to ensure the proper implementation of the provisions relating to the Harare Protocol.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regards to part (a) of the question, that is, the number of applications received. According to the quarterly reports received from ARIPO for the periods 01 October 2025 to 31 December 2025, and 01 January 2026 to 31 March 2026, Mauritius has been designated in –

- six patent applications, which are still under process;
- 14 industrial design applications, 5 of which have been registered, and
- 1 utility model application, which is still under process.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that ARIPO, in collaboration with my Ministry, organised an online sensitisation workshop at Caudan Arts Centre on 21 April 2026. The objective of the workshop was to enhance the uptake of the e-filing services offered by ARIPO with a view to facilitating online filing of IP titles, payment of fees, and online tracking applications.

This workshop targeted IP agents and attorneys, and other potential users of the ARIPO system. The ARIPO mission conducted capacity building sessions for the benefit of the technical staff of the IP Office on the deployment and use of the Member State module on the second day of the mission, and had a working session with some IP agents on the third day of the mission.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue.

INTERNATIONAL VACCINATION CENTRE – SERVICE DECENTRALISATION – REGIONAL HOSPITALS

(No. B/592) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the International Vaccination Centre, he will state whether consideration will be given for the decentralisation of the services thereof to the Regional Hospitals and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the International Vaccination Centre has been designated to provide specialised vaccination services in line with international requirements, including the administration of vaccines such as yellow fever, meningitis, Adacel vaccines, tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis, typhoid vaccines, COVID-19 vaccine for travellers to Hajj, hepatitis A vaccines, pre-travel prophylaxis tablets for malaria, and the issuance of internationally recognised vaccination certificates. These vaccines are inoculated by the public health nursing cadre.

In response to the hon. Member, I wish to state the following –

- (i) in respect of the current service model, the IVC operates as a centralised service to ensure compliance with international standards for vaccine storage, handling and certification, availability of trained personnel authorised to administer specific travel vaccines and issue internationally recognised certificates, and adequate monitoring of adverse events following vaccination.
- (ii) government policy to ensure that all services provided under International Health Organisations remain safe, standardised, and internationally compliant. The current centralised model of the IVC has been effective in maintaining these standards.

While decentralisation improves geographical access, it must be clinically justified and economically viable. Unlike routine immunisation services, travel-related vaccines are low in volume and irregular in demand, especially with multi-dose vials. There is high risk of wastage if turn out is low and involves high-cost vaccines with short shelf life. There are cold chain requirements such as yellow fever vaccine, which requires strict temperature control of 2 to 8 degrees centigrade. It requires strict certification protocols under international regulations. There is human resource limitation, that is need for specifically trained staff, for example, public health nursing officers and community physicians and will necessitate additional infrastructure.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in this context, indiscriminate decentralisation would result in underutilisation of resources and potential wastage, similar to challenges already observed in certain decentralised specialised services. As such, the International Vaccination Centre will remain the designated authority for specialised vaccines and certification. The priority of Government is not decentralisation, but rather providing efficient, safe, and internationally compliant service delivery. The current approach ensures optimal use of public resources while progressively improving accessibility where justified.

The Deputy Speaker: The Hon. First Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE.

BEL AIR & TROU D'EAU DOUCE – TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY – BUS ROUTE & TAXI LICENCES

(No. B/593) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to transport connectivity between Bel Air and Trou d'Eau Douce, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to whether consideration will be given for the –

- (a) introduction of a new bus route along same;
- (b) extension of the existing Route 55 from Trou d'Eau Douce to the proposed Mini Traffic Centre, and
- (c) issue of Public Service (Taxi) Licences for operation along same.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the NLTA that Bel Air and Trou d'Eau Douce are situated approximately four kilometres apart and there is presently no direct bus service operating along the corridor.

I am further informed that connectivity between the two localities is currently ensured by the traveling in two legs that is, from Bel Air to Bramsthan and from Bramsthan to Trou d'Eau Douce along route 16 or 18 and along route 55 respectively with services operating at an average frequency of 30 minutes on each leg.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the NLTA that the introduction of a new dedicated bus route is not being envisaged at this stage in view of the relatively low direct passenger demand between these two localities.

I am made to understand that the predominant travel pattern of residents from both Bel Air and Trou d'Eau Douce is oriented towards Central Flacq which remains the main economic and service hub of the region.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, the extension of route 55 is not being considered due to the relatively low passenger demand considerations. The NLTA is currently examining service optimisation measures including the possible extension of existing route 56, Grand River South East to Flacq, operated by the NTC to serve Trou d'Eau Douce via La Lucie Roy.

This proposal will provide direct connectivity while ensuring more efficient utilisation of available resources. Implementation of this proposal will however be the subject of consultations with the NTC and a road test to ascertain operational feasibility including the availability of a suitable turning radius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (c) of the question, I am informed that there are currently 56 licensed taxis operating from Trou d'Eau Douce and 76 from Bel Air.

The present level of taxi services is considered more than adequate by the NLTA to meet existing demand for taxi services based on population density.

Some of these taxis operate as *taxi train* to provide direct services between Bel Air and Trou d'Eau Douce and complement for the present lack of buses on the basis of separate fares as provided under the law, that is, section 103(4) of the Road Traffic Act. Consequently, the issue of additional bus service, taxi licenses is not being envisaged.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to remind the hon. Member that a meeting was held with the hon. Dr. Ramtohol and hon. Dr. Saumtally on 26 January 2026, that is, some four months ago following their request in my office. The hon. Baboolall was not able to attend because he was traveling to Rodrigues and that, at a material time.

During the meeting, the transport challenges faced by the residents of Trou d'Eau Douce and Bel Air amongst others were discussed. Following those discussions, the NLTA has been actively exploring various avenues to enhance bus service delivery in the regions. Our commitment to the inhabitants is evidenced by the proposed extension of route 56, like I explained earlier, to serve Trou d'Eau Douce.

I am told that the NLTA is in discussions with the NTC for that purpose and a road test will be held soon. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can reassure the hon. Member that my Ministry, together with the NLTA, will continue to maintain close monitoring of transport needs across all regions. Should there be any significant evolution in demand patterns, appropriate adjustments will be considered in consultation with stakeholders to ensure that public transport provision remains responsive, efficient and sustainable.

The Deputy Speaker: No. Okay. The hon. Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil!

MRS R. A. AND MR A. M – FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMISSION
DIRECTORS – COMPLAINTS & INVESTIGATION

(No. B/594) Mr R. Beehook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning whether, in regard to Mrs R. A. and Mr A. M., directors at the Financial Services Commission, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number and nature of the complaints received against them, indicating if investigations have been initiated therein and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) findings thereof and actions taken in relation thereto, and
- (b) total cost incurred therefor.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, before you answer, hon. Dr. Prayag, you have a question after that, after B/595, you have to resume your seat.

Yes, hon. Minister.

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the FSC that four complaints have been received in respect of Mrs R. A and one complaint in respect of Mr A. M. Two of the complaints relating to Mrs R. A were by way of anonymous letters, one received at the FSC in September 2022 and one forwarded by the Financial Crimes Commission in July 2024. The remaining two complaints were from staff and were received in September 2024 and November 2025 respectively. As regards the one complaint relating to Mr A. M, it was received in December 2025 and was from a staff member of the FSC.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, the complaints made against Mrs R. A in the anonymous letter received in September 2022, related to allegations of collusion between the Director and the Managing Director of a management company. As per the findings of the inquiry, the collusion referred to in the complaint letter was not established.

However, it was concluded that supervision was negligent in addressing the complaints that were received against the MC and its officers. Written explanations were sought from the concerned officers including Mrs R.A. However, the board had requested that the matter be put on hold.

In July 2024, the Financial Crimes Commission, (FCC), informed the FSC of an email from an anonymous source alleging collusion between a licensee and Mrs R.A. The

enforcement directorate of the FSC could not pursue the matter further as the FCC did not have any additional information as required by the FSC to initiate an investigation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards the three complaints from staff of the FSC against Mrs R.A and Mr A. M, the status is as follows; one of the complaints against Mrs. R.A is expected to be resolved with the organisational review that the FSC is currently undertaking and as regards the two other complaints, the respective internal inquiries initiated by the FSC are still ongoing.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, the total cost involved are, firstly, for the inquiry carried out regarding the anonymous letter received in respect of Mrs R.A in 2022, the FSC retained the services of an external law firm at the total cost of Rs402,500. As regards the complaint from the staff against Mrs R.A received in November 2025, the FSC has retained the services of an external legal counsel at the cost of Rs115,000 plus VAT.

As regards the complaint from the staff of the FSC against Mr A.M, the FSC has enlisted the services of an external legal counsel to carry out a full investigation at the cost of Rs125,000 plus VAT. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Beehook!

Mr Beehook: Yes, thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. May I know from the hon. Minister, how many times Mrs R.A had been suspended and reintegrated to her post?

Dr. Ms Jeetun: From what I understand, she was recruited in March 2019. I don't have information regarding her suspension. During the investigation in December 2022, I believe she was asked to be out of office, not to be present on the premises during the investigation. But I understand that notice was not served but instead she was on sick leave and then on annual leave. I don't have any information regarding a suspension from the FSC.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr Beehook: Does the hon. Minister have the information to please inform the House, why was Mr A.M promoted to the post of Head of Supervision Directorate despite having no experience in global business, funds and capital markets?

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from what I understand, the structure of that department which is the directorate called supervision, it had a Director and then it has five departments and Mr A. M was heading one of those departments.

As per the procedures and the policies in place at the FSC, he was the highest in the grade when there was a reorganisation. The Director of that supervision was moved to another department. Mr A.M. was the most senior in terms of grade. That is why he was given that. It was not a promotion. It was a temporary measure of assigning additional responsibilities to oversee the Supervision Department.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes! You have another one?

Mr Rookny: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Minister please advise as regards to Mrs. R.A., since it was found that supervision was superficial, did that committee find out who was responsible for such superficiality? What actions have been taken to prevent future occurrences?

Dr. Ms Jeetun: So that happened in 2022. The collusion itself was not established, but they found that there may have been weaknesses in the procedures and the way the complaint was handled. The charges were prepared. But I understand that the board, at that time, was told to put everything on hold.

I must say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that there is a new board in place at the FSC. There is a new director in place. There is major restructuring going on. They have recruited an external professional consultant who is doing a restructuring exercise that will be completed by June. The whole organisation of FSC is being re-looked into because there has been quite a lot of mismanagement and issues at the FSC, as many of my colleagues are aware. There are so many questions that have been put on FSC's operations.

The Deputy Speaker: Last one!

Mr Beehook: I have a question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. As the former Head of the Insurance Department, is the hon. Minister aware what was the involvement of Mr A.M. in the Afri Life Insurance Ltd., owned by one Mr Prateek Gupta, who is the ultimate beneficiary owner of the Silver Bank?

Dr. Ms Jeetun: The question is not part of the of the main question. So, I can find out. I can investigate.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

The hon. First Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart!

**TERRE ROUGE–VERDUN–TRIANON LINK ROAD –TRAFFIC CONGESTION
ALLEVIATION**

(No. B/595) **Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the Terre Rouge Verdun – Trianon Link Road, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to whether any survey has been carried out to assess the effectiveness thereof in alleviating traffic congestion, particularly, in relation to traffic flow through Port Louis and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof and further indicate whether any survey has been carried out on the enhancement of traffic flow along the said corridor.

The Minister of National Infrastructure (Mr A. Gunness): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this Parliamentary Question.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Road Development Authority is responsible for the construction, care, maintenance and improvement of main roads and motorways, while the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, which operates under the purview of the Ministry of Land Transport, is responsible for the traffic management and congestion alleviation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the construction of the Terre Rouge-Verdun-Trianon link road, now known as Motorway M3, was completed in December 2013 and was implemented following a feasibility study having as main objectives to reduce congestion on Motorways M1 and M2 and improve travel time and connectivity between the north and the centre of the island. The project also contributes to boost economic development, enhance road network resilience by providing an alternate route and creating new development opportunities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the TRMSU that prior to the construction and opening of the Motorway M3, the main route for vehicles travelling between the southern and northern parts of the island was through Port Louis via Motorways M1 and M2. A study carried out by the TMRSU in 2011 indicated that through traffic accounted for approximately 30% of total traffic converging daily towards Port Louis, thereby contributing significantly to congestion along these corridors.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also informed by the TMRSU that no specific post-implementation study has been carried out in the subsequent years following the commissioning of the project to assess its effectiveness. However, once it opened to traffic, the Motorway M3 provided an alternative route for through traffic, thereby reducing dependence

on Port Louis as a transit point. Observations at the time indicated an immediate improvement in traffic flow along Motorways M1, M2.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, over the past decade, Mauritius has experienced a significant increase in the number of registered vehicles, rising from 486,144 in 2015 to 746,961 in 2025, representing an increase of approximately 53%. This has resulted in increased traffic volumes across the road network and has contributed to worsening congestion along Motorways M1 and M2 towards Port Louis.

According to traffic counts carried out in 2025 by the TMRSU, approximately 4,300 vehicles per hour travel towards Port Louis from the south via Motorway M1 during peak hours, while approximately 3,600 vehicles travel from the north via Motorway M2 per hour.

The most recent traffic count along the Motorway M3 was carried out in 2018 by the TMRSU. Adjusting for the increase in traffic over the years, it is estimated that approximately 3,100 vehicles travel towards Ebène from the north at the Côte d'Or roundabout during peak hours, 7.45 a.m. to 9.30 a.m., while approximately 2,500 vehicles travel in the opposite direction. In the absence of the M3, this traffic would otherwise have passed through Port Louis via Motorways M1 and M2, further aggravating congestion on these corridors.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in addition to the construction of Motorway M3 as an alternate route with a view to addressing congestion, the RDA has completed several projects along Motorways M1 and M2 to further improve the level of service of its road network. Grade separated junctions and flyovers have been implemented at Caudan, Quay D, Terre Rouge, and La Vigie. A third lane has also been added on Motorway M1 between Terre Rouge and Roche Bois. Further traffic modelling exercises are being carried out at Mapou and Labourdonnais roundabout for future interventions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the RDA further intends to facilitate access to Motorway M3 through the construction of slip lanes at Côte d'Or and Ripailles roundabouts. These slip lanes will allow road users to gain access to the motorway in less time and contribute to an overall improvement in the traffic fluidity along the corridor and connecting roads.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, moreover, Government intends to proceed with the implementation of the Ring Road Phase 2 project, which is expected to significantly alleviate traffic congestion in and around Port Louis and act as an alternate route for road users who do not need to pass through the city centre. This new strategically will help redistribute traffic

currently using the M1 Motorway and key junctions within Port Louis, thereby reducing pressure on heavily congested corridors during peak hours.

It will also improve connectivity between existing roads and enhance the overall resilience and efficiency of the national road network. Besides, Government will implement a flyover project at Camp Fouquereaux to render the traffic more fluid.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the meantime, I am requesting the RDA to carry out a joint survey with the Police and the TMRSU, including a fresh traffic count, to determine immediate measures to alleviate the traffic situation along Motorway M3.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over!

Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/596, B/597, B/598, B/599, B/602, B/606, B/607, B/608, B/609, B/610, B/611, B/612, B/613, B/614, B/616, B/617, B/618, B/619, B/622, B/623, B/624, B/625, B/626, B/627, and B/628.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Mohamed): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that all the business on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

Dr. Boolell rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILL

Second Reading

THE CERTIFICATE OF CHARACTER BILL

(No. II of 2026)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Second Reading of the Certificate of Character Bill (No. II of 2026).

Question again proposed.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research, Dr. Sukon!

(4.20 p.m.)

The Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research (Dr. K. Sukon): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise in full support of this Bill. I must say many of us from both sides of this House must have met young people, parents, mothers and fathers in tears. Why? Because their son or daughter could not secure a job because of the '*certificat de moralité*'. Very often we are asked the question. The Government is giving free education up to the university level, is giving free transport, is providing textbooks freely for many grades. Then why is the law itself closing the doors? Why is this document, '*certificat de moralité*' not allowing our son, our daughter to secure that job? What do we want as parents? We would like them to have a decent life and a decent life depends on a decent job. The question put to us: why are you allowing to shatter the dream of not only the young person but also the entire family? *Pourquoi ce document administratif est en train de condamner l'avenir de ce jeune même avant qu'il soit écrit ?*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we cannot tell someone, 'study hard, work hard, train hard, dream big' and then allow the law to keep opportunities out of reach. We cannot say, 'build your future', but we will continue to judge you by your past. *Contrairement à l'ancien régime qui n'a pas jugé bon de revoir ce dispositif, nous ne restons pas les bras croisés.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that is why today I want to speak beyond this Chambre. I want to speak to every student. I want to speak to every parent. I want to speak to every mother and father who want one thing above all else for their child: a fair chance in life. I want to tell them that this Bill is not only about certificate. It is about justice. It is about fairness. It is about opportunity. It is about hope and above all about second chances.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the current Act does one thing good; it protects the public. But it does one thing in a very undesirable way; it traps too many people in the past for too long. This Bill changes that by raising the fine threshold and reducing the waiting period for several offences. Thus, it ensures that the minor offences do not continue to haunt the individuals for long. This is a major reform.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it rests on a simple idea. Law must make the difference between danger and reform. It must distinguish between serious crime and lesser offending. It must distinguish between someone who remains a risk and someone who has changed. This is not softness, this is fairness. This is proportion and this is wisdom.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, now let me say something very clearly to the country. The Bill is not soft on crime. Serious offences will still remain on the certificate. Grave wrongdoing remains visible because the public must be protected. So, this Bill does not weaken protection. It keeps protection strong.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am really impressed by the balance in this Bill. It is firm where firmness is required. It is fair where fairness is required. It is protective of society but not blind to rehabilitation. It is serious about crime but also serious about human dignity. That is why I would like to thank the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Attorney General for this Bill.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Bill says something very clearly. The person who made a lesser mistake, paid the price, rebuilds their life and respects the law, then the State should not continue punishing them forever. That matters in real life. It matters to the young person trying to get a first job. It matters to the parent who wants to see a child stand tall again. It matters to the family who wants to move from worry to stability, and that is why as the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research, I feel strongly about this Bill.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to speak directly now to every young person who may have stumbled, learned, matured and changed. Your life is not over. Your future matters. And to every parent, your child must not be defined by one bad moment. It is a fact that parents believe children can grow. Parents believe children can learn. They can correct themselves. They can they can come back stronger. This Bill honours that belief. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for several young persons, the road from education to employment can sometimes be hard because it depends on internship, apprenticeship, placement, first job, technical training and research opportunities. One old and lesser offence can shut all those doors completely at once. This Bill helps them open again.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we cannot tell a young person, 'improve yourself', but we will never recognise that improvement. That would be unjust. That would be short-sighted and it would waste precious national talent. Mauritius cannot afford to waste talent – not the talent of our students, not the talent of our graduates, not the talent of young people who are ready to work, who are ready to contribute and ready to move forward.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Bill also introduces an important principle of fairness in employment. Where a conviction is not related to the job, it cannot be used to discriminate applicants. That is a very important message to employers and to the public. Because the right question is not that: has this person ever been convicted? The right question: is that conviction relevant to that job? This is fairness. This is common sense and this is justice with intelligence. The Bill says something better. It says to the graduate, do not give up. It says to the families, hope is still alive. It says to the nation, we can protect the public without giving up on our people.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a strong country is not one that punishes forever. A strong country is one that knows when punishment has done its work. A wise society is not one that confuses stigma and safety. A wise society is one that protects the public while still making room for redemption. That is what this Bill does. It protects society. It restores proportion. It supports employment. It helps students and young people move forward. It gives parents something precious – reassurance. Reassurance that the law can still be fair. Reassurance that the future is still open. Reassurance that one mistake does not have to be a life sentence of exclusion.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let this message be heard clearly across the nation. To the students watching, your future is bigger than your minor mistake. To the parents listening, your child is worth believing in. To the families across this country, there can be a second chapter. And to the nation, justice must protect, but justice must also lift. This is a sound Bill, a fair Bill, a humane Bill, and a necessary Bill.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to reassure all those concerned. I recently met a father, a mother and a son. The father is a fisherman. The mother is a housewife. They came to see me because – like my colleague, hon. Uteem, said, *erreur de jeunesse* – he could not secure a job. I told the parents to just wait and that soon this nightmare will be over.

So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I, wholeheartedly, commend the Certificate of Character Bill to this House.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

I suspend the sitting for half an hour.

At 4.33 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.07 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: *C'est bon*, you may be seated!

Yes, hon. Minister of Gender, it is your turn!

The Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare (Ms A. Navarre-Marie):

Merci Madame la présidente.

Madame la présidente, the *Certificate of Character Bill* est un projet de loi qui va changer des vies. Des changements concrets que les Mauriciennes et les Mauriciens vont ressentir dans leur vie, dans leur recherche d'emploi. Des milliers de personnes attendent ce moment depuis trop longtemps.

Madame la présidente, quelque part à Maurice, aujourd'hui, une personne s'est rendue à un entretien d'embauche. Elle était préparée. Elle était qualifiée. Elle était prête. Mais, elle n'a pas obtenu le poste. Non pas parce qu'elle manquait de compétences, non pas parce qu'elle a échoué à l'entretien, mais à cause de quelque chose qu'elle a faite il y a 15 ans et pour laquelle elle a déjà payé, pour laquelle elle a purgé sa peine et payé peut-être une amende. Quelque chose qu'elle a depuis longtemps laissé derrière elle. Mais, son certificat de moralité en a décidé autrement et la porte s'est refermée. Et ce n'est pas un cas isolé.

À travers toute l'île, la même scène se répète dans des foyers, des régions et des vies différentes. Le résultat est prévisible : le rejet, l'humiliation, l'exclusion. Non pas parce que cette personne représente un danger pour la société et qu'elle a récidivé mais parce qu'un système conçu pour protéger le public est, aujourd'hui, détourné de sa vocation et est utilisé pour stigmatiser définitivement des personnes, pour les marquer comme inaptes bien longtemps après qu'elles aient démontré le contraire. Ce n'est pas de la justice. C'est une double peine. Et c'est une peine qui frappe de manière disproportionnée les jeunes, les plus démunis et les rend incapables de s'en sortir. Et les conséquences ne s'arrêtent pas à l'individu. Elles se propagent. Les familles en souffrent. Lorsqu'un parent ne peut pas trouver du travail à cause d'une condamnation ancienne, ce sont les enfants qui en payent le prix. La suite, on la connaît. Précarité, instabilité et le sentiment que leur famille est d'une façon ou d'une autre marquée par l'État comme étant inférieur.

Madame la présidente, ce projet de loi est une avancée concrète et soulagera des milliers de personnes qui ont besoin que la société leur accorde une seconde chance. Ce projet de loi vient corriger une situation injuste avec proportionnalité et humanité. D'abord, il prévoit que certaines condamnations mineures, sous condition et après un délai déterminé, ne figurent plus sur le certificat, permettant ainsi une véritable réinsertion. Ensuite, il consacre un principe

fondamental. Une personne ne peut être discriminée à l'embauche pour une infraction sans lien avec l'emploi concerné.

Madame la présidente, s'il est vrai que ce projet de loi modernise notre justice et ouvre de nouvelles perspectives, il est tout aussi vrai que notre devoir est de protéger les plus vulnérables, ceux qui sont sans défense, c'est-à-dire les enfants. La protection de l'enfant reste notre priorité absolue. Cette modernisation que nous apportons ne se fera jamais au détriment de la protection des enfants. Bien au contraire !

Et je salue le fait que ce projet de loi maintient avec fermeté l'obligation de faire apparaître sur le certificat de moralité toutes les condamnations liées à des infractions graves commises à l'encontre des enfants, notamment celles prévues dans le *Children's Act 2020*, l'abus sexuel, la prostitution des enfants, le grooming, la pornographie infantile et l'enlèvement d'enfants, entre autres. Ce choix est fondamental. Il traduit une volonté claire et non négociable du gouvernement. Aucun compromis lorsqu'il s'agit de la sécurité, de la protection et du bien-être des enfants.

En ma qualité de ministre responsable de la protection des enfants, je suis particulièrement attentive à la cohérence entre le *Certificate of Character Bill* et le *Children's Act 2020*. Ce dernier établit un cadre robuste pour la protection des mineurs. Le texte présenté par l'Attorney General vient renforcer ce cadre en s'assurant que les informations pertinentes demeurent accessibles chaque fois que la sécurité d'un enfant est en jeu. Madame la présidente, nous ouvrons une porte certes, mais nous ne baissons pas la garde.

Madam Speaker, let us be clear. Mauritius is not reinventing the wheel. We are catching up with a global movement that has recognised for well over a decade that permanent criminal records are bad for individuals, families and society. Across the world, jurisdictions are embracing what is now widely known as clean slate legislation. In the US alone, more than 19 states have now enacted some form of automatic record clearing. Pennsylvania was the first in 2016. New York followed suit in 2024, automatically sealing misdemeanour convictions after three years, and felonies after eight, recognising that a person's past should not determine his or her future when he or she has demonstrated rehabilitation.

Across continental Europe, the principle is universal. Justice must include the possibility of redemption. The evidence is compelling. Studies consistently show that post-conviction employment dramatically reduces recidivism. When a person finds work, they are far less likely to reoffend.

Conversely, when employment is denied and the no door is permanently shut, despair sets in and the cycle of marginalisation continues. The economic argument is powerful. Cost benefit analysis indicates that clearing criminal records produce net benefits for society through increased tax revenues, reduced dependence on social assistance and lower costs to the criminal justice system. In a small island economy like Mauritius, every working adult matters. Every excluded citizen is a cost to all of us.

Madam Speaker, as the Minister responsible for family welfare, I want one and all to understand that the damage done by an uncleared criminal record is never confined to one person. When a parent cannot find a stable job, children grow up in financial precarity. When a young person is repeatedly rejected by the job market, the risk of radicalisation, substance abuse and further offending arises. When families are trapped in poverty by the administrative stigma of an old conviction, the entire family unit is destabilised. These are the families that have recourse to our services, to our family support services. These are the stories our social workers hear every week.

Madam Speaker, this Bill will not solve all our social challenges, but it removes one major unnecessary barrier that has been crushing the potential of too many of our citizens. For the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare, this is not merely a criminal justice reform. It is a family welfare reform. A social cohesion reform.

My thoughts go to those young persons who have had an issue with the justice system, who have served their time and rebuilt their lives, but who keep on being excluded from the formal economy. Their families depend on their ability to find a decent job. This Bill gives them that opportunity.

Madam Speaker, we believe in second chances and in the capacity of human beings to change. We believe that justice must be proportionate and that a society which permanently excludes its own citizens from economic life is a society that is failing itself.

Madame la présidente, ce projet de loi est mesuré et responsable. Il n'efface pas les condamnations graves, ne diminue pas les droits des victimes et n'ouvre pas la porte à l'impunité. Ce qu'il fait avec discernement, c'est reconnaître que pour les infractions mineures, après qu'un délai suffisant se soit écoulé et que la réhabilitation ait été démontrée, l'État doit permettre aux gens d'avancer.

Nous sommes une petite société, nous ne pouvons pas nous permettre de mettre définitivement de côté le potentiel humain et nous permettre le coût social de l'exclusion. Et

nous ne pouvons pas, en toute conscience, continuer à maintenir un système qui punit les gens non pas pour ce qu'ils sont aujourd'hui, mais pour ce qu'ils étaient il y a des années.

Je vous remercie.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Subron!

(5.20 p.m.)

The Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity (Mr A. Subron): Madam Speaker, this House is debating a critical piece of legislation. What we are debating today is deeply rooted within our own harsh history.

This Bill aims at transcending the contradiction of the inherently inhuman history of our own society. A history of class exploitation, class bias, class prejudices and control. Today, we are heading towards a significant rehabilitation of all those from the lower class who have been victims of humiliations, prejudices, harassment, just because they were part of the working class and the poor layer of our society.

How many of them have been denied an employment promotion just because they could not produce this piece of paper which was asked by the employer class?

How many of them have been compelled to endure hardships just because they could not have this piece of paper or have convictions for which they already paid for, dated back several years ago, written on this famous piece of paper?

Madam Speaker, given that many hon. Members articulately addressed the social reintegration dimension of the Bill for not convicting a second time somebody who has duly and legally paid for his sentence, I fully align myself to their views.

For my part, I will contribute to the debate by highlighting the historical and class dimension of the issues being raised and addressed by this Bill. Madam Speaker, many eminent historians consider the practice of requiring documents like a Certificate of Character, formerly, the Certificate of Morality, to be a legacy of our colonial control systems, which directly followed the abolition of slavery in Mauritius.

While it is true that the modern certificate is a standard legal document, its historical roots in Mauritius are undeniably tied to the transition from slavery system to indentured labour and colonial legacy. During the slavery era, enslaved people were physically tagged or were subjected to various forms of identifications to maintain control and enforce property rights of slave owners. If they were found outside their boundaries, they could be arrested, punished or

executed for marronage. Underwater archaeology near shipwrecks such as Le Coureur, wrecked in 1821, has yielded metal identification tags used during the slavery era.

After slavery was abolished in 1835, the colonial government introduced vagrancy laws to ensure a steady supply of cheap labour for sugar estates. These laws criminalised idleness and introduced the famous ‘rogue and vagabond’ charge. If a formerly enslaved person or indentured labourer could not prove they were under a valid labour contract or outside their zone, they were arrested as vagrants. To avoid arrest and secure employment, workers had to provide proof of their good conduct or morality to the new employers. This is the ancestral origin of the Certificate of Morality. This is what evolved into an administrative practice where the police or the Director of Public Prosecutions verify that a person had not been a maroon or a vagrant.

The Truth and Justice Commission argues that these requirements stem from the logic of surveillance, the afterlife of slavery, used to maintain a disciplined and moral workforce in a society where labour was once forced. Let me refer to a few of our eminent historians. For Dr. Vijaya Teelock, I quote –

“Every economic system aims to find cheap and disciplined labour. Thus, the concepts of marronage during slavery and vagrancy during indenture both sought to control the movement of slaves and indentured labourers.”

Dr. Teelock adds –

“Through vagrancy laws, the colonial authorities prevented “free labour competition” whereby labourers would go around estates to assess which one had the best working conditions. The most substantial remnants of vagrancy heritage can be found in Grand River North West, where the vagrant depot lies. Legally, the concept of vagrancy still survives in the Criminal Code under the terms of ‘idle’ or ‘rogue and vagabond’.”

Second, in forbidden freedom, the experience of vagrants at the vagrant depot of Grand River North West and other vagrants in British Mauritius, referenced 1879 to 1905. Satyendra Peerthum, researcher at Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, notes that under colonial laws, a vagrant was someone with no valid pass, who did not have a permanent place of abode, or who was not working under a labour contract.

Madam Speaker, the Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission concluded that contemporary discrimination, including class discrimination, is not an accident, but a direct legacy of the logic of control established during the colonial era to manage enslaved and

indentured populations. Today, the certificate is framed as a security measure to protect workplaces. However, the debate remains that the high pressure to present a clean certificate for even basic labour reflects a historical distrust of the working class rooted in the colonial period.

Madam Speaker, in 2006, the administrative practice inherited from our history for employers' clearance from the police or the DPP to verify that a person is clean was henceforth regulated. The Certificate of Morality Act was voted to make better provision for the issue of Certificate of Morality by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. It was introduced by the then Attorney General and Minister of Justice and Human Rights, the then hon. Rama Valayden. The law made the request to issue a Certificate of Morality a right of the person, not the employer. Without challenging the very practice of employers requesting such certificate for employment purposes.

In year 2012, a new law replacing the Certificate of Morality by the current Certificate of Character was enacted. Besides for the first time listing the various types of offences which would appear on a Certificate of Character, the major feature of this law was the fact of the codification, for the first time in our history, of the very practice of employers seeking clearance certificate for their employees.

While in the first law, the Certificate of Morality, it was the citizen who had the sole right to apply for such a certificate, the present law, which we are changing right now, introduced the principle of an employer applying for a Certificate of Character on behalf of a worker. Section 4(3) of the present law stipulates that an employer may with the written consent of a worker, apply for the issue of a certificate in the name of the worker.

Now, Madam Speaker, one might argue that the employer would need with the written consent of a worker but anyone who knows the world of work would agree that no worker seeking a job or a promotion from an employer would be in a position not to give such a consent. So, it established a *de facto* power of employer to apply for the certificate. The present law is reminiscent of our slavery, indentured and colonial history. It indeed reflects a historical distrust of the working class rooted in the colonial period.

Before coming directly to the Bill in this House, let me highlight a few fundamental facts. Or let me now move to the other side of the coin. If it was a practice for centuries till now, for companies, employers to seek from someone from the working class to prove himself to be sound and certified with the correct morality or character to have a basic right for employment,

the same was not true and still to a large extent not applicable to the owner of capital, proprietor of local companies or the designated directors. As if there is a superhuman-privileged class, a subhuman class or social group in our society.

In times of slavery, slave owners were considered superhuman and had nothing to justify. They derived the superhuman power from the *Code noir* during the French period and from British slavery laws from 1811 to 1835. In times of indenture, the propertied class were considered as subhuman by the law and other subhuman but subject to vagrant, idle, rogue and vagabond laws. Madam Speaker, today's society still bear the scars of old days. This is the truth. This is our truth. For example, the Companies Law – no such clearance of a Certificate of Morality or Character is needed for any shareholder or higher management of companies.

Section 337 of the Companies Act 2010 prohibits some categories of persons from managing companies but it does not require a Certificate of Morality or Character and offenses listed therein. True, in recent years, foreign companies, especially in financial sectors, are required a Certificate of Character and are subject to due diligence, but same does not apply for the quasi majority of employers operating in Mauritius.

The ethic of our laws is still class biased and class discriminate. It upholds that those who detain capital, the means of protection, even if they are rapists, misogynists or criminals, are persons of high morality or character. While those who are from the working class, the poor and lower strata, are de facto potential criminals and stigmatised.

Madam Speaker, let me directly come to the Bill we are debating today. The present Bill, while it does not eliminate the very principle of employers requesting Certificate of Character from an employee, nevertheless fundamentally limits, alters or even nullifies its application. First, the Bill repeals the present section of the Certificate of Character Act, whereby an employer may, with the written consent of a worker, apply for the issue of a certificate in the name of the worker.

This section is simply eliminated. Bravo, hon. Attorney General. Second, the new Bill introduces a significant proviso on the usage of the Certificate of Character by prospective employer. Section 4 on non-discrimination in employment provide –

“Where a person's Certificate of Character specifies that he has been convicted of a crime or misdemeanour –

(a) his employer shall not discriminate against him where the crime or

misdemeanour is not related to the employment; or
(b) his prospective employer shall not discriminate against him where
the crime or misdemeanour is not related to the employment for
which he is being considered.”

Third, the Bill introduced not only non-discrimination clauses in the application of the Certificate of Employment, but the Bill provides the mechanism for the enforcement of this section. In section 12, consequential amendment, the Equal Opportunities Act is amended in section 10(1) by inserting where subject to 10(2), that a person's Certificate of Character certified that he has been convicted of a crime or misdemeanour, which is not related to his employment or to the employment for which is he is considered, thus reinforcing the application of the non-discrimination clause.

Fourth, the Bill fundamentally alters the very consent of the Certificate of Character by substantially limiting the offenses to be listed in the first schedule, eliminate small fines up to Rs50,000 and provides changes in line with a more human dignity consideration.

Madam Speaker, I have focused my intervention and contribution to the debate on social historical and employment related angle, given my trade union activist experiences but I cannot, as Minister of Social Integration, not salute the twin fundamental dimension of this Bill. That is the great qualitative leap forwards in terms of social reintegration of persons who already have paid for their convictions.

A conviction given at any moment in one's life can never be transformed in a form of life sentence by society. Let me again say kudos to the hon. Attorney General and my colleagues of the Cabinet to contribute to bring such a positive Bill in this Assembly. It is this type of initiative which make me and my party to be proud to be in this Government. It is it is this kind of legislation which honours the hundreds of thousands of people who have voted for us in the last general election. To them, we owe our seat in this Assembly. To them, we are here to serve.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you and thank you for keeping the time.

(5.38 p.m.)

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Mohamed): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will also try my best, even though I have never been known for someone who is a very good pupil when it comes to that, to sticking to time.

So, I rise, Madam Speaker...

Madam Speaker: Just at look me in the eyes.

Mr Mohamed: That is the dangerous part. You know, that is the dangerous part. That would sidetrack me, please.

So, Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this Certificate of Character Bill. I have heard all those who have intervened before me, be it at the last Sitting and today. And they have expatiated upon the very positives in this Bill; the idea, the object, the philosophy. I shall not go into that much detail, but allow me to add the following. This is at its heart a Bill about balance. Accountability matters, but rehabilitation also matters. Where a person has served his sentence, stayed within the law and tried to rebuild his life, the law should not impose needless and indefinite obstacles to work in dignity. That is not leniency. That is justice properly understood. Crucially, Madam Speaker, this Bill is not soft on crime.

The First Schedule still requires mandatory disclosure of serious offenses, including murder, manslaughter, rape, child sexual abuse, child pornography, trafficking in persons, financing of terrorism, bribery, money laundering and arson. Lesser and dated convictions may in defined circumstances no longer block a person's future. Serious offending remains visible. That is responsible lawmaking.

And so, I commend the hon. Attorney General for this excellent piece of legislation and the officers of his office. Now, Madam Speaker, I have listened very carefully to hon. Subron, the one who preceded me, and he talked, he painted this historical picture of the source of the Certificate of Character. Allow me to say, and I will add my little piece to it, if I may. So, the very expression *certificat de moralité* comes from continental, specifically French, legal and administrative tradition. In French and francophone legal systems, the long-standing instrument was *certificat de bonne vie et mœurs*; a document attesting to a person's good conduct and moral standing. The *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* defines it as a certificate attesting the good conduct and morality of an individual. In its original sense, this was not a criminal record. It was not a criminal record check. It was a moral *attestation*, often issued by the local official, a mayor, a parish priest, vouching for the good reputation, good conduct and good morals of the person. In 19th century France, for example, the mayor

delivered the obligatory *certificat de moralité* required for school teachers under *Loi Guizot* of 1833 and *Loi Falloux* of 1850.

Now, in Mauritius, we inherited this concept through its French, our French legal tradition which survived the British takeover of 1810 in the form of the *Code Napoléon* and a deep base of French civil and administrative practice. The expression *certificat de moralité* therefore entered Mauritian usage from this francophone administrative culture, even as the colony became British.

I would like to add on this historical part, a doctoral thesis on Freemasonry in Mauritius from 1778 to 1950 records the following: by the 19th century, the *certificat de moralité* was used in Mauritius as a substitute for the *casier judiciaire*. The criminal record, *le Grand Orient*, was informed that the *certificat de moralité* replaced the *casier judiciaire* in Mauritius. This is a crucial point. In Mauritius, the *certificat de moralité* fused two different ideas: the French moral attestation and the criminal record check into a single document. So, this is, for my part, a little part of history that I think it is important to put in context.

However, there is something else that I hold very dearly and allow me to share this. There is one further point, Madam Speaker, that the House cannot ignore. In Mauritius, as has been expatiated and gone in detail by many of my colleagues before me, a certificate of character, or as it was known then, a *certificat de moralité*, is required for many employments in the public sector. I have been on the website of the Ministry of Agro Industry; I have spoken to the Minister. You need a clean *certificat de moralité*, it says, if you want *enn kart pêcheur*. Yes, the website says that.

Madam Speaker: Tout dépend de ce qu'on comprend par pêcheur!

Mr Mohamed: *Tout dépend de ce qu'on comprend par clean!*

(Interruptions)

Can you imagine? What do you have to deal with? A certificate of character is required for a wide range of ordinary permits, licences, modest jobs, a hawker's card, *permit marchand ambulant*, an employment, even *planteur*. Even *planteur*! I mean, I would understand for those who were dabbling into the art of planting. But *planteur*, well, has nothing to do with what we were used to during the last regime of planting. That has nothing to do with it.

Now, a general worker, a refuse collector, as was said by hon. Babajee –you said that with *avec raison* – yet, allow me to say that the law as it stands today for us, in this Assembly,

does not require a certificate of morality. No! So, even if we are to commit an offence, not even before, but even after, or whilst we are in this Assembly, and that offence has nothing to do with electoral dishonesty; that itself has a time within which you can enter the matter and there is a limit, a statutory provided limit. We are the untouchables.

But if it is money laundering, if it is rape, if it is anything of the sort, the law does not provide that we can be disqualified while we are members of the House. So, the question, therefore, has to be answered. I say it because it is an opportunity for us to show that we are here for change, Madam Speaker. This is the mandate upon which we were brought to power and we have not forgotten that. Why is it that we are to forget something so obvious? How is it, therefore, that the man that has to toil away, sweat, be the hawker, be the planter, be the fisherman, he has higher standards to adhere to, whereas us, law makers, we have no standards! There is a serious problem.

So, I call therefore upon my colleague Ministers responsible for every single part there to look into this matter because it has to be sorted out. So, the most modest forms of work demand the cleanest records, while the highest legislative office is governed by far more lenient standard. That asymmetry is itself unfair. This Bill begins to correct it. So, from there, we have to build upon it. A man seeking to push a hawker's cart, take to sea as a fisherman, or sweep our streets, should not, Madam Speaker, face heavier lifelong consequences for entering an honest trade than a politician faces for entering this Chamber. Fairness must begin where life is hardest, not where it is easiest.

This is what I call change. That is what this Bill does. It preserves disclosure for serious offending. It removes unnecessary obstacles for lesser and dated convictions. It protects youth offenders. It forbids irrelevant discrimination in hiring and it brings a measure of justice to the citizens who have, until now, carried the heaviest burden of the present law.

Madam Speaker, this Bill is fair in principle, careful in design and humane in effect. It is balanced. It is overdue and it deserves the full support of this House. I commend the Certificate of Character Bill to the House.

Madam Speaker: Thank you so much. You are all doing so well in terms of time.

Yes, hon. Attorney General! I will again say it is time for your winding-up speech.

(5.48 p.m.)

The Attorney General (Mr G. P. C. Glover, SC): Madam Speaker, last week, perchance, I learned of the story of a gentleman, now in his mid-40s and who works as an accountant in the private sector, but who has been plagued by a certificate of character exhibiting a conviction for a simple larceny for which he was fined.

The offence was committed when he had just turned 18. Almost 30 years ago. With the advent of this new legislation, this gentleman will now, after such a long time, be able to hold his head high and apply for jobs he would never dream of going for, was it not for the novel provisions of the Certificate of Character Bill.

Madam Speaker, this is the measure of the impact this law will have on the lives of hundreds, if not of thousands of Mauritians, cutting across generations, giving hope to people from all walks of life. That being said, Madam Speaker, I need to set the record straight. I do not think that anyone has noticed it, but during my intervention two weeks ago, while setting out the conditions which will lead to certain convictions disappearing from a certificate of character, I said that in cases where the prison sentence did not exceed five years, that conviction would disappear after 10 years. That was obviously incorrect as the Bill provides that it is only in cases of a conviction which leads to a prison sentence of not more than three years that will disappear after 10 years. Of course, this is subject to that offence not being listed in the First Schedule.

Madam Speaker, the importance of this law, this other piece of the jigsaw puzzle we have been putting together for the past 16 months, has been underscored by the number of Members of the House who have intervened. This House has heard from the Leader of the Opposition that he supports the principle underlying the Bill, although he had qualms about the administrative problems that he says would ensue. He spoke of the impracticability of the process presumably because the Bill does not depict exactly how the process will work.

Let me enlighten the House on this issue. You see, Madam Speaker, mindful of the fact that we are innovating and increasing the workload of the Police and the Office of the DPP, the Bill provides at clause 7 the answer. It provides in that clause that the Attorney General may make regulations in consultation with the DPP to regulate applications for a certificate of character and to provide for matters connected and incidental thereto. Not matters relevant thereto.

In relation thereto, a term which I use here advisedly, as will become apparent in a few minutes, I have to inform the House that I have had consultations with the Director of Public

Prosecutions and the Commissioner of Police, whom I met only yesterday, and we discussed the setting up of a clear process for applications. Although it will not be possible to draw strict timelines, we shall endeavour to make things happen in a transparent and effective manner. The regulations to be made will reflect this.

As things stand, Madam Speaker, an application for a certificate is either made online or in person, at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, or at any of the divisional headquarters of the Police. I am informed that there are on average around, hear this one, 9,000 applications monthly.

Madam Speaker: Monthly?

Mr Glover: A third of those are made online and the rest in person. Assuming the application is in order and the required documents submitted, there is a three-stage process which encompasses –

- (i) a review at the divisional headquarters;
- (ii) a verification at the Crime Records Office of the Police, and finally
- (iii) a full assessment at the Office of the DPP.

Delays may occur if applications are incomplete or contain inconsistent or insufficient information, or if a statement has to be taken by the Police from the applicant.

Now, for those who do not have a criminal record, I am told that the waiting time is approximately four to six weeks. For those who have criminal records, the process might take up to three months. However, we cannot and we should not close our eyes to the obvious surge of applications which will occur as soon as the law will come into force. And that is why we have provided that the law will come into force upon proclamation, that is, at a time when the system will be ready to take on the increased load. So much for the administrative process.

There are three other important issues, Madam Speaker, which must be addressed, lest people will be left in the dark. First, with regard to what the Leader of the Opposition has described as the structural ambiguity besetting Clause 4 of the Bill, ‘Non-discrimination in employment’. He found fault with the terminology used in that, and so goes his argument, the words related to the employment is open to debate and is not defined well enough.

But that Clause 4, Madam Speaker, must be read in conjunction with Clause 12, which deals with the consequential amendment to the Equal Opportunities Act. In the existing Equal Opportunities Act, Section 10(1)(f) provides that –

“(1) No employer or prospective employer shall discriminate against another person –

(...)

- (f) where subject to subsection(2), that person has a criminal record which is irrelevant to the nature of employment for which that person is being considered.”

So, in the present Bill, we have moved from a test of relevance to the nature of employment, which is to my mind subjective and rather wide, to one which is stricter. The words being now used are “in relation to”, connoting a more objective test of connectivity. That is why I meant earlier on when I said, “in relation to” was being used advisedly. Here, as in all laws, the balancing exercise is paramount. On the one hand, there is the need to afford adequate protection to the employee or prospective employee, and on the other, we cannot tie the hands of the employer altogether.

As I am on the Equal Opportunities Act, let me place on record that we are in presence of a paper from the Law Reform Commission, published late last year, entitled ‘Strengthening the Powers of the Equal Opportunities Commission’. Thereafter, the Commission was requested by the Prime Minister's Office to give its views on this paper, and it did just that in December last. These are being looked at and it will not be long before we come before the House with amendments to revamp the law in line with Paragraph 9 of the Government Programme 2025-2029. The stated objective there, Madam Speaker, was and still is, and I quote –

“To ensure the principles of meritocracy and non-discrimination in employment are upheld, Government will strengthen the powers of the Equal Opportunities Commission.”

This Government, Madam Speaker, will thus honour another commitment it took and fulfil a promise it made to the people.

Second, the Presidential Commission on the Prerogative of Mercy. The House has heard about Section 75 of the Constitution. What ensued, unfortunately, can only be described as a *méli-mélo*, culminating with the First Member of Constituency No. 10, Montagne Blanche-Grand River South East, asking four questions which, if I may say so, are, unfortunately, based on an infelicitous reading of Clause 5 of the Bill.

Clause 5 of the Bill, which is entitled ‘Certificate of character with no criminal record’, provides for circumstances which may lead to a clean certificate being issued by the DPP. One of the set of circumstances provided for concerns the case of someone who has been convicted of an offence but who has already obtained a free pardon by the President, acting on the advice of the Presidential Commission on the Prerogative of Mercy. That person will be issued with a clean Certificate of Character, irrespective of whether the conviction for which he obtained the free pardon was one listed in the First Schedule. That is what the law says and nothing else – that is Clause 5 (1) (b).

In contradistinction, Clause 5(1) (c) of the Bill provides that the one who has been convicted of an offence and given an absolute or conditional discharge will not have a clean certificate if the offence is one which is listed in the First Schedule. There resides the difference.

To go back to the questions put by the hon. Member, with due respect, they are irrelevant, being premised on an erroneous understanding of what Clause 5 (1) (b) of the Bill provides.

Madam Speaker: *C'est compliqué!*

Mr Glover: Third, Madam Speaker...

Madam Speaker: Monsieur le ministre, c'est un peu compliqué pour les non-juristes, honnêtement !

Mr Glover: I am talking of the First Member for Constituency No. 10.

Madam Speaker: Yes, yes.

Mr Glover: Third, Madam Speaker, previous convictions. The Police is the authority which, through its Criminal Records Office, gathers and stores data relating to previous convictions. The question raised is: what effect will the provisions of this Bill ultimately have on the criminal record of an individual? The short answer is, none. Why? Because precisely

the operation of the provisions of this Bill is not akin to a free pardon, which is when your conviction is erased from the criminal record system, as if you have never committed any crime.

The Certificate of Character is an administrative document which is issued according to the provisions of the law for non-judicial use. You cannot use same in a court of law. If someone has a clean certificate by operation of the provisions of this Bill, the conviction and sentence concerned will no longer appear on the Certificate of Character. But should he, for example, commit another offence, the court will have to look at any of his previous convictions, including the one which no longer appears on the certificate, because it will still appear on the criminal record at the Police.

Madam Speaker, I hope I have cleared the air for all, especially for those who supported the Bill in principle and agreed that it was a step in the right direction, but who, nonetheless, fell short of commending the Bill. In sharp contradiction with the First Member of Constituency No. 10, who candidly commended the Bill to the House.

With these words, Madam Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

THE CERTIFICATE OF CHARACTER BILL

(NO. II OF 2026)

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

Clauses 1 to 14 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

First Schedule

Motion made and question proposed; "that the First Schedule stand part of the Bill."

Mr Glover: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendments the First Schedule –

“In the First Schedule –

- (a) in item 6, in the third column –
- (i) by deleting the following sections and their corresponding entries –
- 301 Larceny
- 330B Issuing cheque without provision
- 350 Hindering public works by force
- (ii) by inserting, in the appropriate numerical order, the following new sections and their corresponding entries –
- 138 Offences by public officers
- 140 Having offensive weapon at unlawful assembly
- 230(2) Assault – premeditation or lying in wait
- 231 Assault upon father or mother
- 277 Giving false evidence in case of misdemeanour
- 343 Deceiving purchaser
- 352 Damaging property by band
- 358 Poisoning animal
- (b) in item 15, in the third column, by deleting the following section and its corresponding entry –
- 10 International terrorism”.

Amendment agreed to.

First Schedule, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Second Schedule ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Third Schedule ordered to stand part of the Bill

The title and enacting clause ordered to stand part of the Bill.

The Bill, as amended, was agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with Madam Speaker in the Chair, Madam Speaker reported accordingly

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Certificate of Character Bill (No. II of 2026) was read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 12 May 2026 at 11:30 a.m.

Dr. Boolell rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned! It is Tuesday next.

At 6.04 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 12 May 2026 at 11:30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION BILL – PROPOSED INTRODUCTION

(No. B/568) Mr R. Beehook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of the Freedom of Information Bill in the Assembly, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

NATIONAL MARITIME ZONE – MONITORING – NATIONAL COAST GUARD STATIONS

(No. B/569) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the national maritime zone, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the –

- (a) systems currently in place for the monitoring thereof, indicating whether same are deemed adequate, and
- (b) number of existing National Coast Guard stations, indicating their respective locations and in each case, the number of personnel posted thereat and helicopters and vessels at the disposal thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**PRIVATE SECURITY SERVICE PROVIDER LICENCE – REGISTERED HOLDERS
– APPLICATIONS – AVERAGE PROCESSING TIME**

(No. B/570) Dr. Ms R. Daureawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Private Security Service Provider Licence, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the current number of registered holders thereof, indicating the –

- (a) number of new and renewal applications for the issue thereof –
 - (i) pending over the past five years, and
 - (ii) approved over the past two years, and
- (b) average time taken for the processing of applications for the issue of new or for the renewal thereof, indicating the reasons for delays, if any, in the processing thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MR A.C.P & TWIN BROTHER – ARREST – REASONS & CIRCUMSTANCES

(No. B/571) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to Mr A.C.P arrested on or about 03 April 2026 and the subsequent arrest of his twin brother, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) the reasons therefor and circumstances thereof, indicating the items seized in the course thereof and whether same include illicit drugs and, if so, give details thereof, and
- (b) whether they are currently subjected to objections to departure.

(Withdrawn)

**GEOPOLITICAL TENSION – FINANCIAL YEAR 2025-2026 – PUBLIC DEBT RISE
– BORROWED SUMS**

(No. B/572) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister

of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to public debt, he will state whether same is on the rise beyond the estimated figure for financial year 2025-2026 due to the actual global geopolitical tension and imported inflation and, if so, give the list of the creditors in relation thereto together with the corresponding sums borrowed, in each case.

(Withdrawn)

**FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENTS – TOTAL GROSS INFLOWS –
ENCOURAGEMENT MEASURES**

(No. B/576) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to Foreign Direct Investments, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Economic Development Board, information as to the –

- (a) total gross inflows thereof recorded since 2023 to date, giving a breakdown thereof on a yearly basis, sector-wise and from which countries, and
- (b) measures taken and/or contemplated to encourage same in emerging sectors.

(Withdrawn)

**FAIR SHARE CONTRIBUTION – REVENUE PROJECTIONS, TARGETED
INDIVIDUALS & COMPANIES**

(No. B/577) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Fair Share Contribution as announced in the Budget Speech 2025-2026 and subsequently amended following representations from stakeholders, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to the –

- (a) total amount of revenue initially projected under the original measure;
- (b) revised amount of revenue expected following the subsequent amendments, and
- (c) number of individual taxpayers and companies expected to be liable under the original and revised schemes, respectively.

(Withdrawn)

**MUDDY/MURKY WATER SUPPLY – COMPLAINTS – REASONS &
REMEDIAL MEASURES**

(No. B/596) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to water supply, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to whether it is in presence of complaints to the effect that same is muddy or murky and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) reasons therefor, and
- (b) remedial measures being taken in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

**M4 MOTORWAY – RIVIÈRE DU REMPART-FLACQ-GRAND PORT–
BENEFITS, IMPACT ASSESSMENTS & REASONS**

(No. B/597) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the M4 Motorway linking the Rivière du Rempart District to the Grand Port District via the Flacq District Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to –

- (a) the main beneficiaries thereof;
- (b) whether prior economic, social and financial impact assessments thereof were carried out and, if so, indicate the main findings thereof, and
- (c) the reasons for the prioritisation thereof over other urgent road works in villages and localities facing severe daily traffic congestion.

(Withdrawn)

**BANCO VALOR INTERNATIONAL LTD – INVESTMENT BANKING
LICENCE – DUE DILIGENCE EXERCISE – OUTCOME**

(No. B/598) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning whether, in regard to the Investment Banking Licence granted to Banco Valor International Ltd., beneficially owned by Mr A. S., she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Services Commission, information as to the outcome of the due diligence exercise carried out when the application therefor was processed, indicating –

- (a) whether the Board thereof was informed of any red flag concerning Mr A. S. and, if not, whether it was subsequently informed thereof, and
- (b) the actions, if any, taken in respect of the officers involved in the processing thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**TRUST FUND FOR EXCELLENCE IN SPORTS – CHAIRPERSON’S
REVOCATION – OVERSIGHT & GOVERNANCE CONCERNS**

(No. B/599) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the revocation of Mr N. V. as Chairperson of the Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports, he will state –

- (a) the reasons therefor, indicating whether an inquiry was conducted prior thereto, and
- (b) whether –
 - (i) he has taken cognizance of allegations of irregularities thereat and of interference by the Chief Executive Officer thereof in the management of the Fund made by Mr N.V., and
 - (ii) the governance structure and operation of the Fund will be reviewed.

(Withdrawn)

**MAURITIUS METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES-MET OFFICE – GRANT
FUND AGREEMENT – OBJECTIVES & BENEFITS**

(No. B/600) Ms M. R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Grant Fund Agreement signed between the Mauritius Meteorological Services and the Met Office, United Kingdom, under the Weather and Climate Information Services for Africa Initiative, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the objectives and expected benefits thereof, indicating, in particular, how same is expected to enhance the weather and climate forecasting capacity across the Republic of Mauritius and support national preparedness for extreme events.

(Withdrawn)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE – PROTECTION ORDERS – BREACHES

(No. B/602) Dr F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to

Protection Orders in cases of domestic violence, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof issued over the past three years, on a yearly basis, indicating the –

- (a) authority responsible for the monitoring of adherence thereto;
- (b) number of reported cases of serious breaches thereof, and
- (c) measures being envisaged to prevent the recurrence of domestic violence following the issue thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**FISHERMAN REGISTRATION CARD – CHARACTER CERTIFICATE –
REQUIREMENT**

(No. B/606) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the Fisherman Registration Card, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether it is a prerequisite for the applicants to hold a clean Certificate of Character for eligibility thereto.

(Withdrawn)

DRUG ADDICTION – ADOLESCENTS – HEALTH ISSUES

(No. B/607) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to drug related health conditions, he will state the number of adolescents admitted in public health institutions therefor over the past five years on a yearly basis, indicating if an assessment of the drug-addiction level of adolescents in Mauritius has been carried out and, if so, indicate the measures being implemented or envisaged to address same.

(Withdrawn)

**CONSTITUENCY NO. 10, MONTAGNE BLANCHE & GRSE – SPORT
COMPLEX – CONSTRUCTION**

(No. B/608) Dr. R. Saumtally (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the provision of sports infrastructure in Constituency No. 10, Montagne Blanche and Grand River South East, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Sports Council, information as to whether consideration will be given for the –

- (a) construction of a modern and fully-equipped sports complex thereat in accordance with international standards, and

- (b) opening, as an interim measure, of the gymnasium at the SSS Bel Air to the public, including the provision of qualified coaching facilities, free of charge, during weekends and after school hours.

(Withdrawn)

**CONSTITUENCY NO.18, BELLE ROSE & QUATRE BORNES –
CONSTRUCTION OF DRAINS**

(No. B/609) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the construction of drains in Constituency No.18, Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Land Drainage Authority, information as to where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

**MRS A. R'S SON – MEDICAL TREATMENT IN INDIA – FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE**

(No. B/610) Dr. R. Sauntally (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the medical treatment undertaken by the son of Mrs A. R., in India, under the aegis of his Ministry, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Overseas Treatment Unit, information as to the nature and extent of the financial and logistical assistance provided thereto, and
- (b) state if his Ministry is in presence of any complaints made in relation thereto and, if so, indicate the measures, if any, taken to address same.

(Withdrawn)

**ALA-LILA ONLINE PLATFORM – TAXI OPERATORS –
REPRESENTATIONS**

(No. B/611) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the introduction of the Ala-lila online platform powered by Uber in Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to whether –

- (a) it is in presence of representations from some taxis operators regarding same, and
- (b) the approval of the Authority was sought and obtained prior thereto and, if so, indicate the conditions attached thereto and, if not, indicate the actions that will be taken in relation thereto, if any.

CEB AGRIVOLTAICS SCHEME – IMPLEMENTATION – SUCCESS RATE

(No. B/612) Ms M. R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the implementation of the CEB Agrivoltaics Scheme, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to where matters stand, indicating the –

- (a) success rate thereof as at to date, and
- (b) number of applications received since the implementation of the initial phase thereof in 2024, indicating the number thereof having been processed, approved and pending as at to date.

(Withdrawn)

**AFRICAN UNION – EXPORT MARKET DIVERSIFICATION – TRADE
ENHANCEMENT POLICY**

(No. B/613) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to Government's policy to enhance trade with member countries of the African Union with a view to diversifying our export markets, he will state the trade missions effected in connection therewith since the implementation thereof to 20 April 2026, indicating, in each case, the actual and foreseen outcomes thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**FLEET MANAGEMENT SYSTEM – PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION –
STATUS**

(No. B/614) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the proposed implementation of the Fleet Management System, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

**LATE RAS NATTY BABY – MEDICAL TREATMENT IN INDIA – TOTAL
EXPENDITURE**

(No. B/615) Mr R. Beehook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to late Mr J. N. É. also known as Ras Natty Baby, he will state the circumstances under which he was transferred for medical treatment in India, indicating the total expenditure incurred in respect thereof and for the repatriation of his body to Mauritius.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/579)

ELECTRIC BUSES – DEPLOYMENT – CHARGING STATIONS

(No. B/616) Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the fleet of 100 electric buses donated by the Government of India, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Corporation, information as to the deployment thereof across the various depots, indicating the

- (a) timeframe set therefor and for the full operationalisation thereof, and
- (b) number of charging stations or pods installed therefor.

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUES & MAURITIUS – MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKERS – SCHEME OF DUTIES

(No. B/617) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to Medical Social Workers, he will state the –

- (a) number thereof posted in public hospitals in mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues Island, respectively, and
- (b) scheme of duties thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS & RODRIGUES – USE OF PESTICIDES – CONTROL MEASURES

(No. B/618) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the use of pesticides in agriculture in mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues Island, he will state the –

- (a) norms applicable thereto, and
- (b) control measures in place to prevent contamination in the chain of agricultural products.

(Withdrawn)

MINISTRY OF LAND TRANSPORT – APPEAL COMMITTEE – PENDING APPEALS – MEASURES

(No. B/619) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the Appeal Committee of his Ministry, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number and type of appeals pending before the Board thereof over the past two years, indicating the –

- (a) timeframe set for the consideration thereof, and
- (b) measures being envisaged to address the delays in determining the appeals.

(Withdrawn)

**MONTAGNE BLANCHE – CREMATORIUM PROJECT – COMPLETION
DATE – TIMELY OPERATIONALISATION**

(No. B/622) Dr. R. Saumtally (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the implementation of the crematorium project at Montagne Blanche, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand, indicating the –

- (a) expected completion date thereof, and
- (b) measures being envisaged to ensure the timely operationalisation thereof.

(Withdrawn)

INVALIDITY PENSIONS – BENEFICIARIES – REJECTED APPLICATIONS

(No. B/623) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the Invalidity Pensions, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information, since January 2024 to date on a yearly basis, information as to –

- (a) the number of beneficiaries thereof, indicating the number thereof whose pensions have been stopped, and
- (b) whether applications therefor from persons suffering from long-term chronic diseases, acquired long-term disabilities and inborn disorders have been rejected and, if so, indicate the number thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**ELECTRICITY TARIFF INCREASE – HOUSEHOLDS & SMALL
BUSINESSES IMPACT – MITIGATING MEASURES**

(No. B/624) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the announced 15 percent increase in electricity tariffs as from May 2026, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to –

- (a) whether the impact thereof on households and small businesses has been assessed, indicating the mitigating measures being envisaged regarding vulnerable consumers, and

- (b) the number of households having had their electricity supply disconnected over the past year for non-payment of bills.

(Withdrawn)

GOODLANDS – PEAK HOURS TRAFFIC – DECONGESTION MEASURES

(No. B/625) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to heavy traffic congestion occurring along the By-Pass from the Goodlands Roundabout to the level of Espace Maison/Rouillard Roundabout during peak hours between 07 00 a.m. to 09 00 a.m. and between 3 30 p.m to 7 00 p.m., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to whether consideration will be given for the construction of –

- (a) an additional lane along same, and
 (b) a separate stretch of road at the appropriate roundabout for commuters converging towards the Vale and Petit Raffray.

(Withdrawn)

SHELTER CAP L'ESPOIR – ACTING SHELTER MANAGER – DUTIES & QUALIFICATION

(No. B/626) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the Shelter Cap L'Espoir, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the identity of the current Acting Shelter Manager, indicating the scheme of duties thereof and qualification requirements therefor.

(Withdrawn)

SUPERMARKETS LEVYING CHARGES – REMISES DE FIN D'ANNÉE & MARKETING FEES – IMPACT

(No. B/627) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the practice of supermarkets levying charges, including '*remises de fin d'année*' and marketing fees on their suppliers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether the impact thereof on retail prices and consumer purchasing power has been assessed and, if so, indicate the findings thereof.

(Withdrawn)

PUBLIC SERVICE – MEDICAL & HEALTH PROFESSIONALS – EFFICIENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY ENHANCEMENT

(No. B/628) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplémousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the recruitment, retention and discipline of medical and health professionals in the public service, he will –

- (a) give details of the existing arrangements governing same, and
- (b) state whether consideration is being given for the setting up of a dedicated Medical and Health Services Commission on the lines of existing service commissions with a view to strengthening efficiency, governance and accountability therein.

(Withdrawn)

WATER RESERVOIRS – DREDGING & MAINTENANCE WORKS & LA FERME RESERVOIR IRRIGATION USE

(No. A/32) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the water reservoirs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to –

- (a) the frequency at which dredging and maintenance works to improve the storage capacity thereof are undertaken and table information as to the number of times same have been undertaken since 2015 to date, and
- (b) why La Ferme Water Reservoir is reserved for irrigation purposes only.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Water Resources Commission that dredging to existing impounding reservoirs already in operation is not carried out for technical reasons and taking due consideration of the uncertainties related to the non-homogeneous geological condition in Mauritius.

I am further advised that dredging will disturb the reservoir bed, which has consolidated over the years with the flow of silt during floods. It can also induce seepage of water under the dam foundation which in turn can endanger the stability and safety of the embankment structure. The safest method to increase the storage capacity of a reservoir is through raising of the dam embankment.

In the event desilting of reservoir bed has to be undertaken, it should be carried out in the context of a complete rehabilitation/raising of dam project. In this case, the reservoir is completely emptied and additional engineering measures, for example, construction of cut-off wall, are implemented to secure the dam embankment.

However, as for maintenance works around the major reservoirs, these are carried out regularly.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I am informed that La Ferme Reservoir, located near the village of Bambous, has been constructed around the year 1914, across River Belle Isle and is primarily used for irrigation to support agriculture in the western coast. The reservoir has a storage capacity of 11.52 million m³. Historically, it serves the Black River District, supplying water for sugar cane and other crops, while also functioning as a key storage facility for agricultural, rather than domestic consumption.

The Ministry has appointed consultants to review the La Ferme Dam structure and to propose measures to rehabilitate and enhance its structural integrity while at the same time, increase its storage capacity. Bidding documents have been prepared for the rehabilitation works which includes raising of the dam to increase the storage capacity to 14.0 million m³.

It is envisaged to use the water for potable purposes once the infrastructure works are completed. Studies are ongoing on this aspect, given that a new water treatment plant would need to be constructed in due course.

**ALMA, L'ESPÉRANCE, L'AVENIR, RIPAILLES & NOUVELLE
DÉCOUVERTE – WATER SUPPLY ISSUES – SURVEY OF UNUSED BOREHOLES
& WELLS – DECENTRALISATION PLAN**

(No. A/33) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the regular water supply issues being encountered in Alma, L'Espérance, L'Avenir, Ripailles and Nouvelle Découverte, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether consideration will be given for a survey of the currently unused boreholes and wells thereat to be undertaken by the Water Resources Unit, in collaboration with the Geotechnical Engineering Division of the Ministry of National Infrastructure, with a view to assessing the viability thereof and establishing a decentralisation plan for the optimal use of local water sources.

Reply: I am informed that 24 boreholes have been drilled in the regions of Alma, L'Esperance, L'Avenir, Ripailles and Nouvelle Découverte. The Central Water Authority is already exploiting six boreholes for domestic water supply in Beau Bois, Bonne Veine, Malenga and Alma (nearer to Dagotière).

Another six boreholes are being used for agricultural purposes while 12 boreholes are not in use due to low and insufficient yield which do not make them viable for exploitation by CWA.

It is to be noted that the Water Resources Commission has awarded a contract for the drilling of another borehole at Alma in the coming months. Furthermore, for the Financial Year 2026/ 2027, it is planned to drill one borehole at L'Espérance – Quartier Militaire.

The location of the proposed boreholes is identified using competency in hydrogeology available in house at the Water Resources Commission. For the geophysical survey exercise, which is the required investigation techniques for borehole drilling, same would be outsourced to a specialised firm.