No. 30 of 2026

REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD) (UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 27 OCTOBER 2026

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(Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)

Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands
Hon. Mrs Marie Arianne Navarre-Marie	Deputy Prime Minister Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare
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
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, GOSK	Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries
Hon. Govindranath Gunness	Minister of National Infrastructure
Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo, GOSK	Minister of Health and Wellness
Hon. Christian Harold Richard Duval	Minister of Tourism
Hon. Ashok Kumar Subron	Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity
Hon. Gavin Patrick Cyril Glover, SC	Attorney-General
Dr. the Hon. Mrs Jyoti Jeetun	Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning
Hon. Patrick Gervais Assirvaden	Minister of Energy and Public Utilities

Hon. Dhananjay Ramful	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Hon. Darmarajen Nagalingum	Minister of Youth and Sports
Hon. Muhammad Reza Cassam Uteem	Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations
Hon. Mahomed Osman Cassam Mahomed	Minister of Land Transport
Hon. John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen	Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection
Dr. the Hon. Kaviraj Sharma Sukon	Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research
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 Ramtohul	Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Lutchmanah Pentiah	Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms
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. 30 of 2026

Sitting of Tuesday 27 October 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)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

STANDING ORDERS 21 & 22 – PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS – PENDING WRITTEN ANSWERS & DOCUMENTS

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, today, I have an announcement to make concerning Written Answers to Parliamentary Questions, and documents which should have been tabled.

When my attention had been drawn to this issue, I asked for details from the Hansard Department and the Clerk's Office has been writing to Ministries concerned. There were 113 answers not provided since the beginning of this new session. Now, we have received 95 answers, and I am still awaiting 18 answers.

Hon. Members, Parliamentary Questions are at the heart of our parliamentary democracy. Standing Orders 21 and 22 deal with the object and nature of questions to Ministers and to the content of such questions.

Standing Order 22 (2) provides that questions are put on Tuesdays and that there is a total of three hours for questions, of which, 30 minutes for the Private Notice Question, 30 minutes for questions put to the Prime Minister, and 120 minutes for other questions.

Standing Order 22 (3) states very clearly that replies to questions not put within the time limit shall be circulated to Members and printed in the official report.

It has been the practice for Members who prefer to have an oral reply to withdraw their questions just before time is up so that they can bring the question back on the following Tuesday. The Table is then advised of such a decision and the Speaker then announces the list of questions withdrawn. It stands to reason then that Members whose questions have not been withdrawn, will receive a written reply.

Such a reply should not in fact be withheld for any amount of time since the Minister to whom the question was addressed, would normally have been ready to reply if time had permitted the question to be reached. Should the Minister want to expand more on any given question in the absence of supplementary questions, this can be done quite easily.

As for Ministers who announced during Question Time that a document will be tabled, this undertaking must be respected within a reasonable time. The Hansard Department has a

record of those questions still awaiting a written reply. The officers producing this official record will not be able to finalise the transcript of the sitting concerned until all questions concerned have been duly answered. This means that only unrevised versions of the Hansard will then be available, which is far from being a good practice.

In order to ensure a better follow-up on these issues, we are now working on an automated workflow on our Gen AI Platform for documents but it is for Ministries concerned to ensure that written answers and documents to be tabled are indeed available to Members within a reasonable time.

SITTING 20 OCTOBER 2026 – UNPARLIAMENTARY/ UNBECOMING WORDS – WITHDRAWAL

Hon. Members, later during the course of the day, I will address you on unparliamentary or unbecoming words that have been pronounced at the last Sitting since I promised to check the Hansard. In the meantime, any Member who wants to come forward to withdraw such words pronounced, and which may have been said in the heat of the moment, is free to do so during the course of the morning session.

I appeal to you all to do your utmost best to respect the decorum of the House and not to provoke each other. The business of the Sitting is important and deserves all our positive energies.

Thank you.

Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

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

Loan Agreement between The Government of the Republic of Mauritius and Abu Dhabi Fund for Development to Finance The Construction of the Riviere Des Anguilles Dam Project, signed on 07 September 2026. (In Original)

B. **Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare**

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Women's Council for the year ended 30 June 2025.

C. **Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations**

The Annual Reports and Reports of the Director of Audit on the financial statements of the Manufacturing Sector Workers Welfare Fund for the years ended 30 June, 2024 and 2025.

D. **Ministry of Education and Human Resource**

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the financial statements of the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development for the year ended 30 June 2024.

E. **Ministry of Local Government**

The Local Government (Building and Land Use Permit Fees) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 175 of 2026)

F. **Ministry of Arts and Culture**

(a) The Annual Reports and Reports of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Heritage Fund for the years ended:

(i) 30 June 2019;

(ii) 30 June 2020;
(iii) 30 June 2021;
(iv) 30 June 2022; and
(v) 30 June 2023.

(b) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the financial statements of the Chinese Speaking Union for the year ended 30 June 2024.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MR S.K. ALLEGED MURDER – FOREIGN EXPERT TEAM'S ASSISTANCE – PROGRESS & FINDINGS

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr C. Baboolall) *(by Private Notice)* asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard the investigation into the alleged murder of S. K. with the assistance of the foreign expert team, he will obtain information as to where matters stand, indicating the –

(a) arrests, if any, effected;

(b) fees paid to the foreign team;

(c) outcome of the –

(i) inquiry into the first post-mortem examination and other unresolved cases, including the "Kistnen papers" concerning emergency procurements during COVID-19;

(ii) forensic evidence obtained, and

(d) whether any file has been referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, as the House may recall, I have, on several occasions, stated that the Judicial Enquiry instituted to further investigate into the death of late Mr Soopramanien Kistnen, in October 2020, was highly critical of the way the Police had conducted the inquiry into the case.

The conclusion of Mrs Mungroo-Jugurnath, who was the Senior District Magistrate at the time, and who had been asked by the DPP to inquire – I must say she had the courage to act totally independently and impartially, and did not shrink from telling things as she saw it. She ought to be congratulated for it. This is the conclusion. I would not read the whole thing. She said – 'I consider the conduct of the Police in the present case to be abhorrent. The manner

in which the inquiry was conducted fell so below what can be considered reasonable that it marks a new level of incompetence.'

So, the Judicial Enquiry concluded that the death was more likely to be homicide rather than a suicide, which has been confirmed by the UK experts. I think I mentioned it in the House. It was sent to UK and they said it was definitely not suicide, but homicide.

Madam Speaker, in view of the disturbing circumstances surrounding the death of late Mr Kistnen, the Government commissioned the services of a team of foreign investigators from the United Kingdom to review the inquiry carried out by the Police into the unexplained death of Mr Kistnen as well as other unresolved cases.

These experts have visited Mauritius on several occasions in order to carry out their assignment. They have reported that the initial police investigations and inquiries were seriously deficient. Exactly what the Senior Magistrate found! Critical evidence – that is what they said – from the scene were not preserved. Now, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is a barrister. He would know what happens when you do not preserve evidence. Important lines of enquiry were not followed up and certain exhibits were not given the importance they had to be given.

After the initial review, which has included seeking the expert opinion of an international forensic scientist, specialising in deaths by fire, I can inform the House that the investigators have concluded that there are sufficient indications to conclude that the death of Mr Kistnen was neither accidental nor self-inflicted, but it was a homicide, that is, an unlawful killing.

The investigation is ongoing and the experts have made certain recommendations concerning the way forward. Even if all avenues are being investigated, Madam Speaker, they have informed that because they have stepped into this investigation so long after the events, and with evidence having been destroyed or are no longer available, it was never going to be easy to detect the exact circumstances leading to the untimely death of Mr Kistnen.

As regards part (a) of the question, no arrests have been effected as to date, but the team working on the case file is still discovering material evidence, which quite extraordinarily had been overlooked during the initial investigation. Not later than last month, I believe, the team found an exhibit which had been overlooked and was in fact a very important exhibit which is now being analysed in order to extract information which, it is hoped, will help in the investigation.

Mr Kistnen's body was found in October 2020 – six years later. He was supposed to have two mobile phones. One was found under his burnt body. The police said: it is burnt, no evidence. We sent it to the experts in London. They found evidence in that phone, which was burnt. The second phone was never found. Now, six years later, the phone has been found. Where was it, Madam Speaker? With the police. Described as a case, not as a phone. But the British experts found it and it is being analysed at the moment.

As regards part (b) of the question, experts who are working on the case for Mr Kistnen have been paid a total sum of £78,000 for their services to date.

As regards part (c)(i) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the case of the "Kistnen Papers" is being investigated by the Central CID and the inquiry is ongoing. As at date, 17 statements from 12 persons have been recorded. There is no ongoing police inquiry into the first post-mortem examination in the case of late Mr Kistnen. What we have are the findings of the crime scene doctor who initially attended the crime scene at Telfair. We also have the report of the independent forensic consultant retained by the widow of late Mr Kistnen who concluded also that it was a homicide by asphyxia. All this is part and parcel of the bigger investigation which is attempting to find out who were those behind the suspected homicide of Mr Kistnen.

As regards to part (c)(ii) of the question, I stand advised that it would be inappropriate, at this stage, while investigations are ongoing, to divulge any forensic evidence obtained.

As regards to part (d) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that no files have been referred to the Director of the Public Prosecutions for advice regarding possible prosecutions, but that the Director of Prosecutions has been contacted and is advising the police during the ongoing investigation.

Madam Speaker, this is unfortunately not all. As the House is aware, the previous regime had engaged into mass surveillance, and slowly but surely, irrefutable facts are coming to light. Some of them relate directly to the case of late Mr Kistnen. It appears that journalists who were investigating the case, well-known household names in Mauritius – and they will recognise themselves, I know, when I am referring to them, they know who they are – were in the surveillance target database.

It also appears that lawyers, including a former Attorney General, were also being targeted for intrusive surveillance, which was totally unlawful, in order to obtain information

as to what they had uncovered in relation to the case of late Mr Kistnen. This, Madam Speaker, goes to show the extent to which the previous regime went to spy on journalists, on lawyers, on family members, in order to further the purpose, which was to control the investigation, and we all know what this has led to.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition, your first supplementary?

Mr Baboolall: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the hon. Prime Minister for his reply.

Madam Speaker, this October, six years have passed since Mr Kistnen was murdered. Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister also stated in the same reply back to my PQ B/970 that there were disturbing circumstances surrounding the death of Mr Kistnen. Can he inform the House whether, those disturbing circumstances have been investigated and what are the outcomes and also can he inform the House whether, anyone was questioned?

The Prime Minister: I did say that 12 people were questioned; there were 17 statements. Also, as I said, the investigation is ongoing. It happened six years ago. Evidence was destroyed – I said that in my reply – data destroyed, burnt, but all this is being recovered and the investigation is ongoing.

Madam Speaker: Next question!

Mr Baboolall: Yes, Madam Speaker. From the reply of the hon. Prime Minister, so we have those 17 persons in relation to the disturbing circumstances.

Hon. Members: 12 persons!

Mr Baboolall: 12 persons and destroyed the previous inquiries. Those are those persons concerned.

The Prime Minister: I will not be at liberty to say who destroyed what. I do not want to prejudice the investigation because there will be cross-examination and all that but these are the facts that I have told you.

Madam Speaker: Next question!

Mr Baboolall: Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister stated in his reply on 04 March 2025 that the judicial inquiry report was a damning indictment, as he stated today. Will the

hon. Prime Minister inform the House how the foreign team and the retired police adviser have helped the inquiry?

The Prime Minister: How the foreign team? The British experts?

Mr Baboolall: Yes.

The Prime Minister: But this is precisely what I said. If they had not come, nothing would have been found. That is my answer.

Madam Speaker: Next question!

Mr Baboolall: Will the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether, there has been any action taken against any police officer and if not, why not?

The Prime Minister: Let us be clear, Madam Speaker, the inquiry is ongoing.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

The Prime Minister: There will be action, but we do not want to prejudice the investigation. It is ongoing but whatever has to be done, will be done.

Madam Speaker: Next question!

Mr Baboolall: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House what are the other foreign cases that the foreign team has worked on?

An hon. Member: *Pas* foreign cases.

Madam Speaker: No. No. Cold cases.

Mr Glover: Cold cases.

Madam Speaker: You mean cold cases?

Mr Baboolall: Yes.

The Prime Minister: They are local cases, not foreign cases. We all know the cases; the case of Souillac, the person who was allegedly thrown from the top of a level. There is the Dantier case and all these.

Madam Speaker: Several cases. Yes, next question.

Mr Baboolall: Madam Speaker, there have been two PNQs by hon. Shakeel Mohamed, the then Leader of the Opposition in the Kistnen case on 07 and 14 May 2024, respectively. No answers could be obtained at that time. Madam Speaker, will the hon. Prime Minister state whether, he has been apprised of the emergency medical purchase made in COVID-19?

The Prime Minister: This is part of the procurement case, Madam Speaker. This is also being investigated. As I said, Madam Speaker, you know, the files were destroyed. In fact, I should say at 3 o'clock in the morning of November 10, that is, on the eve of the election, they started a massive deletion exercise amounting to about 98% – from what I am told – of the drives.

That, in itself, is evidence of conspiracy.

Mr Bérenger: With no one arrested.

The Prime Minister: No one was arrested because the investigation is ongoing. It is not as easy as you think it is. You have to investigate; you have to find the evidence.

Evidence has been destroyed! You have to know who destroyed the evidence.

Mr Bérenger: *Enfin* !

The Prime Minister: But the British experts are currently trying to find; the database experts are recovering part of the disk. It is fragmented, but they are recovering it. They have, in fact, destroyed the operating system. The whole architecture has been destroyed. Such wholesome destruction of information while a criminal investigation was ongoing, is in itself an offence. There are files marked, for example, 'Judicial'. You can guess who was in the list!

Madam Speaker: Okay. Several Members are asking. I do not want to have the problem we had last time. So, you tell me, you have more questions?

Mr Baboolall: I have more questions.

Madam Speaker: Of course. Go ahead!

Mr Baboolall: Madam Speaker, will the hon. Prime Minister state whether Government has carried out an audit trail on different emergency and different contracts awarded?

The Prime Minister: This is investigated by the FCC. So, they will not impart information to me but I know it is being investigated.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Baboolall: Madam Speaker, in relation to the "Kisten Papers", will the hon. Prime Minister state whether, the "Kisten Papers" have been examined by an international handwriting expert? And, if yes, what was the outcome?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Leader of the Opposition is a lawyer. It has been examined, but I am not at liberty to say the outcome because the investigation is ongoing. You do not want to give a running commentary on the investigation because this is exactly what they want, and you will prejudice the investigation. I am sure you know that.

Madam Speaker: Okay, next question. Then, please, when you are ready, you tell me when you want to give way. Then, you reserve your last question. I will allow.

Mr Baboolall: I have more questions, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Okay, go ahead!

Mr Baboolall: Madam Speaker, in relation to the CCTV, the Safe City footage – in a PNQ dated 02 August 2024 asked by hon. Dr. Boolell, who was the then Leader of Opposition, the former Prime Minister stated that the police have secured whatever footage from Safe City Cameras. Can the hon. Prime Minister state whether, the footages of the Safe City Cameras for the period from 16 to 18 of October were obtained or were they erased?

Madam Speaker: October of which year?

The Prime Minister: From what I understand, it was a lie. That answer was a lie because when we look at the footage, they are all destroyed.

Mr Baboolall: So, if they were destroyed, hon. Prime Minister, will you state to the House whether Huawei was contacted to get the storing information? And, if yes, when was this done?

The Prime Minister: That was done when we came back into power. We asked them. They have a time limit where they keep footage. That is what we were told.

Madam Speaker: Yes. *J'ai deux*.

(Interruptions)

One moment. I already have two other persons. I have put you on the list. Okay, I have three persons now waiting. But it is your time.

Mr Baboolall: Yes, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, in his reply to PQ B/78, the hon. Prime Minister stated that the report was highly critical of the police medical officer, a certain Dr. A.S. Will the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether, any disciplinary action was taken? If yes, what action?

The Prime Minister: In fact, we had asked for some kind of disciplinary action but I was told that we have to wait for the investigation and then act.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr Baboolall: The reply is like the former Prime Minister, Madam Speaker!

Can the hon. Prime Minister state about the forensic examination and the DNA examination that were carried out? Is there any clue in relation to anyone? Was someone questioned or charged with specific evidence?

The Prime Minister: Can the hon. Leader of the Opposition clarify what DNA evidence he is referring to?

Mr Baboolall: Madam Speaker, is there any DNA – let me be more simple – that has been received from any forensic that has been carried out by this foreign team?

The Prime Minister: Not that I am aware of.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Next question. Keep your last question, do not forget.

Mr Baboolall: Yes, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, will the hon. Prime Minister consider roping with the DPP to offer immunity to any person bringing credible information to enlighten the murder case of Kisten?

The Prime Minister: As the hon. Leader of Opposition knows, I cannot instruct the DPP. It is for the DPP to decide this; not for me.

Mr Baboolall: Madam Speaker, from all that the hon. Prime Minister has stated, so, nothing has come out since two years!

Madam Speaker: Please, ask a question.

Mr Baboolall: My question is: will the hon. Prime Minister not do any cover up in this matter?

(Interruptions)

Ms Anquetil: *Incroyable*!

The Prime Minister: Do you think you are dealing with the MSM? Do you think you are dealing with the MSM, here? I am the one who brought the British experts! I have told you just now.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Come on. I cannot hear!

The Prime Minister: Had I not brought these British experts, nothing would have been found! Look at the judgment, the findings of the Senior Magistrate, and also the forensic expert who came for Mrs Kistnen. Nothing would have been found. A lot of things have been found. You cannot say that after two years, nothing has been found. This is absolutely misleading!

I told you: the police investigation has been sabotaged. There was deleting of material on the eve of the election. Massive deleting! So, where do I…

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: We have to find out!

The Prime Minister: We have to find out who deleted these materials. He is sitting there as if it is easy: arrest this one; arrest this one!

You have no idea what evidence means?

Mr Mohamed: Dictators do that.

The Prime Minister: Spying on investigative journalists – I have just told you – you do not find this shocking? Not only journalists, but also family members, family lawyers. Ask yourself: what purpose, why did they have to spy on these journalists? Some of them are now defending the MSM. Probably, they do not know they were being spied upon. The Judiciary – there is a file marked ‘Judiciary’ – being spied upon.

What was the purpose? The purpose is very simple. You do not have to be an expert to know. They wanted to know what the investigations are finding out about the death of Mr Kistnen, what evidence they possess, what are their sources – all this they wanted to know and what are the evidences that might implicate the former Prime Minister and some Senior Ministers. That is what they wanted to find out, and that is how they were proceeding.

Madam Speaker: Okay. I have three people who have asked. Do you want to give way?

Mr Baboolall: Yes, I have one more. Since we are talking about the evidence of CCTV or whatever evidence, will the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether, he is in possession of information of the officer responsible for the operation of the command of the Safe City Camera for that period?

The Prime Minister: The answer is yes.

Mr Baboolall: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether, there has been any action taken in relation to any personnel responsible for Safe City Camera?

The Prime Minister: Of course, as I said, the investigation is ongoing. We have to find out, first of all, who destroyed all these evidences. Do you think they are going to say it was 'X' who gave me orders? This is what the British experts are trying to find out.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr Baboolall: Since two years, no answers, hon. Prime Minister!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Is it okay for you to keep your final question? I have got the hon. Chief Whip first, and then Mr Lesjongard. I have only got a few minutes left.

Ms Anquetil: *Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente*.

Would the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether, Dr. A.S., the forensic doctor, has been found competent and sufficiently *intègre* to remain in the police service in light of the findings of the judicial inquiry report, which was highly critical of him and recommended an inquiry into the professional competence? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Prime Minister: I think I said that earlier. An inquiry is being conducted. The DPP is involved. So, I do not want to say what to do, what not to do. Let the inquiry find out.

Madam Speaker: Okay, hon. Lesjongard. He asked first.

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister with regard to those investigating – especially the team of experts – those cold case files, whether, Government has a formal agreement with Scotland Yard for those people to investigate those cases or whether, they are doing it on a private basis, and whether those experts are retired officers from Scotland Yard?

The Prime Minister: It is not directly with Scotland Yard, Madam Speaker, because we cannot get that kind of help. We have recruited them; they are former Scotland Yard experts.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Dr. Aumeer.

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The core of such a very intense investigation relies upon the report of the forensic pathologist and in this case, we have noted, there has been one report of suicide against the other one of homicide. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister, whether, he has been made aware of any investigation or report? Under whose instructions, the pathologist who was assigned at Jeetoo Hospital on that day, was changed to a different pathologist so that it concurs with having a report of being suicide and subsequently, whether immediate disciplinary actions may be taken right from now itself? Thank you.

The Prime Minister: I have been told that they have to complete the investigation. That is the answer that I have been given, and I think it is right.

Madam Speaker: Alright, you have your final question. You will give way, then I will give you your final question? Alright.

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. Le Premier ministre peut-il confirmer à la Chambre qu'initialement, les enregistrements des caméras du système *Safe City* étaient conservés pendant une période de 60 jours et que par la suite, l'ancien gouvernement a révisé cette politique afin de réduire la durée de conservation à 30 jours? Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

The Prime Minister: In any case, Madam Speaker, as I said, every evidence was destroyed; whether conserved or not conserved, they were destroyed.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Now, Leader of the Opposition, you have a few minutes left.

Mr Baboolall: Will the hon. Prime Minister table the Judicial Inquiry Report?

The Prime Minister: Do you mean the District Magistrate findings? I think that is public if I am not mistaken, hon. Attorney General.

Mr Glover: It is in the Press.

Mr Baboolall: It has not been disclosed.

The Prime Minister: It is in the Press.

Mr Baboolall: It has not been disclosed. Can it be tabled?

The Prime Minister: Apparently, I cannot but it is in the press.

Madam Speaker: It is public, you mean?

Mr Glover: It has been published. It is not public. It has been published.

Madam Speaker: It has been published, okay.

Mr Mohamed: It is in the public domain.

Mr Baboolall: Can the hon. Prime Minister state the approximate time when this investigation can be completed?

The Prime Minister: Of course, I cannot. How can I say when the investigation will be completed? I cannot.

Madam Speaker: Okay, good. Thank you very much, everybody.

Hon. Members, I am going to PMQT now.

The Table has been advised that PQ B/1390 will be replied by hon. Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection.

PQs B/1447, B/1468 will be replied by the hon. Prime Minister time permitting, and PQ B/1388 has been withdrawn. I think our good friend is not yet in Mauritius, right?

So, now I will call the hon. Second Member for Savanne and Black River, hon. Jugurnauth!

MAURITIUS & RODRIGUES – ECONOMIC DISPARITY – COSTLY FREIGHT – PRICE CONTROL MECHANISMS

(No. B/1388) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) 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 Rodrigues Island, having regard to the economic disparity and high cost of freight between mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues Island, he will state whether consideration for measures to safeguard and improve the purchasing power of those residing therein are being envisaged, including the –

- provision of subsidies on essential commodities;
- enforcement of price control mechanisms, and
- financial assistance aimed at mitigating the high cost of living thereat.

(Withdrawn)

ROAD ACCIDENT – ALLÉE TAMARIN, BAMBOUS – 02 SEPTEMBER 2026 – MRS M. L. A. DEMISE

(No. B/1389) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second 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 inquiry initiated into the road accident which occurred on or about 02 September 2026 at Allée Tamarin, in Bambous and which resulted in the demise of Mrs M. L. A., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on Thursday 03 September 2026, at about 06.00 a.m, a road accident occurred on a pedestrian crossing at Allée Tamarin, Petite Rivière, involving Mrs L.A., a pedestrian and an autocycle ridden by Mr S.S.U.J. Both the pedestrian and the autocycle rider were injured. They were conveyed to Dr. Jeetoo Hospital for treatment. Mrs L.A. was admitted and Mr S.S.U.J. was allowed to go after the breath test carried out was negative.

I am further informed that on 06 September 2026, that is, three days later, Mrs L.A. passed away in the hospital. The post-mortem examination conducted by the Police Medical Officer attributed her death to pelvic injuries with myocardial infarction.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that on 07 September 2026, Mr S.S.U.J. was arrested and provisionally charged with the offence of involuntary homicide, in breach of section 133 of the Road Traffic Act, before the District Court of Black River. Mr S.S.U.J. was released on bail on the same day upon furnishing a surety of Rs10,000 and a recognisance of Rs30,000. As part of his bail conditions, he is required to report to Pailles Police Station every Monday between 06.00 a.m. and 06.00 p.m.

I am informed, Madam Speaker, by the Director of Forensic Science Lab, that a report will be submitted by mid next week, following which, the enquiry will be concluded, and the case file will be referred to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice.

Let me remind the House that the Minister of Land Transport has, on 05 September of this year, promulgated the Road Traffic (Amendment) Act 2026 which provides for stricter measures such as heavier penalties for causing death by dangerous driving or by careless driving, introduction of road rage as an offence, seizure of vehicles while driving under the influence of drug or alcohol, prohibition of the use of handheld mobile phones while driving or cycling, heavier penalties for illegal road racing. The intent of these measures is to strengthen the culture of responsibility and discipline of all road users.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Jugurnauth?

Mr Jugurnauth: Madam Speaker, will the Prime Minister inform the House whether the Police considered the footage camera in that area?

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Whether the Police looked at the cameras?

Madam Speaker: No, whether you will consider the footage?

The Prime Minister: I? It is not for me.

(Interruptions)

Yes, yes.

Madam Speaker: That is what he said. Alright, next question.

Hon. Third Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or. It will be replied by the hon. Minister of Commerce.

So, next question is hon. Fifth Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue, hon. Lesjongard!

CARGO HANDLING CORPORATION LTD – AUDIT REPORT – JULY 2026 – ALLEGATIONS

(No. B/1391) Mr G. Lesjongard (Fifth 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 the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the findings of the audit report dated July 2026 in respect of allegations concerning matters of governance, accountability, compliance and procurement thereat, indicating whether copy thereof will be tabled.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Director of the Cargo Handling Corporation that an internal audit exercise was undertaken by the Cargo Handling Corporation following anonymous complaints alleging irregularities in the management and operations of company and prolonged equipment downtime. The objective was to strengthen internal controls, ensure compliance with established procedures and improve accountability and operational efficiency within the CHCL.

The Internal Audit Report dated 26 June of this year, highlighted that the recruitment and selection processes had been conducted in accordance with established procedures.

I am further informed that the audit has identified some weaknesses in the documentation and compliance aspects of the procurement process relating to the renovation of a staircase, although bids obtained from the lowest bidder had been retained.

The audit also identified some shortcomings in the documentation and monitoring of staff transfer exercise, attendance and overtime arrangements and made the following recommendations –

(a) stricter enforcement of procurement procedures;
(b) formalisation of staff transfers and overtime arrangements;
(c) improved workforce planning and preventive maintenance;
(d) expeditious procurement of critical spare parts, and

(e) establishment of Board-approved procedures for the disposal of obsolete and scrapped assets.

I am informed that the Cargo Handling Corporation has already implemented some of the recommendations of the Audit Report.

Madam Speaker, I have consistently upheld the principles of transparency and accountability and remain committed to ensuring that matters of public interest are dealt with in an open and transparent manner.

I was advised that it would not be appropriate to depone an Internal Audit Report.

I overrule that advice, and I am tabling the copy of the Internal Audit Report.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, hon. Prime Minister, for your reply. The Chairman of the Board of the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd, in a meeting held on 17 July, that is, a special board meeting of directors, took the commitment that the findings of that audit report will be forwarded to the Financial Crimes Commission for further enquiry. Has this been the case, hon. Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: It is my understanding that this is the case.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Yes, next question. Hon. Fourth Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue.

AFROBAROMETER FLAGSHIP REPORT 2026 – YOUTH EMIGRATION - – RETENTION MEASURES

(No. B/1392) Mr A. Duval (Fourth 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 the finding contained in the Afrobarometer Flagship Report 2026 to the effect that 76% of Mauritians aged 18 to 25 surveyed have considered emigrating, he will state whether Government has taken cognisance thereof and, if so, indicate the measures being taken and/or envisaged to –

(a) retain young and qualified Mauritians in the country, and

(b) encourage the return of those having emigrated.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, as announced in the Government Programme 2025-2029, the future of a country can only be guaranteed when its youth is empowered and actively participates and contributes to societal progress.

Youth emigration is a challenge our island is facing, and one that requires a multifaceted response. We must not only address the reasons why young people choose to leave, but also create the conditions that will encourage them to stay, build their future here and contribute to the development of our country. This means investing in opportunities, skills, employment and entrepreneurship, and above all, restoring confidence in the future.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the following measures are being taken –

(i) the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) has launched a Skills Development Scheme for Professionals (SDSP) in September of this year, which funds training programmes for specialised workforce development;

(ii) my Government is in the process of establishing a High-Tech Special Economic Zone at Côte d'Or which will attract investment in AI, digital technologies and advanced manufacturing over the next five years. This will create new opportunities for skilled employment, thus enabling young and qualified Mauritians to pursue careers in high-value sectors, and

(iii) a single digital platform is being developed by SME Mauritius to facilitate access to information for entrepreneurs on available schemes, grants, tax incentives and financing facilities.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (b) of the question, my Government recognises that our diaspora can play a vital role in shaping the future of our country. A number of initiatives is being taken to strengthen the links with the diaspora to better facilitate their participation in national development. These include –

(i) the development of a National E-Diaspora Platform at the Economic Development Board to connect the diaspora with opportunities in employment, investment,

mentoring and knowledge transfer. The platform is expected to become operational in January of next year;

(ii) the Public Procurement Act has been amended in August 2026 to facilitate the engagement of qualified diaspora experts by public bodies for specialised services on mutually agreed terms and conditions. This will enable public institutions to benefit from the expertise and international experience of the diaspora living abroad, and

(iii) the establishment of a Diaspora and Global Advisory Council under my Office. The Council is intended to serve as a platform for greater participation by the Mauritian diaspora and friends of Mauritius overseas in national development.

Madam Speaker, through these initiatives, Government is not only creating new opportunities and incentives in Mauritius for our youth to stay, but is also encouraging skilled Mauritians to return and contribute to the development of our country. In fact, some of our diaspora professionals have, for the first time, returned to Mauritius and are contributing to the advancement of our country. We have examples –

- at Mauritius Telecom, somebody came from Singapore;
- at the Bank of Mauritius, the Governor was working in New York;
- at the State Bank of Mauritius, again, somebody from Singapore;
- at the Forensic Science Laboratory, someone from the UK, and also in the medical sector.

We recognise, however, that much more needs to be done and that we must step up our efforts in the years ahead. In this respect, we are also establishing a framework for policy development on migration, population and diaspora.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, hon. A. Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, the official figures, in fact, are very worrying. If you look at the report itself, 76% of persons aged…

Madam Speaker: Ask the question!

Mr A. Duval: That is the question. I am sorry, Madam Speaker, you are right.

Is the Prime Minister aware that 76% of people aged 18 to 25 are considering emigration, that is, going away from Mauritius, and that the official unemployment rate for that age group in Mauritius, registered unemployment, stands at four times the national rate, at 20%? Is the Prime Minister aware of that?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I am aware of that. That is why we are trying to correct the situation, which has remained uncorrected for so long. As for the unemployment rate, you must realise, they have just qualified. They have just come on the market.

Madam Speaker: Next question! Question!

Mr A. Duval: Yes, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Beware!

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, according to the 2022 census, it is up to 34,000 persons in that age group. Is the Prime Minister aware that up to 34,000 persons in that age group are neither in employment, education nor training? Therefore, is it not time to come back with the Youth Employment Programme which was initiated in 2013, where upwards of 50,000 young persons have found employment, subsidised up to 50% by Government? It was a total success, and today, the figures are totally worrying. Is the Prime Minister going to review that now?

The Prime Minister: We are considering it, but the only problem is subsidies. We cannot afford to subsidise everything in this country. That is the problem.

Mr A. Duval: May I have my last question, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: Last!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you.

Madam Speaker: But do not talk, just put a question!

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, may I ask the Prime Minister: what is Government's vision as to where the country is headed if nearly eight out of 10 persons who are the future, are looking to go and four times the national rate of unemployment for that age group?

Therefore, unless he finds the money to subsidise their employment, what is going to be the future of Mauritius under his helm?

The Prime Minister: I do not want to jeopardise the situation that we get a downgrade by Moody's either. So, if you can suggest where should I cut and get the money from?

We are looking at it. I did not say we are not looking at it. We are thinking of reviving it but there is this question that we must look. How much can we subsidise?

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles!

AIR MAURITIUS LTD & AIRPORT HOLDINGS LTD – DISMANTLING – MAURITIUS STOCK EXCHANGE – RELISTING

(No. B/1393) Mr R. Jhummun (Second 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 Air Mauritius Ltd. and Airport Holdings Ltd., he will state whether consideration will be given for the –

(a) dismantling of the said holding company and the reorganisation of the corporate structure thereof to address issues of corporate conflicts and duality of responsibility, and

(b) relisting of Air Mauritius Ltd. on the official market of the Stock Exchange of Mauritius.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that Government is considering the dismantling of Airport Holdings Ltd and action has already been initiated in that respect.

In regard to part (b) of the question, it is worth highlighting that Air Mauritius Ltd was delisted from the Stock Exchange of Mauritius when it entered into voluntary administration, when the company was literally in a state of bankruptcy under the previous regime.

Air Mauritius Ltd is still in a recovery phase following its exit from voluntary administration. Its immediate focus must, therefore, remain on strengthening its business fundamentals and implementing strategies that will place the company on a financially

sustainable footing. It is only then that consideration would be given to the relisting of Air Mauritius Ltd on the Stock Exchange of Mauritius.

Madam Speaker: You are okay? Yes.

Mr Lukeeram: Could Dr. the hon. Prime Minister state whether, consideration will be given for the taking over of Airmate Ltd by Air Mauritius?

The Prime Minister: Airmate Ltd was closed by the previous regime, as you probably know. We are looking at all the restructuring of the A.H.L.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Third Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central, hon. Dr. Aumeer!

CIVIL UNREST INCIDENTS – POLICE PREPAREDNESS & CROWD-CONTROL STRATEGIES

(No. B/1394) 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 the recent incidents of civil unrest, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether –

(a) the adequacy of the intelligence gathering, early-warning mechanisms and operational preparedness of the Police Force has been assessed, and

(b) a comprehensive review of crowd-control strategies and rapid-response capabilities is being envisaged.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the Mauritius Police Force already has clearly defined procedures for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of intelligence. These procedures support operational planning and facilitate the deployment of specialised units, including the Special Support Unit and the Special Mobile Force.

As regards part (a) of the question, the Secretary of Home Affairs held a meeting on Wednesday 21 October 2026 with concerned stakeholders, including the Commissioner of Police and the National Security Adviser for an assessment of the recent incidents. Both the Commissioner of Police and the National Security Adviser were requested to carry out an in-

depth evaluation of the situation regarding the riots, including intelligence gathering, and to submit a report. Police will address the outcome of the evaluation.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that a debriefing session with the Divisional Commanders and the Branch Officers concerned has been held to review the events, assess the adequacy of the Police response and identify areas requiring further improvement.

Particular attention was given to intelligence gathering and assessment, operational response, damage caused to public and private property, the adequacy of equipment, and measures required to enhance the Force's operational capabilities and readiness.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, already the Police have crowd-control strategies and rapid-response capabilities. However, they need to be reviewed in light of the recent incidents which took place. The review will take into consideration improvement of public order policing and the rules governing the use of force; the deployment, mobility and operational readiness of the specialised units; the adequacy of equipment and specialised training; and the coordination arrangements among the different Police units.

I am informed that Police have requested the assistance of the French authorities, under the *Groupe de Contact Maurice–Réunion* Framework on Security, to conduct a comprehensive audit of the capabilities of the Police Force, including its equipment, tactics and procedures relating to crowd control and public order policing. That proposed audit will provide an opportunity to identify any operational gaps and to be in line with international best practices.

I should add, although it is probably not exactly appropriate, I will be speaking to the French President who had, in the past, given us assistance to look into that, and also, from the Indian Government.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether, he will use his good office to recommend the establishment of real-time digital intelligence and monitoring mechanism in collaboration with social media platforms to detect and respond promptly to credible threats of violence and coordinated public disorder?

The Prime Minister: That is part of the package that we are looking at. I should have added, we are also looking at the replacement of vehicles that have been damaged from foreign countries – France and India.

Madam Speaker: Alright.

Dr. Aumeer: Last question.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Dr. Aumeer: I have listened very carefully to the answer given by the hon. Prime Minister at part (b) and maybe that fits part of the question that I have.

Will the hon. Prime Minister, with the Police Department, consider the acquisition and deployment of special police vehicles equipped with elevated high-definition surveillance cameras that can also have automated number plate recognition and real-time video transmission with a view to strengthening intelligence gathering and early detection and, of potential public disorder and those who indulge into offending public rights?

The Prime Minister: These are part of the equipment that we are looking at. As I mentioned, I am going to meet President Macron very soon and this will be one of the issues I will raise. I do not know though, there have been riots in France, whether it is appropriate.

Madam Speaker: Okay, hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister, with regard to crowd control strategies and rapid response capabilities during the recent riots, can he inform the House whether, he sought advice from persons who are not officially responsible for maintaining law and order in this country?

The Prime Minister: No. The answer is no.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, I have raised my hand even before; you saw me. You decided to…

Madam Speaker: Yes, but he caught my eye. I will give you in a minute. Do not fight. Yes, Hon. Juman.

Mr Juman: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: He also caught my eye.

Mr A. Duval: I caught your eyes first.

Mr Juman: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister, the number of officers attached to the National Security Services?

Madam Speaker: The number of?

Mr Juman: Number of officers attached to the Department of National Security Services.

Madam Speaker: National Security Services. Yes.

The Prime Minister: Normally, we do not give the numbers, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Hon. Mr A. Duval, straight to the point.

Mr A. Duval: Yes, to the point. Madam Speaker, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister with regard to the inadequate equipment at police stations and, we have seen at courts, firefighting equipment, whether he will now review urgently the firefighting disposal at police stations and in courts, fire sprinklers and other firefighting equipment so that if this is to happen again, at least we can protect the police stations, first and foremost?

The Prime Minister: You are absolutely right. We have to prioritise because we inherited a bankrupted economy, but we have to prioritise.

Madam Speaker: Okay, good. Now we have hon. First Member for Rodrigues, hon. Ms Collet!

REGIONAL MARITIME SECURITY ARCHITECTURE – PROPOSED STRENGTHENING – IMPLEMENTATION TIME FRAME

(No. B/1395) Ms M. R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) 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 implementation of measures announced under the proposed strengthening of the Regional Maritime Security Architecture and surveillance enhancement capacity for the protection of the maritime domain of the

Republic of Mauritius, announced in the 2025-2029 Government Programme, he will state where matters stand, indicating the –

(a) key milestones attained;
(b) implementation timeframe;
(c) regional/international cooperation initiatives pursued, and
(d) technical, financial, capacity-building or other support sought/secured?

Madam Speaker: Sorry, I called you Miss.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the Maritime Security Architecture is a combination of laws, organisations, technologies and operational procedures that nations and regional groups use to safeguard oceans, shipping lines and marine resources.

Mauritius occupies a strategic position in the Western Indian Ocean, and also has a vast Exclusive Economic Zone. It has developed its Maritime Security Framework which involves Maritime Security Policy, enhanced monitoring, control and surveillance capabilities, and seamless coordination amongst national institutions. Mauritius has also strengthened its cooperation ties with regional and global partners.

I am informed, Madam Speaker, that Police is expanding its capabilities to combat transnational crimes, drug trafficking, human trafficking, Illegal Unreported and Unregulated fishing, and other illegal activities as follows –

(a) the implementation of the National Maritime Information Sharing and Coordination Centre, with the assistance of the Government. The Centre will be operational in 2027;
(b) procurement of an Offshore Patrol Vessel under the Indian Line of Credit is expected by the end of 2028;
(c) acquisition of Four Light Utility Helicopters from India, expected as from 2029;
(d) upgrades to the Automatic Identification System (AIS) infrastructure and additional AIS receivers in both Mauritius and Rodrigues, in collaboration with the United States of America are expected by the end of November of this year;
(e) extension of the i24-7 INTERPOL system to Mauritius and Rodrigues last year, and

(f) a new Japanese-funded Coastal Surveillance Radar System has been installed in September 2026, comprising seven radar stations including one in Rodrigues. The project also includes five AIS stations.

Mauritius is an active member of the Indian Ocean Commission, through which we are benefitting from the regional linkages of the Maritime Security Architecture. As such, the Police are leveraging on the information sharing mechanism and operational coordination from the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre in Madagascar, Regional Coordination Operations Centre in Seychelles, and the Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region.

Moreover, we have a *Groupe de contact sur la securité Maurice-Réunion* where bilateral exchanges in terms of information sharing and inter-operability exercises between the Police Forces of the two islands are ongoing.

As regards surveillance patrol of the EEZ, Mauritius has an ongoing collaboration with India, France, and the United States of America. These friendly countries also extend capacity building opportunities through specialised training on Maritime Domaine Awareness to our Police Officers. Since 2025, some 400 Police Officers including officers from Rodrigues have been trained.

Madam Speaker: Yes, you are alright? Yes, next question. Hon. Jhummun!

SILVER BANK LTD – TOXIC LOANS – ALLEGED LOSS – MANAGERS IDENTITY

(No. B/1396) Mr R. Jhummun (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 alleged loss of some Rs 7 billion in toxic loans at the former Silver Bank Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Crimes Commission, information as to the identity of the foreign and Mauritian managers concerned who have not been questioned in connection therewith and, regarding those who have left the country, indicate the circumstances thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Financial Crimes Commission that in the case of the former Silver Bank Limited, 125 persons have been interviewed/interrogated so far, out of whom, 79 were interviewed as witnesses and 46

interrogated under warning. These include 9 officers of the Bank of Mauritius, 6 of whom were questioned as witnesses and 3 interrogated under warning.

I am further informed by the Financial Crimes Commission that between January 2023 to February 2025, 8 foreigners and one national who had been involved in the management of the former Silver Bank Limited left Mauritius and have not returned.

The names of these persons are –

1. Mr Prateek GUPTA, Ultimate Beneficial Owner;
2. Mrs Ginni GUPTA, Ultimate Beneficial Owner;
3. Mr Purushotam MENON, Ultimate Beneficial Owner;
4. Mr Vasil REVISHVILI, CEO & Executive Director;
5. Mr Alexander BELLO, Acting CEO;
6. Mr Mayur SOMANI, Head of Risk & Credit;
7. Mr Shriram JAMBHEKAR, Silver Bank Limited Officer;
8. Mr Ritesh CHAINANI, Finance Manager, and
9. Ms Sheikha KOODOORUTH (Mauritian), Senior Manager Operations.

The Commission has undertaken several steps in respect of the nine persons mentioned, including the filing of mutual legal assistance requests to the Attorney General's Office to the United Arab Emirates on 21 April of this year, and to the Republic of Singapore, Republic of Seychelles, and the Republic of South Africa on the 30 June 2026, and replies are being awaited.

Furthermore, the Financial Crimes Commission has initiated steps for the institution of provisional plaints in absentia against the nine persons implicated in this matter – I mentioned the names earlier – with a view to obtaining warrants of arrest and placing them on the Red Notice list of Interpol. The Commission is also working in close collaboration with the office of the DPP and the Commissioner of Police on that issue.

In view of the complexity of the case and the international ramifications, the House will appreciate that certain limbs of the investigation will take time to be completed.

However, I am informed by the Financial Crimes Commission that the investigation involving domestic limbs is expected to be completed within six months.

Madam Speaker: Yes, you are happy?

Let us have a last question, hon. third Member for Grand Baie Poudre d'Or.

FINANCIAL YEARS 2024-2025 & 2025-2026 – CORPORATE SECTOR – TEMPORARY SOLIDARITY LEVY

(No. B/1397) 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 the corporate sector, particularly, the banking, insurance, oil distribution, tourism and retail sectors, during the financial years 2024–2025 and 2025–2026, he will state whether, having regard to the financial performance thereof, consideration will be given for the introduction of a temporary solidarity levy on companies operating therein with the proceeds thereof to be earmarked for specific urgent national priorities.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, allow me to remind the House that in the last two budgets, we have already asked the corporate sector to make additional efforts in terms of their tax contribution.

In fact, in my very first Budget, a Fair Share Contribution up to 5% of chargeable income has been introduced for three years on domestic enterprises having an annual chargeable income above Rs24 million.

With regard to the banking sector, in addition to the Fair Share Contribution, which I have just mentioned, in that same Budget, I also introduced an additional Fair Share Contribution of 2.5% on the chargeable income of banks derived from the domestic operations applicable for three years.

Moreover, the cap applicable on the special levy payable by banks has been removed and partial exemption and foreign source dividend are no longer applicable.

In order to ensure that banks are not subjected to an excessive tax burden, we took care of introducing a specific provision in the legislation last year, which specifies that the sum of Fair Share Contribution, the Additional Fair Share Contribution, the Corporate Income Tax, CSR and CCR Levy payable in respect of the domestic operations shall not exceed 35% of their chargeable income.

Besides, an Alternative Minimum Tax was introduced last year on certain sectors such as hotels, insurance companies, financial intermediaries, real estate operators and telecom operators. This Alternative Minimum Tax aimed at ensuring that these operators pay at least 10% of the adjusted book profit as corporate tax.

A Qualified Domestic Minimum Top-Up Tax was also introduced on a resident parent or subsidiary of a large multinational enterprise to raise their effective rate to 15%.

Let me give some figures, Madam Speaker.

In the financial year of 2025/2026, Rs49.2 billion of revenue, excluding CSR, was collected out of which, Rs13.7 billion from the banks.

As regards the Fair Share and Additional Fair Share Contributions, they have generated an additional Rs4.3 billion in the financial year of 2025/2026.

This year, the Budget provides for an increase of Rs2.7 billion in revenues as follows –

(a) 1.5 billion under the Corporate Climate Responsibility Levy, following a change in the scope of the levy and for us from the current financial year;
(b) 700 million as a result of the abolition of capping of tax payers under the special levy on banks;
(c) Rs500 million by increasing corporate tax rate on companies engaged in export of live animals.

The estimated revenue from corporates for financial year 2026/2027 is Rs58.9 billion.

However, we have to tread cautiously as higher taxes, additional levies, fees or contributions can undermine the competitiveness of our enterprises and can be damaging to the sectors operating internationally, such as banking and financial services. If a sector is highly taxed, certain services could be relocalised abroad, leading to a fall in revenue to the Treasury.

That is why Government has set up a High-Level Committee under the Chair of the Financial Secretary to fundamentally review our tax system with a view to enhancing its fairness, efficiency and international competitiveness.

The hon. Member is very interested in this. I will advise you to join that committee and give your contribution.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Prime Minister.

Time is up now!

So, the Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/1398, B/1399, B/1402, B/1403, B/1404, B/1405, B/1406, B/1408, B/1409, B/1410, B/1411, B/1412, B/1413, B/1419, B/1420, B/1421, B/1424 and B/1447. I cannot tell which ones are still remaining, but if there are, we will be expecting written answers. Thank you.

Now, I have a few minutes left. We will start with the questions addressed to hon. Ministers.

Hon. Fifth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue!

PUBLIC SERVICE – CENTRALISED REDEPLOYMENT FRAMEWORK & REGISTER

(No. B/1425) Mr G. Lesjongard (Fifth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms whether, in regard to the implementation of the Centralised Redeployment Cell, the Redeployment Framework and the Redeployment Register, respectively, as recommended in the Pay Research Bureau Report 2026, he will state where matters stand, indicating whether provision will be made therein for the qualifications, experience, skills and career progression of officers to be taken into consideration.

Mr Pentiah: Madam Speaker, the Pay Research Bureau has, at paragraph 18.8 of its 2026 report, recommended the establishment of a Centralised Redeployment Cell under the Human Resource Development Division of my Ministry as a coordinating mechanism to facilitate the redeployment of officers for a more effective management of redundancy in the public service.

Furthermore, paragraphs 18.1 and 18.11 of the report recommend that my Ministry, in consultation with the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations and the federations, develops a redeployment framework to manage redundancy in the public service and to maintain an up-to-date redeployment register containing relevant information on the redundant and surplus employees in the public sector.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that as a matter of policy, public officers are redeployed to other organisations in the following circumstances –

(i) restructuring of government departments;
(ii) corporatisation of government department;
(iii) closure of a specific government divisions or units, and
(iv) setting up of new government organisations.

I also wish to inform the House that well-defined policies and procedures already exist to deal with any redeployment case in the public service.

Over the last two years, there has been no restructuring of government departments, and consequently, no public officers within the civil service, proper, have required redeployment. Therefore, the establishment of a centralised redeployment cell as a central coordinating mechanism for the public service does not arise at this stage.

Madam Speaker, the House will, however, note that some parastatal organisations have undergone restructuring or dissolution during the last years. In these specific instances, the redeployment or transfer conditions of the affected employees have been explicitly prescribed under the saving and transitional provisions of the legislation governing the repeal or reorganisation of these entities. As these transitional provisions carry specific statutory force tailored to each organisation, transfer of the employees concerned falls strictly within these distinct legal frameworks, rather than a centralised redeployment cell. I wish to reassure the House that the saving and transitional provisions governing the transfer of these employees do provide for conditions to protect and safeguard the accrued rights of the employees.

Madam Speaker, some clear examples are the restructuring involving the National Environment Cleaning Authority (NECA), established under the National Environment Cleaning Authority Act 2022, and the Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation, established under the Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation Act 2025. In the two cases, the saving and transitional provisions specifically catered for the period of service with the defunct organisations to be treated as an unbroken period of service, and for the employees to be transferred on terms and conditions which were not less favourable than those of their previous employment are respected.

Madam Speaker, in the end, I also wish to inform the House that in accordance with established policy, employees who are redeployed in comparable grades carrying same

qualifications and salary retained all their accrued benefits which are carried over to their new positions. Also, as applicable for all officers in the public sector, redeployed employees are also eligible to apply for any other posts which are advertised in the public sector. I thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, hon. Lesjongard.

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have got two supplementary questions. The first one is in relation to those organisations where redeployment has taken place as stated by the hon. Minister. Will he table the list of the officers who have been redeployed, indicating their former grades and positions, their new postings, and whether their duties are commensurate with their qualifications, experience, and skills?

Mr Pentiah: Madam Speaker, let me please reassure the hon. Member, this Government practices transparency. The required information will be tabled with all due requirements. I thank you.

Madam Speaker: In a reasonable time.

Mr Pentiah: Absolutely, in a matter of days.

Madam Speaker: Your second question, last question!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, hon. Minister. Now, my second supplementary question is in relation with the forthcoming Public Service Bill. Will Government consider incorporating clear rules and guidelines on public officers' redeployment with regard to the forthcoming Public Service Bill?

Mr Pentiah: Madam Speaker, it is not the Public Service Reform Bill. I shall respectfully indicate to the hon. Member: the Public Sector Reform Bill. Yes, of course, a question is going to follow later. Certain provisions will be clearly indicated in there of course, under the guidance of the AG's Office while drafting it and advice of the AG's Office.

Madam Speaker: Okay, thank you. Last question, hon. Third Member for Savanne and Black River! Yes.

CWA HOTLINE 170 – TOLL-FREE SERVICE – REGISTERED COMPLAINTS

(No. B/1426) Ms V. Leu-Govind (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the CWA hotline 170, he will state whether consideration will be given for making same a toll-free service for calls originating from both fixed lines and mobile phones, in view of complaints from prepaid mobile users whose credits are exhausted before their complaints can be registered and, if so, when.

Mr Assirvaden: Madame la présidente, la CWA m'informe que sa ligne d'assistance téléphonique 170 enregistre actuellement les différentes catégories de plaintes et de demandes de service telles que –

- pas d'eau;
- tuyaux cassés;
- fuite, et
- qualité de l'eau.

Ce service est fourni par la Mauritius Telecom.

Madame la présidente, j'ai pris note de la demande de l'honorable membre. Mon ministère examinera en consultation avec les parties prenantes concernées, notamment le fournisseur, la Mauritius Telecom, les implications techniques, financières de la proposition sur les réseaux fixes et mobiles. Des propositions visant à utiliser des canaux gratuits tels que WhatsApp, des formulaires web et les SMS ont été formulés et peuvent être étudiés. Notre objectif demeure la mise à disposition d'un canal accessible et efficace permettant aux clients d'obtenir de l'aide et de faire part de leurs préoccupations.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, we can have one more question.

Hon. Third Member for Pamplemousses and Triolet!

PUBLIC SERVICE – RECRUITS – TOTAL SALARY EXPENDITURE

(No. B/1427) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses &Triolet) asked the Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms whether, in regard to the public service, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

(a) number of persons recruited and total salary expenditure incurred therefor over each of the past two years, and

(b) projected number of recruits and corresponding salary expenditure therefor for each of the forthcoming three years.

Mr Pentiah: Yes, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Yes, I am waiting.

Mr Pentiah: Madam Speaker, I am to inform the House that recruitment in the public service is carried out in accordance with the Public Service Commission, Disciplined Forces Service Commission, and the Judicial and Legal Service Commission regulations on the basis of approved Schemes of Service by my Ministry, as may be applicable, and subject to the posts being funded in the budget for the financial year.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that for the Financial Year 2024-2025, over 4,000 persons were recruited with a total expenditure of Rs1,375,000,000 comprising of salary and other benefits. For the Financial Year 2025-2026, funds were earmarked for the recruitment of 2,033 new posts into the public service. And as of date, 1,374 posts have been filled with a total expenditure of Rs473 million for salary and other benefits. Furthermore, Madam Speaker, in process, there are Management Support Officers, trainee Nurses, Police Constables, and trainee Education Officers to be recruited by the respective Service Commission.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that projected recruitment for each of the forthcoming three years will be determined on the basis of the operational needs of Ministries and departments. Priority will be given to critical areas, the implementation of new Government policies, and taking into account, of course, of the fiscal space available and the budgetary provisions. I thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, hon. Rookny?

Mr Rookny: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the hon. Minister advise the House whether his Ministry has taken actions against excessive recruitment that happened prior to November 2024?

Mr Pentiah: Madam Speaker, this issue was addressed at policy level decisions, and this Government has taken a very humane approach to the whole issue. Yes, there was excessive

recruitment in all areas, from MSOs to auxiliary staff and to other levels but none of them has been in a way made redundant. Instead and in lieu, this Government has taken full responsibility to ensure those posts were duly confirmed on humanitarian grounds. I thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, second question.

Mr Rookny: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So, will the Minister then confirm that we are actually endorsing the excessive recruitment or has he optimised the expenditure?

Mr Pentiah: This is why, Madam Speaker, I am glad to inform the House that when I joined the Ministry, we carried a very strict human resource audit to redeploy all staff duly where and as required to efficiently use whatever staff was recruited. This is why this reflects only for over 4,000 people recruited in 2024-2025. This is the reason. We had to redeploy what was overused by the previous government in an exaggerated manner first. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Okay, I have hon. François.

Mr François: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just seize this opportunity. May I ask the hon. Minister whether his Ministry is reconsidering the request of a few Rodriguan-born public officers recruited here and who requested their transfer from the Mauritius establishment to that of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly establishment on a case-to-case basis or on a humanitarian ground?

Mr Pentiah: Madam Speaker, I carefully listened to whatever you said in your introduction this afternoon, but I must emphasise, all questions addressed to my Ministry in written form, if not in oral form, have been put and tabled before the Assembly.

To the question now, there are two different issues to be addressed as far as Rodrigues' public officers are concerned. There are those recruited under the Mauritian establishment, and there are those recruited under the Rodrigues establishment – under the RRA provisions.

Now, those recruited in Rodrigues under the RRA provisions are not strictly transferable and vice versa. But having said that, on humanitarian grounds, we have considered on a case-to-case basis already, but the only issue is transfer of benefits and accrued benefits on positions, which is not sometimes agreeable to the local Regional Assembly. But may I please reassure the hon. Member, I am having a meeting next week with representatives of the Rodrigues

Regional Assembly (RRA) and officers to try and find ways to iron out matters. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, time is already up. Thank you very much. I suspend the Sitting for one and a half hour. Thank you!

At 1.01 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.31 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: You may be seated!

The hon. First Member for La Caverne and Phoenix!

MARE AUX VACOAS RESERVOIR – BATHYMETRIC SURVEY – GEOLOGICAL, GEOTECHNICAL & SEEPAGE ASSESSMENTS

(No. B/1428) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Mare aux Vacoas reservoir, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information regarding –

(a) when the last bathymetric survey thereof was conducted, indicating the extent of sediment accumulation and reduction in the usable storage capacity thereof, and

(b) whether geological, geotechnical and seepage assessments of the bed and foundations thereof were undertaken and, if so, when, which company carried out same, costs incurred and findings and recommendations thereof.

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, concernant la partie (a) de la question, la Water Resources Commission m'a informé qu'une étude hydrographique et sédimentologique du réservoir de Mare aux Vacoas a été réalisée par le consultant Wright en 1996. Cette étude comprenait un levé bathymétrique du réservoir. Le volume mort du réservoir est estimé, par le consultant, à 0,002 million de mètres cubes. Le volume mort correspond généralement au volume d'eau situé sous le niveau de remplissage le plus bas et qui ne peut être prélevé du réservoir.

La perte annuelle en 1996, la perte annuelle moyenne de capacité du réservoir de Mare aux Vacoas, a été estimée à 0,02% par an par le consultant sur la base d'un calcul de

sédimentation sur une période de 108 ans, à savoir 1888 à 1996. Partant de la même hypothèse de réduction de la capacité de stockage, la perte de stockage en 2026, donc cette année-ci, soit environ 30 ans après l'étude, c'est-à-dire de 1997 à 2026, est estimée à 0,15 million de mètres cubes, ce qui représente moins de 2 jours d'approvisionnement normal actuel.

J'ai été informé que, selon les conclusions du rapport Wright, la perte de stockage de Mare aux Vacoas comparée à la perte de stockage des réservoirs similaires dans le monde était insignifiante.

M. le président, concernant la partie (b) de la question, j'ai appris qu'entre 1997 et 1999, une étude d'analyse de sécurité du barrage a été menée par le Consulting Engineering Services de l'Inde pour les barrages de Mare aux Vacoas. Pour plusieurs réservoirs, cette étude a coûté autour de R 7 millions. Pour entreprendre l'étude d'analyse de sécurité du barrage, donc l'état du barrage du réservoir de Mare aux Vacoas, Consulting Engineering Limited a mené des investigations géotechniques et d'autres évaluations. L'étude d'analyse de la sécurité du barrage a recommandé la réhabilitation du réservoir de Mare aux Vacoas. Le contrat pour ces travaux a été attribué à une entreprise en août 1999 et achevé en juin 2000. Donc, 6 ans de cela.

En complément des investigations et évaluations menées dans le cadre de l'étude pour le barrage, le cabinet de consultant italien, Pietrangeli, a complété cette analyse en 2020, 6 ans de cela, par des inspections et des études supplémentaires au titre de l'analyse de rupture du barrage. Le montant des contrats de prestation du conseil pour l'analyse de rupture s'élève à plus de R 21 millions.

J'ai été informé que le consultant n'a constaté aucune trace d'infiltration importante au niveau des fondations du barrage, aucun débit d'eau n'ayant été observé en aval. Par conséquent, rien ne prouve que ces infiltrations aient réduit de manière significative le volume d'eau disponible dans le réservoir.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Mr Deputy Speaker, may I ask the hon. Minister with regard to the water coming from Mare aux Vacoas and going to La Marie, where they use what they call the intake tower. The Minister would recall that way back, on 18 May 2021, there was a diver that unfortunately lost his life. From thereon, they could not analyse to see the leakages that were profusely happening at the intake tower.

As at now, has this exercise of intercepting or finding that the leakages are still going on at this intake tower, from Mare aux Vacoas to La Marie, been done after the incident of 2021? Has this been done, please?

Mr Assirvaden: J'ai cru comprendre que oui, effectivement, les ingénieurs de la Water Resources Commission ont travaillé sur des études concernant Mare aux Vacoas et La Marie. Nous avons un *pipe* qui prend de l'eau de Mare aux Vacoas jusqu'à La Marie et cela nous ramène 15 000 mètres cubes par jour. Ce que j'ai cru comprendre, c'est que des études ont été menées sur la trajectoire de Mare aux Vacoas jusqu'à La Marie.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, put your question!

Mr Lobine: The hon. Minister does he not find it now appropriate, after 30 years, for a proper bathymetric survey at Mare aux Vacoas, whereby we have reports that we had several craters around with regard to the volcanic nature of the region around? Is it not high time, after 30 years, to have a thorough geotechnical and bathymetric survey of Mare aux Vacoas Reservoir?

Mr Assirvaden: Je dirais qu'à ce stade, non. Les études que nous avons faites, et partant de la même hypothèse de réduction du captage pour les réservoirs, démontrent que d'après les spécialistes/ingénieurs du Water Resources Commission et de la CWA, la perte de Mare aux Vacoas est insignifiante. La perte d'eau est normale comparée à d'autres réservoirs. Mais si c'est prouvé dans les semaines ou dans les mois à venir que nous devons entreprendre d'autres études, bien sûr, qu'on va le faire. Mais, à ce stade, on ne peut pas dire que des études vont être menées concernant Mare aux Vacoas.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Minister with regard to the intake tower at Mare aux Vacoas, is there a comprehensive report or any report from the Water Resources Unit or the Water Resources Commission, that it is in good working condition and there is no leakage which is going on profusely there? Is there a report?

Mr Assirvaden: Intake…

Mr Lobine: Intake tower. It is where the raw water from Mare aux Vacoas goes to La Marie.

The Deputy Speaker: The Minister has understood your question.

Come on, give your reply!

Mr Lobine: I am explaining to him.

Mr Assirvaden: On a deux *intake* quittant Mare aux Vacoas pour La Marie. Donc, ce travail est fait quotidiennement par ceux qui monitorent l'eau sortant de Mare aux Vacoas pour aller à La Marie. Les deux *towers* que nous avons à Mare aux Vacoas sont des *towers* avec des sorties. Donc, plus le niveau du réservoir de Mare aux Vacoas baisse, moins d'eau sort. Plus l'eau augmente, plus il y a d'eau qui est envoyée à La Marie. Automatiquement, sans que nous touchions à quoi que ce soit. Mais en ce qui concerne les deux *towers,* c'est la Water Resources Commission qui fait un *monitoring* quotidien.

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

ONLINE PLATFORMS – LEGAL FRAMEWORK & DIGITAL SAFETY

(No. B/1429) Ms M. R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the proposed review of the legal and regulatory framework to enhance –

(a) accountability, digital integrity, online safety and compliance by online platforms and users of their products and services with Mauritian laws, particularly, in relation to cyberbullying, online harassment, doxxing, deepfakes, harmful Generative AI content, impersonation, fake profiles, misinformation/disinformation;

(b) the capacity of relevant institutions, and

(c) cooperation with online platforms, foreign regulators and international partners therefor, he will state where matters stand.

Dr. Ramtohul: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank hon. Member for the question.

Government recognises the need to strengthen the legal and regulatory framework governing the digital environment to address emerging online risks while safeguarding the

fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the Constitution. In this regard, draft proposals have been prepared to amend the Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Act 2021 in order to enhance accountability, digital integrity, online safety and compliance with our local laws.

The proposals address online harms including cyberbullying, online harassment, doxing, impersonation, defamation, fake profiles, deep fakes and harmful Gen AI contents, along with misinformation.

The proposed amendments provide for the establishment of a cybersecurity and cybercrime agency of Mauritius to coordinate cybersecurity and online safety functions and exercise specified regulatory enforcement powers and these would complement the efforts of the Mauritius Police Force, the proposed National Crime Agency and that of the Director of the Public Prosecutions and the courts.

The proposed framework will –

- establish procedures for reporting harmful content, requiring platforms to review qualified notices – the platforms would be Facebook, TikTok, among others.

- Provide reasoned responses and preserve relevant electronic evidence. In cases involving imminent serious harm, temporary restrictions on access to specified content may be imposed, subject to prescribed approval procedures and judicial safeguards.

- Access to specified subscriber information would remain subject to judicial authorisation and applicable legal requirements.

These amendments that have been proposed would clarify the responsibilities of content authors, the administrators of accounts and pages, the moderators and the platforms as well in a proportionate manner. Therefore, the obligations on these parties would be proportionate and penalties would be imposed for breaches, subject to procedural safeguards and appeal rights. Mechanisms to promote verifiable identities have also been considered to address the misuse of anonymous or fake accounts for harassment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, today, a lot of people think that once they are behind an anonymous account, they cannot be traced. To those people, I would tell them that now things

have changed. We have agreements with Meta and upon the right judicial process being followed, the names will be divulged should those fake accounts be used to cause harm online.

Government has requested Meta currently also not to implement anonymity on WhatsApp in Mauritius. This would have made it difficult for us to identify people involved in online harms, especially given the incidents that we just went through. Additional measures are also envisaged to strengthen child online safety including age assurance mechanisms and parental consent requirements for children under 16.

Government is also promoting responsible AI adoption through National Artificial Intelligence Strategy and the FAIR Guidelines, which was launched on 09 April this year. Existing legislation including the Data Protection Act continues to apply. We are also drafting an Electronic Management Bill which will be introduced in due course into the Parliament.

To strengthen institutional capacity, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and cooperation with online platforms, my Ministry engaged with the representatives of Meta, which is the owner of Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, on 06 and 07 October this year. Discussions with relevant public institutions and stakeholders addressed cyberbullying, online harassment, hate speech, scams, impersonation and child safety along with Gen AI content. Concerns were raised by parties who participated in the workshop about delays in responding to content removal requests and we do receive requests from many hon. Members of this House as well.

Following the engagement, a range of practical measures has been identified and these include – and I will be quick on this –

- standardising government requests for content removal and establishing escalation channels;
- strengthening rapid response cooperation between CERT-MU and the Cybercrime Unit operating under the Police;
- developing a local lexicon of offensive terms, and improving the consideration of Mauritian Creole and local culture context when moderation is at work.
- Improving reporting arrangements for impersonation, harassment and scams and pursuing the use of – there are two organisations that are global, they are NGOs. One is called StopNCII – Non-Consensual Intimate Images (NCII) –

and take it down. So, we are working with them now; we have started working with them in order to establish the protocol, and

- finally, developing longer term cooperation on Gen AI content and digital authenticity and digital well-being.

In conclusion, government remains committed to a balanced and effective framework that strengthens accountability and protection against online harms, promotes compliance with Mauritian laws and enhances cooperation with relevant partners, while also safeguarding the freedom of expression, privacy and the rule of law.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: You have a supplementary question, hon. Ms Collet?

Ms Collet: I have one supplementary question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Will the hon. Minister indicate to this House whether the framework and agreement with the online platform Meta includes the implementation of the Midnight Mode feature to enhance the protection of minors online, as is being implemented in the United States? Thank you.

Dr. Ramtohul: Thank you, hon. Member for this supplementary question. So, following an out-of-court-settlement within the US, several States of the US had actually complained to Meta about the algorithms that were being used to keep youngsters addicted to contents and there was an agreement that there would not be any notifications that would hit the mobile phones and the accounts of people under a certain age between midnight and 6.00 a.m. We will be requesting Meta to deploy that in Mauritius at the back of the required regulations.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. PQs B/1430 and B/1431 have been withdrawn.

The hon. Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill. Hon. Pierre!

NATIONAL INSURANCE COMPANY LTD – EARLY RETIREMENT SCHEME 2021 – TERMS & CONDITIONS

(No. B/1430) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning whether, in regard to the Early Retirement Scheme 2021 of the National Insurance Company Ltd. targeting employees aged

35+, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof who opted therefor and number thereof having been re-employed, indicating the –

- new terms and conditions thereof;
- total monthly staff costs in respect thereof;
- quantum of retirement benefits paid thereto, and
- number thereof having been promoted.

(Withdrawn)

OUTLINE PLANNING SCHEME – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT MAP – REVIEW

(No. B/1431) Mr R. Beechook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Outline Planning Scheme, he will state whether consideration will be given for a comprehensive revision thereof, particularly, the Development Management Map, with a view to ensuring equitable and sustainable zoning policies that take into account the specific needs and realities of both urban and rural areas.

(Withdrawn)

ARTIST BILL – PROPOSED INTRODUCTION

(No. B/1432) Mr S. Pierre (Third Member for Stanley & Rose-Hill) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of an Artist Bill in Parliament, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Gondeea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must first correct the premise of the hon. Member's question. At no stage has this Government proposed the introduction of a new Artist Bill. It is therefore regrettable that the question attributes to the government a proposal it has never made.

Nevertheless, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I shall respond to the substance of the question and provide the House with an update on the review of the existing Act and the preparation of the proposed amendments.

As I clearly explained in my reply to Parliamentary Question B/933 on 28 October 2025, my Ministry is undertaking a comprehensive review of the existing status of the Artist Act 2023 and this review forms part of our commitments under the Government Programme 2025-

2029. The legislation introduced by the previous government did not adequately reflect the realities of the artistic community it was intended to serve.

A legislative framework for artists must take proper account of how they work, the difficulties they face and the protection they need. This Government is committed to addressing those shortcomings through a thorough review, inform the people directly concerned. I am giving this exercise my close personal attention. Our objective is to establish a framework that provides meaningful professional recognition and adequately addresses concerns relating to social protection and working conditions. These matters affect the livelihoods and dignity of our artists and cultural workers and they require careful consideration.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a significant contribution to this review comes from the National Convention on Arts and Culture, which brought together many artists, cultural practitioners and other stakeholders from different disciplines. The consultations held in September and December 2025, including the session in Rodrigues, formed the part of this Convention. They provided an opportunity for participants to share their experiences, identify shortcomings and put forward proposals concerning the future of the sector. The inputs provided by artists during the Convention are being used to inform the review of the Act and the proposed amendments.

A first consolidated draft report on the consultations was completed in January 2026. This engagement continued through meetings with l'*Union des Artistes* in February and April 2026, following which, the union submitted formal proposal on 22 April 2026. These proposals are also being considered as part of the review.

Alongside this consultation process, my Ministry has pursued the necessary legal and technical examination of the proposed changes. On 06 July 2026, a consultative meeting was held at the State Law Office with representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations.

The State Law Office provided his legal assessment on 10 July 2026, while the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations recommended further consultations before amendment were introduced. On 04 September 2026, I personally chaired a meeting to examine the proposals received and review the issues requiring further attention. A further technical meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations was held on 07 October 2026 to refine the proposed amendments. This work is essential to ensuring that the revised

provisions are legally sound, practical to implement and responsive to the circumstances of artists and cultural workers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our artists deserve a legislation that recognises their contribution to the country, respects their profession and responds to their everyday realities. This is the standard guiding the review.

I remain fully committed to bringing this exercise to a meaningful conclusion. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Do you have a supplementary? Yes!

Mr Pierre: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I thank the hon. Minister for his very detailed answer. Thank you for moving it to the status of Artist Act, which indeed was the substance of my question. Will the hon. Minister confirm that the implementation of the Act is still a priority, as you mentioned in response to hon. Quirin, one year ago, in October 2025, to question B/933, that this was a priority? So, we are in October 2026. Will the hon. Minister confirm that the implementation of the Act is still a priority?

Mr Gondeea: Thank you, hon. Member. Yes, of course, it is our priority. We are still working on it. It will come in the days to come. Thank you.

Mr Pierre: Thank you. In the same answer, you mentioned that it was supposed to be an action plan to cover period 2025 to 2029. So, we are already at the end of 2026. So, two years. Can the hon. Minister give us an indication if there is any discussion with the SLO to have, at least, a roadmap or an indication on timing? Thank you.

Mr Gondeea: I already mentioned in my reply that we have already consulted the SLO and we are working on it. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. First Member for Vacoas and Floréal!

BEAUX-SONGES & PIERREFONDS – WATER SUPPLY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS – MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

(No. B/1433) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Memorandum of Agreement signed between Medine Limited and the Central Water Authority in 2024 for the development of water supply infrastructure and exploitation of boreholes in Beaux-Songes and Pierrefonds, he will

obtain information as to whether the Lease Agreement for six arpents of land at Beaux-Songes has been signed, where matters stand regarding the construction of service reservoirs, pumping stations and pipelines, and the expected date of operation thereof.

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, j'ai été informé par la Central Water Authority que la CWA avait signé un protocole d'accord avec Medine Limited le 19 juin 2024, quelques mois avant les élections, pour le développement proposé des infrastructures d'approvisionnement en eau à Beaux Songes, y compris des réservoirs de service pour le stockage d'eau extraite des forages dans la région de Beaux Songes.

M. le président, entre-temps, depuis 2020, les différents projets de Medine Smart City sont alimentés par le réseau existant de la CWA. J'ai été informé que conformément au protocole d'accord du 19 juin 2024, dans le cadre de sa contribution aux besoins en eau de son projet de smart city, Medine prévoyait de construire trois réservoirs de 12 000 m³ au total à Beaux Songes.

À cet effet, Medine Limited avait réservé un terrain de 8 arpents à Beaux Songes. Medine avait proposé de louer environ 6 arpents à la CWA pour ses besoins de planification générale. Je dois ajouter, M. le président, qu'à ce jour, Medine n'a construit aucune des infrastructures proposées ci-dessus.

L'article 1.2 du protocole d'accord de 2024 prévoyait la finalisation et la signature du contrat de location dans les deux mois suivant la signature du contrat. À défaut, le protocole d'accord serait caduc. Le contrat de location n'a jamais été signé. Donc, entre juin 2024, le deux mois après, le contrat n'avait toujours pas été signé. Et par conséquent, le protocole d'accord a expiré le 19 août 2024, juste avant les élections.

Entre-temps, la CWA m'a informé que Medine Limited a soumis un nouveau protocole d'accord le 18 août 2026. J'ai également été informé que le nouveau protocole d'accord présente certaines différences entre le nouveau et l'ancien et quelques incohérences par rapport au précédent. Le document actuel est examiné par la CWA et mon ministère. Un avis juridique sera également sollicité concernant les implications des dispositions du protocole d'accord sur le développement actuel et futur de la région en eau.

M. le président, suite à une visite du site de Medine Limited que j'ai effectuée le 14 septembre de cette année, le mois dernier, et compte tenu du problème d'approvisionnement en eau dans la région, il a été décidé que trois forages exploratoires réalisés par Medine seraient

repris par la CWA et que l'eau serait injectée dans le réseau d'eau existant de la CWA. Cela permettra d'approvisionner en eau les régions de Tamarin, de Black Rock, de Carlos, de Flic-en-Flac, de Palma, de Bambous, de Cité La Ferme, de Charlie et de Cité Beau Séjour.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes. Hon. Member!

Ms J. Bérenger: Je vous remercie. Mais est-ce que ces trois forages sont opérationnels?

Mr Assirvaden: Les trois forages sont opérationnels mais pas encore utilisés par le CEB. Ce n'est pas encore connecté sur le réseau du CEB.

Ms J. Bérenger: CEB?

The Deputy Speaker: CEB? CWA!

Mr Assirvaden: CWA, pardon. Par contre, Pierrefonds 1, qui est dans le projet de Medine, nous avons déjà pris en *borehole* avec Medine concernant autour de 5 000 m³ qui alimente la région de Flic-en-Flac, la région de Black River, et la région de Bambous. Donc, les trois forages vont être connectés incessamment sur notre réseau.

Mais je dirais qu'au même moment, il faut bien le préciser, que depuis 2020, nous fournissons de l'eau à la hauteur de 900 m³ par jour à des projets pour Medine Smart City, les projets de l'université Middlesex, les résidences étudiantes 1 et 2, SPARC, l'Île aux Enfants, Green Park, Oceanside, Bricolage, Artemis, les projets de la smart city. Depuis 2020, nous prenons de l'eau sur notre réseau pour alimenter la smart city.

En contrepartie, nous avons eu les *borehole*s de Pierrefonds qui sont en opération. Les trois autres *borehole*s que j'ai: le premier forage à Beaux Songes: 4 000 m³; le deuxième forage de Medine: 2 800 m³; le troisième forage de Beaux Songes: 2 800 m³ et 6 400 m³ pour alimenter Palma et Cité Beau Séjour.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Ms J. Bérenger: L'honorable ministre vient de nous informer que la CWA fournit l'eau à Medine pour sa smart city. Est-ce qu'il pourrait nous éclairer si cette eau était initialement destinée à l'agriculture et est maintenant destinée à ces besoins immobiliers? Si oui, est-ce que c'est le cas pour d'autres smart cities aussi?

Mr Assirvaden: Non, mais, M. le président, je dois ici saluer d'abord la coopération que nous avons avec Medine et le secteur privé en général. Dans la crise où nous sommes aujourd'hui, nous avons la collaboration du secteur privé.

Donc, l'eau que nous donnons à Medine Smart City, c'est *potable water*. Ce n'est pas de l'eau pour la plantation. Ce n'est pas *raw water.* C'est de l'eau que nous alimentons, par exemple, à Artemis et les autres projets de Medine: Île aux Enfants, l'école, le SPARC. C'est *potable water* que nous prenons sur notre réseau pour alimenter la smart city.

Mais au même moment en contrepartie, même si nous n'avons pas encore signé l'accord, on a rendez-vous avec Medine la semaine prochaine. Même si nous n'avons pas encore signé l'accord, l'échange se fait. On prend les *boreholes* qui alimentent notre réseau et en contrepartie nous donnons depuis 2020 le *potable water* à la *Smart City* de Médine.

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

MARTINIÈRE, SURINAM – STATE LAND – SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC PANELS INSTALLATION

(No. B/1434) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the plot of land of approximately seven arpents situated at Martinière, Surinam, he will –

(a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the District Council of Savanne, information as to the present use thereof, and
(b) state whether consideration will be given for the installation of solar photovoltaic panels thereon to promote renewable energy generation for the southern regions of Mauritius.

Mr Woochit: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I refer the hon. Member to my PQ B/601 on 05 May 2026. The land at Martinière, Surinam is a State land vested in my Ministry measuring six arpent and 59 perches. As regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the District Council of Savanne that approximately two arpent are presently being used as a temporary dumping site for green waste during the cyclonic season with the approval of the relevant authority. The remaining portion is not presently being used for any major development.

As regard to part (b) of the question, no request or proposal has to date been received from the District Council of Savanne, any councillor or any private developer for the

installation of solar photovoltaic panels on this site. I must also make it clear that the District Council of Savanne does not have the financial capacity to finance a solar project of this magnitude from its own resources. Such a project would require substantial capital investment, as well as necessary technical and regulatory clearances.

However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the proposal raised by the hon. Member is a commendable one and deserves due consideration particularly in the context of Government's policy to promote renewable energy and to cope with the increasing demand of energy during the hot season. I will, therefore, request the District Council of Savanne to formally submit a proposal to my Ministry following which it will be referred to the Ministry of Finance for funding requirements. If necessary funding is available, then the Council will proceed with the required feasibility and technical studies and will seek necessary clearances from relevant authorities including the Central Electricity Board. Subject to these approvals the Council may then proceed with the implementation of this project.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Member.

Mr Jugurnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to mention that every day till now there is illegal dumping on that site…

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

Mr Jugurnauth: Will the hon. Minister will consider to fence that site? Thank you.

Mr Woochit: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are aware of this site. Regular cleaning is being done and bollards, even boulders, have been put on the way to prevent the lorries to come and to dump over there, and we have already made the requirements before the budget 2026. So, we have a funding problem.

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

BUDGET 2026-2027 – PUBLIC SERVICE FACILITIES – MODERNISATION – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/1435) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms whether, in regard to the modernisation of public service facilities announced in the Budget 2026–2027, he will state where matters stand, indicating the –

(a) amount budgeted therefor and the actual expenditure incurred to date, and

(b) expected implementation timeframe therefor.

Mr Pentiah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I first thank the hon. Member for her question.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I presume that the hon. Member is referring to measures aimed at modernising the public service and improving the efficiency and quality of public service delivery. In this regard, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry is pursuing a series of major reforms aimed at strengthening governance, institutional efficiency, capacity building, digital transformation, and citizen-centric service delivery.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to highlight the main initiatives being undertaken by my Ministry. My Ministry is finalising the strategic framework for public service and administration reforms, which is to be launched in the weeks to come. It will, for the first time in the history of public service of this country, provide a comprehensive roadmap for transforming the public service into a more efficient, transparent, accountable, agile, and citizen-centric institution. Aligned with the Government Programme 2025-2029 and the National Digital Transformation Blueprint by my colleague Minister, it will promote a whole of Government approach to reform with emphasis on institutional coordination, innovation, digital transformation, streamlining of administrative processes, and improved public service delivery while reducing bureaucratic hurdles which often result in considerable time and delay.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one of the key measures of this Government and my Ministry is the introduction of a comprehensive Public Sector Reform Bill to establish a stronger legislative and institutional framework for public service governance and administration. It was a decade before when Dr. the hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam was Prime Minister that his Government initiated the reform of public service. Then we all know what happened, for a decade that reform was buried in a drawer somewhere in the Ministry.

This Government, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is committed to realising the long-awaited reform of the public sector of our country. The Public Sector Reform Bill is ready to be drafted and my Ministry is issuing instructions to the Attorney General's Office for same to be done. This Bill will reflect the contributions of NGOs, public service users, trade unions, federations, academics, lawyers, public officers, private sector and this will reflect what they contributed through consultation with them. The proposed legislation will seek to strengthen legal foundation, promote consistency in the application of public service policies and standards,

and reinforce transparency of everything, accountability, which is vital and performance management while making it mandatory for training, capacity building, safety and health and welfare of public officers, of course.

Moreover, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, two bodies having statutory powers will be set up to fast track procedures in the case of interdicted officers, to enable disposal of the case within a specified time frame, which is going to be in line with the provisions of the Industrial Relations Act, that is comparable to the private sector, which is going to be done within weeks, not years and months as it is done presently. Besides it, a separate body will be set up for conciliation…

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, all these bodies, they will be in the Bill?

Mr Pentiah: Of course.

The Deputy Speaker: You will have an opportunity to tell us what is the Bill when you present the Bill.

Mr Pentiah: Thank you. The question was asked…

The Deputy Speaker: Do not go in details about the Bill now.

Mr Pentiah: At the end, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir…

The Deputy Speaker: You just say that you are going to come with a Bill, the objectives of the Bill, that is it. Do not go in details about the Bill.

Mr Pentiah: Yes, at the end, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I please point out that my Ministry has been working not only with India, but with Egypt, Singapore, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom, it started working with Australia as well, to streamline and to ensure capacity building and training overseas.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the last budget provided for the institutions of Reform and Innovation Units (RIU) in all Ministries. My Ministry is developing a strategy to build in each Ministry a grievance desk in line with what is being done with other administrative processes in other countries. The grievance desk will address the grievance of each citizen on a daily basis and address them within a span of two to three weeks to answer to the grievance.

An hon. Member: Amen.

Mr Pentiah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I pray together with you, hon. Member of the House, and I hope you and I will smile together…

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question.

Mr Pentiah: …as you are smiling now when we complete it.

Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the end, I may…

(Interruptions)

If you allow me, please, kindly.

At the end, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the first time, there is going to be as of tomorrow, for three days, an international conference on public service administration and public finance. I am pleased to inform the House that not less than 75 papers are going to be presented in that conference. We have representations from India, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Uganda…

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

Mr Pentiah: …South Africa, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Uruguay, and Egypt.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, you have answered the question.

Mr Pentiah: In the end, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I hope I have answered the question of the hon. Member, unless there is any other enlightenment. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Ms Daureeawo!

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: Yes, could the hon. Minister state what provisions are being made to ensure that the modernised facilities are accessible to elderly persons, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups?

Mr Pentiah: I am sorry, I did not follow the question. Could you, please, kindly repeat?

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: Could you, please, confirm whether provisions will be made to ensure that those modernised facilities, or whatever reforms you have been referring to, are accessible to all vulnerable groups, including elderly persons and people with disabilities?

Mr Pentiah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to begin with, all new buildings being constructed in the public service have access for people with disabilities. A good example is the Atal Bihari Vajpayee, where we have made provisions for all officers on wheelchairs to have complete access through a lift. We are trying to do the same and have ramps in places of public office.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Second Member for Flacq Bon Accueil!

ITET – OFFICER-IN-CHARGE – QUALIFICATIONS & REMUNERATION

(No. B/1436) Mr R. Beechook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the Officer in Charge of the Institute of Technical Education and Technology, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the substantive grade thereof, indicating the –

(a) academic and professional qualifications thereof;

(b) quantum of the remuneration, allowances and other benefits attached to the post, and

(c) criteria governing the appointment thereof and the rationale therefor.

Dr. Gungapersad: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to thank the hon. Member for this question on the Institute of Technical Education and Technology, commonly known as the ITET.

It is good for the House to know that the ITET was set up in January 2022 to provide technical and technology education in line with the current and future needs of the economy. The ITET is presently headed by a Director and 25 staff. The Director was appointed on 13 October 2025. However, he had to proceed urgently on sick leave for medical treatment from 21 July 2026 to 24 September 2026. Fortunately, the Director resumed work on 25 September 2026.

It was during the medical leave of the Director that the Technical Education Centre Executive of the ITET, the senior-most officer in grade after the Director, was assigned the duties of Officer-in-Charge of the institution to ensure managerial continuity of all ongoing

activities and oversee the day-to-day running thereof for administrative convenience by the board.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that the Technical Education Centre Executive holds a degree in Management with Finance.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am further informed that as at date, no allowance has yet been disbursed to the Technical Education Centre Executive for the assignment of duties as Officer-in-Charge from 21 July 2026 to 24 September 2026. He will however be paid allowances in line with circular letter dated 06 September 2022 from the Secretary of the Public Service. The amount to be released stands at Rs25,600 monthly, therefore amounting to Rs51,200 for the two months, including the pay component.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (c) of the question, as already mentioned earlier, the Officer-in-Charge was designated to replace the Director for administrative convenience. During the absence of the Director, the Officer-in-Charge ensured the following, and I need to mention it –

(i) The delivery of winter short courses for some 417 secondary students in different courses.

(ii) The preparation of 15 award courses at NCE Level 3, 4 and 5 for the intake in January 2027.

(iii) The accreditation of nine non-award courses.

(iv) The preparation of short-term courses targeted for secondary school students.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to place on record that the ITET was dormant since its creation in 2022. No courses had been developed and delivered before that. With the appointment of the new Director, several courses have been developed and activities are ongoing at the ITET.

To conclude, I wish to thank the Officer-in-Charge for the good work carried out, and wish the Director good health and hope he continues with his good work.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, supplementary, hon. Beechook!

Mr Beechook: The question I had asked, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is: what is the substantive grade of the person, Mr K.B., who is acting as Officer-in-Charge during the absence of the Director?

Dr. Gungapersad: I answered it. During the absence of the Director, we had an Officer-in-Charge, the senior-most officer, who was the Centre Manager, and was allocated this responsibility, and for that he got Rs25,600 for one month. Is that it?

Mr Beechook: Is he an Office Management Assistant? Is that the specific grade of his employment?

Dr. Gungapersad: No, he was given that amount for assuming that responsibility as per a circular dated 06 September 2022 from the Secretary for Public Service. This guides how much you have to give them. There is a circular.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill!

PLEASURE CRAFT LICENCES – APPLICATION & PROCESSING TIME FRAME

(No. B/1437) Mr S. Pierre (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to Pleasure Craft Licences, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tourism Authority, information as to –

(a) whether applications therefor are still being entertained, and

(b) the current waiting time for the processing and issuance of new licences and renewals thereof.

Mr R. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in reply to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Tourism Authority that it is still entertaining applications for pleasure craft licences. I am also informed that for the period of January to August 2026, a total of 3,550 applications has been received at the Tourism Authority as follows –

- Private: 70;
- Commercial:7,
- Renewal of private commercial pleasure craft licences: 2,299;

- Variation/Change of ownership: 1,074.

A total of 3,450.

Out of the 3,450 applications received, 2,994 licences, more than 80%, have been issued, while 362 applications are still under process due to incomplete documentation or awaiting survey.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the current waiting time for the processing of the issuance of new licences for variation and change of ownership is 21 days, subject to all conditions being satisfactorily met, including the submission of all the required documents and valid survey report. As regards the renewal of the pleasure craft licences, such applications are processed at the counter of the authority on the same day, subject to all mandatory documents being submitted by the applicant and valid survey report.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Economic Development Board is assisting the Tourism Authority in its e-Licensing Project, which will be hosted on the National Electronic Licensing System (NELS). The process of the licensing procedure supports national digital transformation objectives and aims to promote efficient and transparent service delivery at the Tourism Authority.

The project comprises the development of several modules, namely pleasure craft licences (private and commercial), tourist enterprise licence, Tourist Accommodation Certificate and certificate of Skipper's Licence. The e-licensing system for private and commercial pleasure craft licences is expected to be operational by the end of November 2026. The development of the other modules is still in progress.

The e-licensing system, once fully operational, will therefore reduce the lead time of processing of applications for licences, also improving user experience and database management.

The Deputy Speaker: You have a supplementary?

Mr Pierre: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I thank the Minister for his answer.

La *Tourism Authority* a émis un communiqué pour lever le gel des licences en septembre 2026. Le ministre pourrait-il informer la Chambre sur l'avant-septembre 2026, c'est-à-dire le dégel – si le ministre a l'information ou s'il peut communiquer à la Chambre plus tard –, sur le nombre de licences délivrées, et dans quelles circonstances ces licences ont été délivrées avant le dégel ? Merci.

Mr R. Duval: Non, j'e n'ai pas cette information là, mais je peux *table* avec plaisir.

Mr Pierre: Une dernière question; je vais essayer de les mettre dans la même question. Il y a eu des contestations de la Fédération des plaisanciers concernant l'étude de la capacité de nos lagons. Il y a, semble-t-il, une confusion.

L'honorable ministre pourrait-il clarifier est-ce que cette étude a déjà été effectuée ou, puisque la *Tourism Authority* aussi mentionne qu'elle se réserve le droit de délivrer des licences à l'issue de cette étude. Donc, est-ce que cette étude a été délivrée, terminée – l'étude de la capacité des lagons puisque c'est ce que conteste la Fédération des plaisanciers concernant la saturation de nos lagons et les infrastructures?

Merci l'honorable ministre.

Mr R. Duval: Valeur du jour, je dois dire, *Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,* je n'ai pas eu de requête de FOPCO. Mais pour revenir à ce que vous venez de me dire, honorable membre, je dois dire qu'il y avait un rapport *which was conducted by the United Nations Development Programme* en 2022 et 2023 et ce rapport dit qu'il fallait absolument et je cite ce qu'il dit –

"United Nation Development Programme, a project commissioned by the Ministry, study to be conducted on carrying capacity of the lagoon."

Ils disent dedans que *it is going to monitor the maritime traffic inside the lagoon, prevent from being overloaded and the pressure of tourist coastal activities.*

Basé sur ce rapport, je dois dire que nous sommes venus à la conclusion qu'on a identifié 10 lagons, *10 lagoon cells where additional commercial craft could be accommodated.* Il y a un total de 14 *Embarkation Points (EP*) that are concerned. Dans les 14, il y aura 10 qui ont été identifiés et je vais les les nommer –

- Bain des dames;
- Bel ombre;

- Belmare;
- Case Noyale;
- Cap Malheureux;
- Grand Gaube;
- Pointe Bambou;
- Pointe Jérôme.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Mr Pierre: Juste pour clarifier, la question, M. le président. En fait ma question c'était le dégel intervient, monsieur l'honorable ministre mentionne que suite aux arrivées touristiques qui est en hausse, ce qui est vrai, et aussi une étude de la capacité de nos lagons.

Donc ces deux éléments qui motivent la décision du gouvernement pour lever le gel et c'est ce que conteste – c'est partout dans la presse – la Fédération des plaisanciers sur ce dégel. Ma question est justement sur cette étude de la capacité de nos lagons. Est-ce qu'il y a une étude en cours puisque la *Tourism Authority* mentionne cette étude à la base de l'étude de la capacité de nos lagons et la *Tourism Authority* se réserve aussi le droit de refuser tout permis à l'issue de cette étude.

Ma question est: est-ce qu'il y a une étude ou elle sera…

The Deputy Speaker: Is there a study or not?

Mr R. Duval: Actuellement, il y a un survey de la *Tourism Authority*, je dois dire. Mais il faut bien comprendre, pour dire à l'honorable membre, entre le rapport que je viens de citer, c'est-à-dire le *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)* et maintenant, nous avons eu une augmentation de 400,000 touristes de plus. C'est pour cela qu'il est impératif pour nous de revenir et de revoir tout le système.

The Deputy Speaker: One last question on this issue.

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, M. le président. L'honorable ministre peut-il indiquer à la Chambre s'il y a eu au cours de cette année une augmentation du nombre de demandes relatives aux bateaux de plaisance traité par la *Tourism Authority,* et dans l'affirmative, fournir les chiffres. Je vous remercie, M. le président.

Mr R. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, pour 2024, ce que j'ai comme application: 290 applications qui sont passées devant le *Licensing Committee;* 834 ont été traitées administrativement. Donc, un total de 1124. En ce qu'il s'agit de 2025: 705 cas sont passés devant le L*icensing Committee* et 252 ont été traités administrativement, soit un total de 957.

En ce qu'il s'agit de la période de janvier jusqu'au 26 octobre 2026, M. le président, 2357 cas ont été traités par la le L*icensing Committ*ee et 132 administratifs, donc un total, tenez-vous bien, M. le président, 2489. C'est un record pour la *Tourism Authority*.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question.

Ms J. Bérenger: Je vous remercie. L'honorable ministre a fait référence à une étude, il a cité s des morceaux de cette étude, est-ce qu'il pourrait la rendre publique s'il vous plaît ?

Mr R. Duval: Je le ferai avec plaisir.

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

CONSTITUENCY NO. 18 – SPORTING ACTIVITIES – YOUTH PARTICIPATION – PROGRAMMES & INITIATIVES

(No. B/1438) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the promotion and development of sports in Constituency No. 18, Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes, he will state the programmes and/or initiatives being envisaged to encourage greater youth participation in sporting activities thereat, giving details thereof.

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government remains fully committed to encouraging greater youth participation in sporting activities in Mauritius.

To that endeavour, my Ministry is implementing a series of ongoing programmes and initiatives in the region of Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes. The sporting activities and programme that are run in the Constituency No. 18 are as follows –

- Inter College Sports Competition;
- Kids in Action;
- École de natation;
- Natation scolaire;
- École de foot

- Centre technique régional de football;
- École de boxe;
- École d'athlétisme, *and*
- Aquathérapie *and aqua gym session.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the sporting infrastructure in the Constituency is actively used by the public and by clubs as detailed below –

- Le Pavilion swimming pool;
- Multi-Use Game Area, that is MUGA, La Source, and
- Daniel Imbert Sports Complex.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Sport Hub Programme will be launched by the Mauritius Sports Council at the Multi-Use Game Area, La Source, in January 2027. It will serve as a community-based centre where residents, particularly children and young people may register and take part in structured sport activities. The sport proposed for the initial phase are badminton, table tennis, boxing and judo. The programme aims to promote regular participation in sports, encourage talent identification and provide a pathway towards club and federation participation.

The Sports Promotion Division of the Mauritius Sports Council will also run a sport medicine and healthy lifestyle awareness sessions targeting secondary school students, including those from –

- Belle Rose State Secondary School;
- Dr. Regis Chaperon State Secondary School;
- Gaetan Raynal State College;
- Quatre Bornes State Secondary School;
- Sodnac State Secondary School, and
- other educational institutions serving the region.

These sessions will cover sport medicine, injuries prevention, recovering technique, healthy nutrition, balanced eating habits and the importance of an active lifestyle so as to equip young people with the knowledge to maintain good health, improve their sport participation and prevent injuries.

The Mauritius Sports Council will continue to organise holiday sport activities during school holidays, providing children and young people with opportunities to take part in

structured sport and recreational activities within the Constituency No. 18. The hon. Member may also wish to know that a Christmas Carol Sports Day is also planned. This event will combine sport activities with festive celebration to encourage community participation, family engagement and healthy lifestyle during the holiday season.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to also point out that in my reply to a Parliamentary Question 20 October 2026, I informed the House that as from 01 November 2026, access will be provided free of charge to 13 regional sports facilities including the Daniel Imbert Sports Complex.

In addition, a contract has been awarded recently for the preventive maintenance of Pavillon Swimming Pool. However, the swimming pool remain operational during the period maintenance work will be carried out. These measures, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, demonstrate Government's sustained effort to promote and develop sports in Constituency No. 18 and other constituencies as well to encourage greater youth participation in sports activities thereat.

Ms Anquetil: J'ai deux questions.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, we are waiting.

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, M. le président. Je remercie le ministre pour sa réponse.

Would the hon. Minister inform the House whether his Ministry is considering the introduction of a scheme to assist children and young people from low-income families with the provision of basic sports equipment, including appropriate sports shoes and clothing to enable them to participate in sporting activities? I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Nagalingum: I will surely look into the matter. It is not very easy to come with a plan because we have 20 constituencies. So, if there is need to do something in Constituency No. 18 in specific places, we are going to put head together with all MPs.

Ms Anquetil: Je remercie l'honorable ministre au nom, bien sûr, des jeunes de Belle Rose-Quatre Bornes pour ces belles initiatives.

Can the hon. Minister provide information regarding the project '*Anou Transform Nou Landrwa*' in Constituency No. 18? Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is implementing the '*Anou Transform Nou Landrwa*' Project in several regions in the island. The aim of which to expose residents, especially the youth, to sport and leisure activities as well as to bring sustainable transformation in the community grappling with various social challenges.

The objective is to identify young talents and guide them towards sports, school and technical training, enabling them to fully develop their potential. I, therefore, kindly invite the hon. Member and other elected members of the constituency to come up with a proposal to organise such event in their constituencies at any time.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Fouth Member for Rodrigues!

SADC PROTOCOL ON ENERGY – MAURITIUS' POSITION

(No. B/1439) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Southern African Development Community Protocol on Energy, he will state whether Mauritius has signed the 2021 amended version thereof and, if not, why not.

Mr Ramful: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the SADC Protocol on Energy was signed and ratified by Mauritius on 24 August and 11 October 1996, respectively. It entered into force regionally on 17 April 1998. The SADC Protocol intends to promote the harmonious development of national energy policies and matters of common interest for the balanced and equitable development of energy throughout the SADC region.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, an agreement amending the SADC Protocol on Energy was approved and tabled for signature by the SADC Summit of Head of States and Government in August 2021.

To date, 10 SADC Member States have signed the agreement, which came into force on 17 August 2025. The rationale for the review of the protocol on energy was based on the need to eliminate inconsistencies, correcting inadequacies, capturing emerging institutional reforms and promoting private sector participation in infrastructure development.

Additionally, various sections of the protocol were outdated and needed to be amended in line with emerging issues, such as the establishment of the SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, which did not exist at the time the protocol was adopted. The

protocol has also been reviewed to align it with provisions of the Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan.

Mauritius has not yet signed the agreement. Consultations are ongoing with the relevant ministries, institutions and stakeholders to assess the legal, institutional, policy and other implications of the agreement amending the SADC Protocol, including the obligations that may arise for Mauritius' signature and subsequent ratification where applicable.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government considers it is important to complete this assessment before taking a decision. Accordingly, no final decision has been taken at this stage. The matter will be considered further once the consultations and assessments are completed. My Ministry will continue to work closely with the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities regarding the consultations for the signature of the agreement. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Edouard!

Mr Edouard: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Minister whether our failure to sign the amended version has impacted Mauritius' diplomatic standing within the SADC energy cluster?

Mr Ramful: I am not aware of any such impact on our diplomatic relation with the SADC Member States.

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

FOND DU SAC – DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/1440) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the drainage infrastructure at Fond du Sac, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of new drains earmarked for construction during the current financial year, indicating –

(a) the locations thereof and implementation timeframe therefor. and

(b) whether the proposed works are expected to adequately address the flooding problems in the high-risk areas thereof.

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that during the current financial year 2026-2027, my Ministry is pursuing two drain projects in the region of Fond du Sac,

namely one project for the completion of outstanding drainage works under phase one and another project involving preliminary investigative works under phase two.

With regard to part (a) of the question at Fond du Sac, the project for the completion of outstanding drainage works under phase one is currently at the evaluation stage. As per the implementation schedule, construction is expected to start in January 2027 and be completed by August 2027.

As regards phase two of the project, which concerns the construction of the final discharge outlet from major drain at Fond du Sac, a consultant has been appointed for design. Bids for investigative works have been launched on 24 September 2026 with closing date of 29 October 2026. The investigative works are expected to be undertaken between February and May 2027. The timeframe for construction will be determined following completion of the necessary preparatory stages, including detailed design and land acquisition.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, the proposed drainage interventions are intended to improve storm water evacuation, alleviate water accumulation and reduce the risk of flooding in the area concerned. As such, the completion of outstanding drain networks is expected to bring improvements in flood mitigation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that other flood prone flood prone locations are being examined. These include a proposed absorption drain along a lateral of Topize Road, Grand Baie, a proposed cut off drain at the junction of Royal Road and Subash Chandra Bose Road, Fond du Sac, and flood mitigation measures along Forbach Road, Fond du Sac.

These proposals are currently being assessed by the Land Drainage Authority under the aegis of my Ministry. It is, therefore, important to recognise that while the programme works are expected to alleviate flooding at the locations concerned, they form part of a broader and progressive approach to flood mitigation.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Beejan!

Mr Beejan: Thank you, Deputy Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether he will undertake to convene a coordination meeting at the soonest possible with all relevant authorities to establish a common action plan for drain project in Constituency No. 6, Grand Baie-Poudre d'Or with clearly assigned responsibilities and deadlines?

Mr Gunness: The hon. Member knows that I normally practice an open door policy. So, it is with much pleasure that we can convene a meeting with all MPs and councillors, district councillors and village councillors in the weeks to come.

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

LA LOUISE, QUATRE BORNES – FLOOD ALLEVIATION WORKS

(No. B/1441) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the proposed implementation of flood alleviation works at La Louise in Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand, indicating –

(a) whether the necessary approvals and funding have been secured therefor, and

(b) the expected start and completion dates thereof.

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in my reply to PQ B/653 at the Sitting of 12 May 2026, I highlighted that the project at La Louise is very complex in nature, thereby necessitating a comprehensive and detailed study of the technical, hydraulic environmental and other relevant aspects to ensure its proper planning and implementation.

I am informed that an initial proposal was formulated for the construction of a gravity drain from La Louise to Rivière Rempart at an estimated cost of Rs5.4 billion. However, in view of the prevailing economic constraints, the Land Drainage Authority conveyed its approval on 09 February 2026 to proceed with alternative mitigation measures, namely –

(a) the construction of 1,200 metres absorption drains along Lal Bahadur Shastri Street and Boundary Road;
(b) the construction of a retention pond of 220 metres length by 220 metres width over a height of two metres at Morcellement Dookun to accommodate the overflow of water from the absorption drains;
(c) the conversion of the existing 1,000 metres drains into upsized absorption drains extending from La Paix Street to the junction at La Louise along Candos-Vacoas Road, and
(d) the construction of 300 metres drains along SSR Road and in the vicinity of Winners.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, given the site constraints within the densely populated regions and particularly with the presence of buried services, geotechnical investigations warranting 34 trial pits have to be carried out before finalising the scope of the drainage works. I am informed that necessary clearances pertaining to wayleave permission from the land owners of Morcellement Dookun are awaited. Bidding documents for the investigative works have already been prepared and would be invited after securing the necessary wayleave from the land owners.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, the funding for the investigative works will be met from funds earmarked for projects under preparation.

As regards part (b), the investigative works are expected to start by end of April 2027 for a duration of eight weeks. The RDA would thereafter be instructed to initiate preparatory works for the conversion of the existing 1,000 metres drain into upsized absorption drains extending from La Paix Street to junction at La Louise along Candos-Vacoas Road as phase two of the project.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me reassure the hon. Member that the implementation of flood mitigation measures in the region of La Louise, Quatre Bornes, is a major project which is being closely monitored.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Member.

Ms Anquetil: *Merci, M. le president*. Further to his reply dated 12 May 2026, where the Minister stated that the tender documents for the drain network at Résidence Beau Séjour were ready for implementation by the NDU and that tenders would be launched by 15 July 2026, subject to financial clearance, can we know the current status of this project? Thank you.

Mr Gunness: In fact, the main question refers to La Louise, and I understand now the question is about Résidence Beau Séjour. So, I will provide the information because it is not in the main question.

The Deputy Speaker: Do you have another one for La Louise?

Ms Anquetil: I have got a second one. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. For the project of La Louise, can we know where matters stand for the proposed construction of absorption drains along – the Minister just stated – Lal Bahadur Shastri Street and Boundary

Street, La Paix Street up to junction at La Louise, along Candos-Vacoas Road and along SSR Road in the vicinity of Winners Candos? Thank you.

Mr Gunness: I think in my main answer, I gave all the details. We have 34 trial pits. I even gave the timeframe when the investigative works, tender documents, etc., have been prepared. Anyway, the investigative works are starting next year. We have eight weeks of investigative works which will end April 2027. And then, we have to get the wayleave for the land from Morcellement Dookun. Once we get the wayleave, then we will float the bids and we will appoint a contractor, we will issue works order because we cannot start the works if we do not get the discharge point where the absorption basin will be constructed.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Third Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien!

MAHEBOURG WATERFRONT – RENOVATION, REPAIR & EMBELLISHMENT

(No. B/1442) Mr C. Lukeeram (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Mahebourg Waterfront, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

(a) where matters stand regarding the renovation, repair and embellishment works planned/being undertaken thereat, indicating the –

  (i) progress made for the rehabilitation of the steel jetty, and

  (ii) expected timeframe for the completion and re-opening thereof, and

(b) the measures being envisaged to prevent cars and motorcycles from using the designated pedestrian areas thereof, including the carrying out of regular police controls thereat.

Mr Woochit: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government is fully aware of the deteriorated condition of the steel jetty at the Mahebourg Waterfront, which remains closed for public safety reasons. During my site visit in April this year, I noted that the jetty is beyond repairs and will have to be demolished and replaced by a new structure which is suitable for the marine environment. The District Council of Grand Port prepared a project proposal with a cost estimate of around Rs25 million and a request for funding was made to the Ministry of Finance before the annual budget exercise. However, funding for this project was not allocated.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are aware that the jetty is presently an eyesore and also a matter of safety. My Ministry will again make a request to the Ministry of Finance for funds and until and unless necessary funding is approved, the expected time frame for the completion and reopening of the jetty, actually, cannot be provided. In the meantime, the District Council is carrying out regular maintenance and safety works along the waterfront, which include *inter alia* repairs of damageed street lighting, painting. Bollards and chains have also been installed to prevent cars and motorcycles to have access to pedestrians. I am also informed that Police patrols are being carried out on a regular basis.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to invite the hon. Member also to bring to the attention of the Chief Executive of the District Council any particular issues noted at the waterfront so that appropriate action may be taken accordingly. I would nevertheless like to inform the House that our immediate priority remains the safety of the waterfront until we get the necessary funding for the replacement of the jetty.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Lukeeram?

Mr Lukeeram: Will the hon. Minister please inform the House when was the project proposal sent to Finance?

Mr Woochit: In fact, on two occasions, we asked for finance to the Ministry of Finance. One was last year and and this year before the budget maybe in April-May.

Mr Lukeeram: Could the hon. Minister please inform the House why is it that a timeframe cannot be given to the House?

Mr Woochit: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if we do not have the funding, how can we procure for this project? Once you procure, you can have several requests. So, by this way you can know what will be the exact amount that has been earmarked and then we can go ahead with the procurement, with the time frame also.

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

RAINY/CYCLONIC SEASONS 2026-2027 – WATER DRAINAGE SYSTEMS – INSPECTION, CLEANING & CLEARING

(No. B/1443) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the rainy/cyclonic seasons 2026-2027,

he will state the measures taken/envisaged together with the Land Drainage Authority, Road Development Authority and local authorities, for inspection, cleaning and clearing of drains, culverts, roadside water passages, canals and rivers, indicating the extent, locations and number thereof –

(a) cleaned and cleared to date, and

(b) remaining to be cleaned and cleared.

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the inspection, cleaning, clearing and desilting of drains, culverts, roadside water passages, canals and rivers is an ongoing process undertaken by the local authorities under the supervision of the Land Drainage Authority of my Ministry. For its part, the Road Development Authority undertakes cleaning of drains along the motorways and main roads, including culverts, bridges and roadside water passages. This exercise is not limited solely to the period preceding the rainy and cyclonic seasons.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with a view to effectively implementing the maintenance programme, the following measures have been taken –

(a) implementation of a maintenance plan by the LDA. The plan provides for a first round of cleaning from August to December and a further round from January to March;
(b) regular inspection of existing drainage infrastructure to identify obstructions, accumulation of silt, debris, vegetation and other materials likely to impede the free flow of storm water;
(c) identification and prioritisation of critical locations, particularly in flood prone areas for timely maintenance and remedial interventions;
(d) focus meeting by the LDA with the RDA and local authorities, and
(e) continued monitoring and follow-up interventions as and when required, particularly following episodes of heavy rainfall which may result in fresh accumulation of silt, debris and other obstructions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with a view to strengthening preparedness for the forthcoming rainy and cyclonic seasons, I chaired a coordination meeting, on 24 September 2026, at the Municipal Council of Port Louis, in the presence of both the hon. Minister and the Junior Minister of Local Government, representatives of the LDA, local authorities, Police Department, National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre, and other relevant

authorities. The purpose of the meeting was to review the preparedness, take stock of the cleaning and desilting activities, and reinforce coordination among the concerned authorities with emphasis on the timely implementation of necessary interventions ahead of the rainy season.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that despite the prevailing economic situation, an amount of Rs125 million has been allocated for the financial year 2026-2027. Part of this amount will be used for payment of outstanding claims for works carried out during the last financial year 2025-2026. Furthermore, I am informed that an additional amount of Rs196.5 million has been made available yesterday, 26 October 2026, for the cleaning of drains and desilting of rivers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the second part of the question, I am informed that today, a total of some 359.7 km of drains have been cleaned, whilst cleaning works covering around 135 km remain to be undertaken. In respect of rivers and watercourses, the local authorities have undertaken desilting works over a total length of around 107.7 km with a further 137.6 km remaining to be desilted.

As regards drains falling under the purview of the RDA, cleaning works have been completed over a total length of some 65.8 km, while an additional 71 km are scheduled to be cleaned during the current financial year.

With regard to the details requested by the hon. Member, I am tabling the requested information.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, despite regular interventions, it has been observed that dumping of household waste, plastic materials, construction debris and other refuse into drains, culverts, canals and rivers remain a major cause of concern. I, therefore, seize this opportunity to make an appeal to the general public to act responsibly and to refrain from throwing waste and other materials into our drainage infrastructure, rivers and watercourses, and also, to report cases of illegal dumping. Keeping our drains and rivers clean is a shared responsibility and civic duty. A clean drain not only protects infrastructure, but can save lives and properties.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to assure the House that my Ministry, together with the LDA, RDA, local authorities, and other stakeholders, will continue to give priority to the cleaning, clearing and maintenance of drainage infrastructure as well as the implementation of

appropriate flood mitigation measures with a view to enhancing preparedness and safeguarding the population during the forthcoming rainy and cyclonic seasons. In the same vein, the LDA has devised a communication campaign to sensitise the public at large, which is targeted to start early next month.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière!

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE – PESTICIDE RESIDUE ANALYSIS (MAY-JUNE 2026) – FINDINGS

(No. B/1444) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to vegetables/agricultural products, he will obtain from the Pesticides Regulatory Office, information as to the number of pesticide residue analyses carried out for period May to June 2026, indicating –

(a) the number thereof which –

(i) exceeded the prescribed Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs), and

(ii) contained non-recommended pesticide residues;

(b) the locations from which the samples were collected, and

(c) whether the growers, suppliers or distributors whose products exceeded the prescribed MRLs have been identified and, if so, indicate the findings thereof.

The Minister of Health and Wellness (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to parliamentary questions B/1445, B/1453, and B/1473 together as they relate to the same subject matter.

The issue of misuse of pesticides is a matter of great concern for this country, and we need the collaboration...

The Deputy Speaker: Sorry, can you repeat the three questions?

Mr Bachoo: B/1445.

The Deputy Speaker: B/1445?

Mr Bachoo: I am sorry. B/1444, B/1453 and B/1473.

The Deputy Speaker: B/1445 has nothing to do with pesticides.

Mr Bachoo: B/1444, B/1452, and B/1472. I am sorry.

With your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I shall reply to these questions.

The issue of misuse of pesticides is a matter of concern for this country, and we need the collaboration of all stakeholders, including farmers to ensure food safety. The use and control of pesticides are governed by the Use of Pesticides Act 2018.

This Act also made provision for the setting up of a Pesticides Regulatory Office which regulates, controls and monitors the use of pesticides in or on any agricultural produce. This office collects samples of local fresh agricultural produce for pesticide residue analysis and the report is published on the website of the Ministry. At the time of the setting up of the Pesticides Regulatory Office in 2018, there were three officers posted thereat. Presently, this office is manned by seven staff.

Since the setting up of the Pesticides Regulatory Office, 5,532 samples have been collected and analysed. For the months of May and June 2026, of a total of 78 samples collected from farm gates, auction sales and supermarkets for analysis purposes, seven samples exceeded the maximum residue limits and 34 with non-recommended pesticide residues. These samples were collected in various regions across the island and pesticide residue tests are carried out by registered local and overseas accredited laboratories.

The growers, suppliers and distributors whose agricultural produce exceeded the maximum residue limits set out by FAO and WHO have been identified. 32 Improvement notices were accordingly issued to them under section 9(2) of the Use of Pesticides Act 2018. In parallel, the results were shared with FAREI for field visits and provision of technical advice to these non-compliant farmers on the judicious use of pesticides. I am tabling the list.

I wish to inform the House that the Use of Pesticides Act 2018 was amended by the then government through the Finance Act 2022 with a view to verifying that agricultural produce that are consumed will be subject to pesticide residue control and allow for the updating of the list of produced pesticides and maximum level of pesticide residue through regulations. The list of recommended pesticides prescribed in the First Schedule to the Act was removed. This

amendment was proclaimed in 2022 without any accompanying regulation, thus leaving a legislative gap.

To address this gap, four draft regulations have now been prepared with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme under the Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-Chemical Development in Small Island Developing States project with the objective of enhancing the monitoring of pesticide residues in both locally grown and imported fresh agricultural produce as well as establishing mandatory training and certification for users. These regulations are presently under the consideration on a fast-track basis by the Attorney General's Office.

It has been noted that some of the farmers who made abusive use of pesticides are registered with the Small Farmers Welfare Fund and derived benefits from schemes provided by the government. In addition, some of them have been granted lease of State land for agricultural purposes. I am proposing to deregister those farmers and retrieve the State land leased to those planters. The advice of the Attorney General's Office on the way forward is awaited.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government remains committed to ensuring that food security is accompanied by effective safeguards for food safety and public health while supporting growers in adopting responsible and sustainable agricultural practices. On 02 October 2026, an inter-ministerial committee was set up under the chair of the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries, and comprising the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, the Minister of Health and Wellness, the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection, and the Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperatives, to look into the abusive use of pesticide in the food crop cultivation sector and its likely impact on the health of citizens.

The first meeting of the committee was held on 05 October 2026 during which concerns were expressed regarding the possible relationship between pesticides and exposure to cancer. It was emphasised that this relationship should be examined through scientifically epidemiological studies and that no causal link should be presumed in the absence of sufficient scientific evidence.

The Committee recommended, *inter alia*, –

- the services of an expert from World Health Organisation be enlisted for the conduct of an epidemiological study;
- comprehensive and aggressive public awareness campaigns be launched to educate planters on responsible pesticide use, prevention and the importance of using personal protective equipment, and
- the Ministry of Health and Wellness conducts random studies on planters and their children to assess the impact of pesticide exposure.

The Ministry of Health and Wellness has sought technical assistance from the World Health Organisation on 09 October 2026 for the conduct of an epidemiological study. In addition, the latter Ministry is strengthening analytical capabilities of Government Analyst Division through the procurement of advanced laboratory equipment to detect and quantify pesticide residues at risk level in food, thereby supporting food safety monitoring. Also, the Dangerous Chemical Control Board is reinforcing control on the import and sale of pesticides.

With a view to further promoting the production of quality organic product, Government agreed on 16 May 2025 that drafting instructions be conveyed to Attorney General's Office for the finalisation of Organic Agriculture Bill. The proposed legislation would *inter alia* support the development of organic agriculture and encourage the adoption of sustainable farming practices, thereby reducing the reliance of organic producers on chemical fertilisers, pesticides and other agricultural inputs. The Bill is under consideration by the hon. Attorney General's Office.

In addition, the following measures are being implemented by the Food Agricultural Research and Extension Institute and the Agricultural Services of the Ministry of Agriculture –

(i) Training from November 2026 to December 2027, targeting around 780 beneficiaries. This would cover the correct dosage and application of pesticides, observance of pre-harvest intervals, compliance with product labels and the safe handling of pesticides.

(ii) Strengthening of awareness campaign and community outreach activities to encourage growers on the recommended use of pesticides.

(iii) The establishment of bio-farming units across the island to familiarise growers with alternative agricultural techniques.

(iv) Implementation of a pilot QR code traceability initiative to strengthen transparency and tractability in the agricultural supply chain.

(v) Procurement of additional equipment to increase the number of samples tested to at least 300 per month.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Quirin.

Mr Quirin: Merci, M. le président. L'honorable ministre peut-il informer la Chambre à la suite des analyses ayant révélé des dépassements des limites maximales de résidus de pesticides, si les produits potentiellement dangereux ont été retirés du marché et si des sanctions ont été prises contre les producteurs ou distributeurs trouvés coupables? Dans la négative, de nous donner les raisons.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, I have mentioned that they had amended the law in 2022. Unfortunately, they had removed the regulations which should have accompanied the law, the Act and because of this, it was difficult for the Ministry of Agriculture to take sanctions against them. But at the same time, many investigations were conducted as I have just mentioned to you.

Even in my Ministry, the Ministry of Health, the Chief Government Analyst, they have made recommendations to buy a few equipment. For example, one liquid chromatography mass spectrometer, at a tune of Rs18 million, so that all the foods and the pesticides particularly have to be tested properly. Secondly, the human biomonitoring project to study exposure of Mauritians by testing their blood and other biomedical samples and determining the level of exposure to pesticide residues, that is going to cost us about Rs33 million. So, we are not resting just like that, we are trying to act. Secondly, there has always been a fear that there is a relationship of pesticides with the problem of cancer. Even here, research has been done. But up till now, we have not been able to come to a clear conclusion whether these pesticides are responsible for the increase in the number of cancer patients. Because there are other factors also like environmental, lifestyle related factors like air pollution, cosmetics, food related exposures, including concerns raised about certain genetically modified organisms and other environmental contamination. So, all these things are being looked at because we have already sought the support of WHO to help us in that.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Ms J. Bérenger.

Ms J. Bérenger: Merci. En fait, ma question n'a pas été répondue. Donc, je vais essayer de nouveau. Étant donné les résultats alarmants que nous avons eus chez les échantillons des légumes et le fait que le directeur de l'Audit a demandé à nouveau dans son dernier rapport à ce que le nombre, la quantité d'échantillons soit augmentée et que les *improvement notice* soit mieux servis et eux aussi soient augmentés, l'honorable ministre pourrait-il nous dire combien de techniciens sont actuellement en poste au *Pesticides Regulatory Office*?

Mr Bachoo: Unfortunately, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this question should have been addressed to the substantive Minister.

Ms J. Bérenger: Mais…

Mr Bachoo: No, but as I told you, we have got about seven officers in one particular sector. This is what I have already answered. But as far as other officers are concerned, it is difficult for me because I am only replacing the hon. Minister. As far as my Ministry is concerned, I have got enough number of officers who are looking into the case.

For example, I have got the Director of Public Health and Food Safety Division, where I have got enough officers who conduct regular inspections of foods in the markets. That I do have. Secondly, as I have mentioned, I have got another department, that is the Government Analyst Division; works are conducted properly with the exception of a few equipment which are missing, which I have mentioned, we are going to procure.

The Deputy Speaker: That is your Ministry.

Mr Bachoo: That is my Ministry. But basically…

The Deputy Speaker: No. You are speaking as acting Minister of Agro Industry, not the Ministry of Health. The question is addressed to the Minister of Agro Industry. How many officers are there?

Ms J. Bérenger: Il a été annoncé qu'il répondait pour le ministère de l'Agro-industrie à ma question et ma question principale demandait le nombre d'officiers au *Pesticides Regulatory Office*.

The Deputy Speaker: Can you say if the Ministry of Agro…

You cannot say it.

Mr Bachoo: I am answering the question on behalf of the hon. Minister of Agriculture.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

Mr Bachoo: So, whatever information was provided to me, I have already…

The Deputy Speaker: So, give information for the Ministry of Agro Industry only. Anymore? No?

Mr Quirin: Yes.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes. Last one.

Mr Quirin: *Last one.* Comme l'honorable ministre n'est non seulement le suppléant à l'Agro-industrie, mais il faut aussi prendre en considération qu'il est le ministre de la Santé. Donc, une question…

The Deputy Speaker: The question is addressed to the hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Mr Quirin: Une question comme libellée ici le concerne aussi en tant que ministre de la Santé. Donc, je voudrais qu'il nous dise afin d'établir s'il existe une éventuelle corrélation entre l'exposition de la population aux résidus de pesticides présents dans les fruits et légumes consommés et l'incidence croissante de certains types de cancer. Est-ce qu'à son niveau, il a déjà entrepris ou bien est-ce qu'il envisage d'entreprendre une étude afin de déterminer éventuellement une corrélation?

Mr Bachoo: I have answered this question. I have said, I mentioned that the existence and extent of a causal relationship between pesticide exposure and cancer prevalence in Mauritius has not yet been scientifically established. That is the reason, but that does not mean that that it may not exist. That is the reason why we are seeking the support of World Health Organisation and in fact, they have agreed to send us some experts in our country to go through all the details and see whether really there is an existence between the two and if so, what action needs to be taken.

Ms J. Bérenger: Une dernière question, s'il vous plait.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, a last one on this.

Ms J. Bérenger: Les pesticides font partie de la famille des herbicides, comme l'honorable ministre le sait, et l'Organisation mondiale de la Santé a reconnu que le glyphosate

a des molécules potentiellement cancérigènes. Est-ce que l'honorable ministre compte prendre des actions face à l'utilisation abusive du glyphosate ou interdire l'importation du glyphosate tout court?

Mr Bachoo: See, once it is really proved and if action needs to be taken, I am going to take actions, there is no doubt about it.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. PQ B/1445 has been withdrawn.

So, we proceed to B/1446. Hon. Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière!

GLOBAL BUSINESS SECTOR - EMPLOYEES - REGISTERED & DEREGISTERED COMPANIES

(No. B/1445) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning whether, in regard to the Global Business sector, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Service Commission, information as to the yearly number of –

(a) Global Business Companies registered and deregistered, respectively, over the past five years, and
(b) persons employed by management companies over the past three years.

(Withdrawn)

CÔTE D'OR NATIONAL SPORTS COMPLEX – SWIMMING POOLS – LOW WATER TEMPERATURE & CLOSURE

(No. B/1446) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to swimming pools facilities at the Côte d'Or National Sports Complex, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Multisports Infrastructure Ltd., information as to whether –

(a) the main swimming pool was heated during the past winter, indicating the number of complaints, if any, received for excessively low water temperature, and
(b) both swimming pools were recently closed owing to water shortages.

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for this question. With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that there are two swimming pools at the

Côte d'Or National Sports Complex. One main swimming pool for competitions and one warmed-up swimming pool.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is acknowledged that Mauritius is currently facing significant challenges in relation to the availability and security of water and energy supply. These challenges which are influenced by a combination of climatic, structural and demand related factors, underscore the importance of adopting a proactive, coordinated and forward-looking approach to the management of these two essential resources.

My Ministry considers that as a responsible organisation and together with other institutions falling under its purview, it has an obligation to participate in the national effort to save energy and to manage its water resources. It is in this context that the MMIL adopted measures keeping in mind the needs of its users and did not heat the main swimming pool, which is used to carry out competition as from 01 June to 20 September 2026.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is to be noted that only around 10 to 15 swimmers use that competition pool daily between 5:30 p.m. to 20:45 p.m. During that period, that is around one swimmer every hour. In addition, only three complaints were registered for low water temperature in the competition pool. Other energy conservation measures such as switching off light and electrical appliances when not in use, regulating the use of air conditioning system, making optimal use of natural lighting and ventilation and encouraging the use of energy efficient equipment have been adopted as well.

These measures, Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, are in line with the broader objective of improving energy efficiency, protecting the environment and promoting sustainable development. However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as more swimming activities are conducted in the warm-up pool which is 50 metres in length, that pool remains heated throughout the period so as to ensure the continuity of activities and minimises inconvenience to users.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that both swimming pools at the complex were closed from 13 to 18 2026 due to water shortage. In respect of the warm-up pool, the Central Water Authority has informed that the daily amount of water required to operate the pool would not be available under the prevailing water constraint.

As a consequent, arrangements were made to use water from the main swimming pool to replenish the warm-up pool instead of using domestic water. The warm-up pool was reopened

on 19 October 2026 and was made available to users. All swimming lessons and aqua gym session also resumed on that date. However, the main competition pool will remain closed until the water supply situation in the country improves and condition permit its reopening.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, comme l'a bien souligné l'honorable ministre, j'ai aussi reçu des doléances de quelques membres du public concernant le chauffage inadéquat de la piscine de Côte d'Or, principalement pendant la période hivernale. Donc, l'honorable ministre peut-il indiquer à la Chambre si la température recommandée normalement pour les piscines de compétition par la *World Aquatics,* et je cite l'article 16.2.13.1 concernant les competition regulation en vigueur depuis le 25 juin 2025, qui exige que l'eau soit entre 25 et 28 degrés Celsius, doit être respectée à la piscine de Côte d'Or? Dans la négative, dites-nous pourquoi? Je peux comprendre qu'il y a une pénurie d'eau, mais de là à ne pas chauffer l'eau du tout en hiver, me laisse perplexe.

Mr Nagalingum: I just stated in my reply, the hon. Member will concur with me that due to the exceptional circumstances that is prevailing in the country now, we have no other measure than to apply what the MMIL has adopted.

REHABILITATION YOUTH CENTRE – CLOSURE – STAFF REDEPLOYMENT

(No. B/1447) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the closure of the Rehabilitation Youth Centre, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the measures taken for the redeployment of the staff thereof, indicating the institutions or departments to which they have been posted.

(Withdrawn)

The Deputy Speaker: The last question for today. The hon. Second Member for Grand Port and Rose Belle!

BOIS DES AMOURETTES FOOTBALL GROUND – INFRASTRUCTURAL WORKS

(No. B/1448) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the upgrading and

infrastructural development works at the Bois des Amourettes Football Ground, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

(a) whether there has been any delay in the implementation thereof and, if so, indicate the reasons therefor, and

(b) the expected resumption and completion dates of the outstanding works, including the installation of lighting facilities.

Mr Gunness: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the National Development Unit has carried out upgrading works at the Bois des Amourettes Football Ground in two phases.

Phase 1 of the project was implemented in year 2023-2024 for an amount of Rs 6,715,349.80. The works consisted of the returfing of the whole pitch of the Bois des Amourettes Football ground.

The start date was 06 March 2023 with initial completion date on 28 July 2023. However, due to bad weather conditions, which resulted in unstable ground condition, the design had to be changed to stabilise the whole area. Consequently, works were completed on 07 September 2023.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for phase 2, the project was implemented in financial year 2024-2025 at a cost of Rs4,113,109.55. The works consisted of the demolition of the existing frontage fencing and the reconstruction of a new one. Works started on 04 March 2024. The expected completion date was 22 July 2024. However, the contractor failed to complete the works without any justifications, liquidated damage was applied and the actual completion date was 20 December 2024.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is currently no ongoing contract at the Bois des Amourettes Football Ground as same has already been completed and the site handed over to the District Council of Grand Port on 21 October 2025.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the project upgrading of Football Ground Bois des Amourettes phase 3, which includes fencing, turfing works, bleachers and lighting, has recently been added to the list of amenities projects earmarked for implementation in Constituency No. 11. Phase 3 is estimated to cost some Rs7.9 million.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, phase 3 is actually under consideration at my Ministry. Subject to availability of funds, same will be implemented.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Seeburn!

Mr Seeburn: Can the hon. Minister give due consideration and give priority to the completion of the works and the lighting facilities so as to allow our youth to practise sports in a safe and conducive environment, particularly during evening hours? Given the importance of sports in promoting discipline, social integration and keeping our youth away from drug delinquency, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sure that phase 3 is not preventing the people in the region to use the ground and to practise their sports. As I have said, depending on availability of funds, if funds are made available, obviously, this project will be implemented. At the level of Ministry, it is under the list of projects to be implemented, depending on availability of funds.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over!

The Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/1450, B/1451, B/1454, B/1456, B/1458, B/1461, B/1462, B/1465, B/1466, B/1469 and B/1471.

Madam Speaker will now resume the session.

At this stage, Madam Speaker took the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, you may be seated.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10 (2)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, 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.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

ADJOURNMENT MATTER – QUEEN VICTORIA & CAMP ITHIER – TAXI SERVICE UNAVAILABILITY & IRREGULARITY

(4.21 p.m.)

The Minister of Land Transport (Mr Osman Mahomed): Madam Speaker, with your permission, I would like to make a Statement on a matter raised by the hon. Beechook on adjournment at the last Sitting of the Assembly regarding transport issues relating to Queen Victoria and Camp Ithier in his constituency and the need to grant additional taxi licences for these two localities, which subject according to him, he had raised before, and so did his constituency mate, hon. Ramkalawon on another occasion.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that Queen Victoria has a population of 2,850 inhabitants and 15 taxis are licensed to operate therefrom, this means one taxi for every 190 persons. Camp Ithier has a population figure of about 5,000 people and 48 taxis have been licensed for that locality, which works out to one taxi for every 100 residents. This is indicative of the customer base available to the taxi operators, taking into account that the transport demand is spread over a full day.

For Queen Victoria, bus services are available at specific times of the day under paid contract. Camp Ithier has a regular bus service along routes 55 and 58A, Palmar to Flacq, in addition to the 48 taxis. The rule of thumb that has been used for over 20 years across the island is one taxi for every 600 inhabitants. One can argue that it should today be perhaps one to maybe 1,500 on account that during the last 20 years, ownership of private passenger vehicles have increased by more than three times, excluding motorcycles. Without adjusting for the tremendous increase in vehicular fleet, which obviously reduced dependency to taxis, Queen Victoria has been allocated three times more taxis than it ought to have, and Camp Ithier six times more.

In a previous PQ B/536 of 28 April 2026 of the hon. Beechook asking for more taxis for his constituency, I had mentioned that the district of Flacq has one of the highest number of taxis per inhabitant, even by excluding all the taxis based at hotels in that region. So, going for more taxis will tantamount to the law of diminishing returns. Instead, the NLTA proposes to proceed as follows –

- introduce a full-day shuttle service between Queen Victoria and Flacq. This is not a given, however, as previous attempts have failed due to harsh competition from taxi operators;
- take disciplinary action against defaulting taxi operators who are benefiting duty remission, concession on registration, reduced road tax throughout their career. Already one taxi licence of Queen Victoria has been revoked by the NLTA more than a month ago. Four more taxi operators from Camp Ithier are now *dans le collimateur* for possible revocation.

Madam Speaker, to end, I hope that these stern measures will serve as a lesson to defaulting taxi drivers and restore discipline not only in these two localities, but indeed across the island. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

PUBLIC BILL

Second Reading

THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE (OFFENDERS ASSISTING INVESTIGATIONS AND PROSECUTIONS) BILL

(No. XXIV of 2026)

Order for Second Reading read.

(4.24 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I move that the Criminal Justice (Offenders Assisting Investigations and Prosecutions Bill) (No. XXIV of 2026), be read a second time.

Madam Speaker, this short Bill is part of the new criminal justice architecture we are building with the National Crime Agency and the National Prosecution Service with new tools to fight serious, complex or organised crime. In addition, we will introduce a National Security Act to place on a transparent statutory basis with independent safeguards, the powers of the State to use covert surveillance for national security purposes; a power that has been gravely and grotesquely abused by the previous criminal regime, as was evident this morning, when I

gave my answer to the hon. Leader of the Opposition on his PNQ – grossly abused. I mentioned they listened to journalists, to lawyers, to private conversations. It is unbelievable.

Each of these Bills of the National Crime Agency is an interlocking piece. It fits together into that architecture and provides for the greatest reform our law enforcement capabilities have seen in our history. It will be done, Madam Speaker, in strict compliance with the rule of law and with our Constitution. Its only aim is to leave no hiding place for those who occupy the dark shadows and carry out the sinister and pernicious design in secrecy. There is a saying, Madam Speaker –

"However high you may be, the law is above you."

This is a short Bill with 17 clauses only but it answers a question that has caused difficulty to investigators in this country for decades, including what the hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned this morning. I understand the frustration. I feel the same. We want to see results but we have difficulties. This is what the Bill addresses. How do you get evidence to convict those who commanded a crime; – *le commanditaire, comme on dit, il reste caché dans l'ombre* – when the only people who carry out these deeds, they are very unlikely and reluctant to give information or evidence? That is the problem we face.

The Bill, for the first time in our judicial system, gives the Director of Prosecutions three instruments. Each is in writing. Each is conditional, and each is subject to the Court's fiat.

The first is an Immunity Notice, reserved for exceptional circumstances.

The second is a Restricted-use Undertaking, so that information a person gives cannot be used against that very person.

The third is a Sentencing Reducing Agreement under which an accused who pleads guilty and assists an investigation or a prosecution may receive a lesser sentence, but may see that reduction taken back by the Court if he does not keep his word. In other words, if he lies, he says he will cooperate and then he does not, the sentence is again backed to what it was.

This Bill is about investigations as much as about prosecutions. It is one of the nine Bills which Cabinet approved on 04 September. It appeared together with the eight which create the National Crime Agency, but it is a Bill that affects the whole criminal justice system, hence its title, Madam Speaker. As Minister responsible for Home Affairs and the Police, I think it is

incumbent upon me to tell the House why those who investigate serious crimes in this country need this Bill.

In the same breath, let me also say, at the very outset, what this Bill is not because some people are saying this. It is not an emergency measure: it was announced a month before the events of last week. It is not a public-order power: it creates no new offence and no new power of arrest, search or detention. It is a tool for the courtroom, modelled on a framework the United Kingdom has used since 2005 and it comes before this House in an ordinary way, for ordinary scrutiny, which hon. Members on both sides will, I am sure, give it.

The question is: why is this Bill needed?

Madam Speaker, serious crime in Mauritius is a conspiracy of silence before anything else. Nobody talks. The drug network, the money laundering scheme, the gang that extracts corrupt profit for themselves from the public or plans an attack: each is built so that the person at the top never touches the drugs, he never signs any paper, he never holds the weapon and his identity remains shrouded in anonymity. He is protected by a wall – a wall that is made of people.

Every investigator in this country is too familiar with this: Nobody saw anything; nobody knows anything. Not because nobody knows, but because the people who know are the people who took part, and for them, to speak is to confess.

So, what happens? The drug mule goes to prison, but the ones who set up and organised the trans-national transaction do not. We are seeing this with the ship that they brought in the port from Thailand with drugs. Those who are on the ships are getting caught, but where are the barons? The young man who threw the Molotov cocktail is arrested, but the man who incited him, who gave him money, who instructed him, he is not arrested.

An hon. Member: Absent!

The Prime Minister: He is absent. Yes, *absent*.

Those who are caught serve their sentence and the others who are not caught are not even named! *C'est ce qu'on dit toujours, Madame la présidente, les gros poissons, ils ne sont jamais arrêtés. Vous voyez les* drug dealers *sur la rue qui sont arrêtés*. The Commission of Inquiry on Drug Trafficking illustrates this in a very striking way. It was done in 2018.

What does our law offer today to the insider who might be willing to talk? Three things, Madam Speaker, but none of them is enough. Unbelievably!

First, the Director of Public Prosecutions may decide. Section 72 of the Constitution allows the Director of Public Prosecutions to decide not to prosecute a person who agrees to give evidence. It is there already. That power exists and it has been used, but very sparingly and also in extraordinary circumstances. This is because there is no legal architecture for such use of an immense power, if you think of it; hence the reluctance to use it. There is no statutory form, there are no statutory conditions, and no statutory consequence if the person later on changes his story. Hence also the unwillingness of prosecutors to resort to that process.

Second, Madam Speaker, since 2000, section 43 of the Dangerous Drugs Act has allowed the Court to reduce the sentence of an offender under that law who makes possible the identification or arrest of other guilty persons. That was in 2000. In July of this year, the Supreme Court applied it: two couriers who pleaded guilty to importing 219 kilos of heroin, and who agreed or undertook to testify against the organisers, received seven years' penal servitude. That is a sentence which has been reduced for cooperation the Court called exceptional. That is the principle of the Bill, Madam Speaker. We have this provision already in our law but it applies only to drugs. There is no equivalent for murder, rape, arson, corruption, money laundering or riot. Therefore, it has no teeth. If those two men who do not thereafter testify when the day comes – they have been condemned for seven years –, if they refuse, change their story and do not testify, nothing in the law as it is today, allows the Court to revisit the bargain; that is, the bargain was not kept. The Court reduced the sentence, and then they changed the story in Court, the sentence stays. That is totally unacceptable. It is a breach.

Third, there is the person who would help, but if only his version could not be used against him – self-incrimination. Today, we have nothing to offer him. Nothing! So, he has no motive to say anything. Therefore, he says nothing! What is the use?

That is the gap that the Bill fills, Madam Speaker. It does not invent a new idea. It takes a principle this House accepted twenty-six years ago for one offence, but it extends it to serious crime generally. I should add, in 2000, it was a good thing, but it was only, as I said, for drugs. It extends it to serious crime generally and fences it off with the procedure, the conditions and the judicial control which the 2000 legislation did not have.

Let me take the House, Madam Speaker, through the mechanism, because the detail is where the safeguards are.

Clause 3 is the starting point. Nothing in the Bill affects the right of an accused simply to plead guilty without any undertaking. He can do so as it is now. And nothing in it affects the powers of the Director of Public Prosecutions under section 72 of the Constitution. Therefore, we are not touching the independence of the Office of Director of Public Prosecutions. We are giving it a transparent structure to work within.

Clause 4 is the Immunity Notice. The DPP may issue it only for the purpose of an investigation or a prosecution, in exceptional circumstances and only in the public interest. It must be in writing, signed by the DPP or a law officer not below the rank of Assistant DPP, and it must specify the offences covered, the assistance required and the conditions attached. It ceases, Madam Speaker, to have effect the moment the person breaches a condition, or fails to give truthful and complete assistance, or commits a serious offence. Immunity, under this Bill, is not a gift. It is a contract, and the State can tear it up for non-compliance.

Clause 5 is the Restricted-use Undertaking, the narrower instrument. The DPP does not promise not to prosecute. He promises that specified information the person provides, will not be used against him, either in criminal or asset-recovery proceedings. It protects neither perjury nor false information, nor information lawfully obtained from an independent source.

Clause 6 is the Sentencing Reduction Agreement. Now, it applies only to an accused who has pleaded guilty and who, under a written agreement with the DPP, has assisted or offered to assist in relation to another offence. I must add, Madam Speaker, and make it clear, the Court, not the DPP, it is for the Court to decide what that assistance is worth, weighing its significance and usefulness, the risk the accused ran in giving it, and how early he actually gave it. There is no fixed discount and no automatic discount. And the Court, Madam Speaker, must state in open Court that it has passed a lesser sentence, and what the greater sentence would have been had the agreement not been made, unless disclosure itself would endanger a person or the public interest, in which case it records those matters in writing to both parties.

Clause 7 is the enforcement Clause. While the person is still serving the sentence, the DPP may refer the case back to the Court that sentenced him. If he has given further assistance, the Court may reduce the sentence further. If he received a discount and then knowingly failed to deliver, the Court may increase the sentence, up to what it would have passed had there been

no agreement and I should add, Madam Speaker, both the person and the DPP may appeal. It is not final, they may appeal.

Clauses 8, 10 and 11 protect the process and the person – the Court may sit in camera and restrict publication where safety requires it, records of negotiations may be sealed, and those who administer the Act, they are bound to secrecy on pain of a fine of up to Rs1 million and one year's imprisonment.

Clause 9 guarantees legal representation before any negotiation begins, and Clause 12, the victim's right to be informed. I will return to both in a minute.

Importantly, Madam Speaker, Clause 13 provides that no Court is bound by any notice, undertaking or agreement. It is for the Court to decide. Clause 14 opens the Witness Protection Programme to an assisting offender at risk and Clause 15 requires the DPP to report every year on the use of these powers, and the hon. Attorney General has to lay that report before this House so that you can see what has been done.

Hon. Members do not need a lecture but they need only remember. Let me again take the case we spoke about this morning, the case of Mr Kistnen. He was found in a cane field at Telfair on 18 October 2020. The initial investigation concluded, as we know, suicide. Subsequent judicial inquiry found it was homicide, not suicide. The UK experts also found that it was not suicide. Not only they said that, they described how stupid these findings were. One thing they said is that how would somebody commit suicide and then burn his telephone and put it under his body. Even that they did not manage to see because it was a cover up. They found also that it was not suicide, but homicide. In other words, unlawful killing.

I told this House at the time, last year, that the initial police investigation was botched and seriously deficient and the magistrate, the senior magistrate also found this. It has now been taken up from the beginning by a new team, with expertise from abroad. I believe some 30 people have been interviewed. No one has been charged yet, but they have been interviewed. But I told this to the hon. Leader of the Opposition this morning. They tried to destroy all the evidence. They did not manage to destroy everything, but they did try.

Some may think that a man cannot be driven to a cane field just for the sake of it. Someone must have driven him there in a vehicle of some form. Someone must have kept watch because he was about to be killed. Someone was probably told afterwards the result of what happened. But each one of them stayed silent. Silent for six years, for the same reason.

Because the truth would put them in the dock beside the person who gave the order. So, everyone decided to stay silent. This Bill speaks exactly to those people. It is saying this: there is a lawful, written, supervised way to tell what you know. You must help justice to be served, because there are consequences. If there were no consequences, they have no motive to say anything.

Let us take the drugs trade. In March 2017, 135 kilos of heroin were seized at the port. Then, it was the largest seizure of drugs, of heroin, this country had known – 135 kilos in March 2017. The man arrested has been in detention ever since. Over the years, he has given statements. Not one statement, not two, not three, 60 statements to ADSU, to ICAC, to the Central CID and he has offered cooperation in exchange for immunity. I do not want to say anything about the merits of that case because it is in front of the courts. But I ask this: Under what law is that offer to be assessed? By whom? On what conditions? With what record, and with what consequence if the information proves to be false? Today, Madam Speaker, our statute book is absolutely silent on this.

Take the case where a co-accused was released to become the prosecution's main witness under an arrangement. An arrangement with no basis on any statute, no written conditions, no requirement of truthful and complete assistance, no sanction if he failed to keep his promise. None. The trial that followed ended in an acquittal and the crime remains unsolved to this day. The lesson is not that the insider evidence is worthless. Unless that insider evidence is obtained within a framework which a Court or a jury and the public can trust, it has no value. That is what is happening.

Let me come to the events of this month because they show, on every street where a shop was looted, why this Bill matters far beyond the drug trade.

Between the 07 and 13 October, what began as protests over water shortages, a grievance which was real and which this Government is tackling, turned into something else. A young woman, Élodie Thomas, was shot by a police officer at Camp Levieux on 09 October. I said then that the act was an unforgivable act. It is beyond comprehension. Whatever has happened, you cannot just take your gun and shoot somebody and the law will take its course. But what followed was not only just anger.

A Police Station at Abercombie was burnt with petrol bombs. Shops and a cooperative store in Bambous were emptied. Rs3 million of goods from one business alone, Rs12 million of damage. The Metro station was vandalised at Barkly.

More than 17,000 tonnes of sugarcane were burnt. 15 police officers were injured. 195 people were arrested, 26 of them minors.

I told the nation on 13 and 15 October what police intelligence told me: that organised groups were at work; that some were financed and directed by drug traffickers and others who felt the pressure of police operations and they had recruited young persons to do the dirty deeds, because *inter alia,* those under 14 cannot be prosecuted. They know this very well. Investigators are now working through WhatsApp groups, some 20, I think, Facebook passages and hundreds of fake profiles. Cases are before the courts and are being condemned. That is why I prefer not to say any more about them.

But consider what the police are left with. They have the person who threw the stone because the Safe City camera, when they managed to get him, it caught him on camera. And then the camera was smashed. They have the young man who created this group because his phone was seized. It is on the phone. What they do not have, and what no camera or no phone will give them on its own, is the person or the persons who paid for the petrol, the man who pointed to the police station to be attacked, the man who sent the message that said: tonight, Bambous. Those men were never on the street. They are cowards with money. They were not on the street. They hid and sent their minions to do their dirty work and now those who were incited to carry out the attacks are the ones who are facing the music.

Under the law today, every one of them has only one rational option, as we say: *chup chap*. Silence! No need to say anything. Speak and you confess your own part, while those who finance you, sent you to loot and create havoc, remain absolutely free. Under this Bill, there is a second option. The young person at the bottom of that chain, can go to the DPP with a lawyer, and say that: here is who sent us and here is where the money came from. A Restricted-use Undertaking means his word will not be used against him. A Sentencing Reduction Agreement means that if he pleads guilty, his cooperation counts before the Court. And if he lies, he loses everything.

Madam Speaker, the people who used our young ones this month, they are not only hiding in the dark, they are counting on their silence. This Bill is how we break that silence.

Let me leave organised crime because this Bill is not only for drug barons. Let me describe a case. I think hon. Members will recognise it. I do not want to mention names, but versions of it have happened in this country: on a beach in the north, in a car on a lonely road, in private, after a party. A young woman has been attacked by men at night and has survived. She goes to the police. She can describe only one of the persons who attacked her; she knew him by sight. She identified him. The police looked for him. He is arrested. The other four, she never saw clearly. It was dark, she was held down, and one of them was filming. But she never saw them. She cannot say she saw them. She saw one person.

The police do what they can. Forensic evidence confirms that this man was present, but only if his profile is already known. The one in custody now, he denies everything. He says: 'No, she left the beach with somebody else.' It was not him. The others who were never identified are never charged.

Under the law today, Madam Speaker, that is how the story ends. Over. The victim knows that four of the men who raped her, are walking free, and that one man in the cell knows who they are; he knows their names, but he never says anything, because each is counting on the other to stay silent, and none of them gains anything by speaking.

This Bill changes the arithmetic in that case. The one in custody can plead guilty, admitting his own crime, sparing the victim the ordeal of going to the courts, enters a written agreement with the DPP to identify the other four and give evidence against them. Now, if his assistance is truthful, if it is complete and it is useful, the Court will take it into account in his sentence. If now he lies, or he makes false accusations, or he fails to testify when the day comes, the DPP can send the file back to the Court and the discount is gone. He does not get any discount.

Let me be very clear about the limits. Nothing in this Bill compels the DPP to offer anything to a rapist, Madam Speaker. Nothing! And I can tell you, Madam Speaker, I, for one, and I am sure most hon. Members here, if not all, cannot conceive of circumstances in which the public interest would justify immunity for a man who took part in a rape. That cannot be! And what this Bill offers is not immunity, but a reduction of a sentence as the price for helping putting the other four behind bars. That is the compromise. That is a price we should be prepared to defend because the alternative is what? The alternative is that the other four who took part in the rape, who filmed, they walk free. That is the alternative.

And the first to speak gets the benefit. The solidarity of criminals becomes a race, a race to the DPP's door. That, Madam Speaker, is not a weakness of this Bill. It is the point of it.

Let me now come to clause 12, and I want every hon. Member here to listen very carefully, because it is the clause that distinguishes this Bill from the model we borrowed from the UK.

The United Kingdom's 2005 Act contains no such clause. Ours does. Because we have our own specificity. We cannot just import everything. We have our own specificity. We cannot just copy and paste as often has been done from a foreign jurisdiction. Clause 12 provides that where an Immunity Notice or a Restricted-Use Undertaking is issued, an agreement to reduce a sentence is concluded, the Director of Public Prosecutions shall – not may, Madam Speaker, shall –communicate with the victim, as soon as reasonably practicable, on two things: the substance of and the reasons for the arrangement, and the victim's entitlement to be present when the Court considers it. That is different from every other jurisdiction we know of.

The only exception is where compelling reasons in the interests of justice requires otherwise, where, for example, telling the victim today would put a witness' life at risk tomorrow. Even then, the duty is deferred, not extinguished, but deferred.

Before any such arrangement is made, the DPP may invite the victim to make written representations and may take them into account in deciding whether to conclude it or not. Where the victim has died because time has passed or is incapacitated, the duty is owed to the immediate family. Where the victim is a child under sixteen, a parent, a guardian or a guardian, *ad litem*, as we say, speaks for the child. And where the child is 16 or over, the child speaks together with the parent or a guardian.

This matters, and why does this matter?

Because no woman who was raped should learn from a newspaper that one of the men who attacked her, has been given a more lenient sentence than she expected. It is not right. No mother whose son was killed should come to overhear in a corridor, that one of the offenders has been given immunity. If the State decides that the public interest requires an arrangement with an offender to get other offenders – and sometimes it will – then the State owes it to the victim, it owes an obligation of looking her in the eye and telling her why this is being done. It is to get the others, and it owes her a seat in the courtroom when the Court decides on whatever it will decide.

Our criminal law has not, until now, written the victim into the prosecutorial decision of this kind. This Bill for the first time does, and I have full confidence in the Office of the DPP, and I expect that duty will be discharged with the seriousness this House attaches to it. The annual report, as I mentioned earlier, under Clause 15 will tell us whether this is the case.

Madam Speaker, a Bill which offers a benefit to offenders must be judged by its safeguards. In this case, there are four such safeguards.

First, the person. Before any negotiation begins, clause 9 requires that an unrepresented person be told of his/her right to a lawyer and to legal aid, of his protection against self-incrimination, of the presumption of innocence, of his right to seek a sentence indication from the Court and of his right to have a third party of his choice present. If he still chooses, he might decide he does not want a lawyer, he wants to negotiate alone. That choice must be in writing. The Court must be satisfied that he was competent, he knew what he was doing and approved of the opening negotiations. I must add that negotiations are with the Director of Public Prosecutions, not with the Police. It is with the DPP.

Second, the truth. Every instrument in this Bill is conditional on the truthful and complete assistance. The Restricted-Use Undertaking gives no cover to perjury or false information. The Immunity Notice falls away if you breach it. The discounted sentence can be restored as I mentioned under clause 7. And the ordinary rules of evidence remain: our courts have always approached the evidence of an accomplice with caution and in certain circumstances, looked for cooperation and nothing in this Bill changes that. Nothing is changed as far as this is concerned. An accused against whom an assisting offender testifies, keeps every protection given under section 10 of our Constitution.

Third, the Court. The Court is not bound by any notice or any undertaking or any agreement. The Court fixes the sentence and the extent of any reduction. The Court states the discount in open Court as I said, decides whether records are sealed and whether the public is excluded for different reasons and only to the extent necessary for safety and the interest of justice and as I said, both sides may appeal.

Fourth, every year the DPP reports the number of notices, undertakings, reductions and reviews with their outcomes and as I said, the Attorney General lays that report in the House. Hon. Members will then be able to see for themselves whether an exceptional power is being used exceptionally.

Some might say, Madam Speaker, that this is a repressive law rushed through in the wake of the riots, alongside the curfew that was imposed. It is not. As I said, Cabinet approved this Bill on 04 September, more than a month before the first barricade was set on fire. As I said at the beginning of my speech, it creates no new offence. It creates no additional power to the Police. It is a prosecution tool borrowed from a democracy that has used it for 20 years. And again, we have modified it slightly for our country.

It might be said – some have said it – it hands too much power to the DPP with no accountability. Some have said this. Madam Speaker, the DPP already has the power to grant immunity under section 72 of our Constitution but with no conditions, and he does not have to report to anyone. This Bill puts that power in writing under conditions which the Court will take cognisance of, but is not bound to accept it or to act upon it. There is a right of appeal for both sides as I said. The victim has the right to be informed and a report must be laid before this House every year by the Attorney General. This is the first Bill that actually gives accountability for immunity decisions. Before, the DPP could just give the immunity with no statute, no background, nothing, no architecture.

It might be said that criminals will buy their way out of prison and that the big fish will save themselves by giving up the small ones. The answer to that objection is that the Court reduces the sentence according to the significance and usefulness of the information/the assistance. What a kingpin can say against his own courier is not worth as much as what the courier can say against the kingpin and be rewarded accordingly. The incentive in this Bill, in fact, runs upwards, not downwards. And immunity itself is reserved for exceptional circumstances and the public interest with the Court, which is free to disregard it.

It might be said, Madam Speaker, that the evidence of a *repenti* is unreliable and will produce false accusations. Our courts have treated accomplice evidence with caution for over a century, and I am sure will go on doing so. A benefit bought with a lie buys nothing but a longer sentence under clause 7, and additionally, a prosecution for perjury. And the accused who faces such evidence, keeps every right to a fair trial. The risk of a false accusation is real in real life and the Bill is built around this possibility. The risk of a true accusation has never been made because the law gives the witness no reason to make it. It is the risk we live with today in every unsolved case I have described earlier and we have seen it in the past. And then you will see comments, I have seen today, that nothing is being done. These are the problems we face. That is why we are trying to cure that defect. That is what we are remedying.

Otherwise, same situation, same result, and you will see the big fish or the top criminal is walking free.

It might be said that – I am trying to respond to what I have seen other people say – vulnerable young people will be pressured into deals but Clause 4 is the answer: a lawyer, legal aid, and the presumption of innocence is explained, and the Court must be satisfied of the competence before every single word is negotiated.

It might be said that justice is being done behind closed doors. No! Discounts are stated in open Court, as I said earlier. Sealing and exclusion of the public are allowed only to the extent necessary to protect a life. The numbers come to this House every year; they will be in front of the House. And the victim, the person with the greatest right to know – sometimes, we forget the victim – is told the substance and the reasons.

There is another thing that some might say – they have actually said –, that allowing a Court to go below a minimum sentence undermines what Parliament itself enacted. But, Madam Speaker, I remind hon. Members, Parliament is sovereign over its own minimum sentences, and Parliament is now deciding, that genuine assistance may justify a departure, decided not by Parliament, but by a judge in every case. Without that provision, a mandatory minimum becomes the kingpin's best friend, because the courier facing it has nothing to gain by speaking.

And it might also be said, especially by those who I see are worried about the National Crime Agency, that this Government may use *repentis* to manufacture witnesses against its political opponents. As I told the hon. Leader of the Opposition who understands this, and I think the whole Opposition understands this – except those from the MSM –, we are not the MSM. We are not going to do this. This is precisely what we want to prevent. That is why we put all these guarantees. The DPP decides, independently, under a Constitution which we did not write, neither this Government nor the previous government. And will not bend the Constitution. We have seen, in the past, manufactured evidence. There was manufactured evidence against me. Planting – we have seen all this. This is going to be of the past. The Court decides whether to accept. The numbers will be published. This Bill does not choose its targets; the evidence does. What an accomplice might one day say under oath, is not a reason for this House to protect the silence.

Let us be clear, Madam Speaker: we are not doing a new experiment.

The United Kingdom legislated this framework in the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 and carried it into the Sentencing Act 2020, where the review of a sentence for assistance given or withheld is now routine. Australia, Canada and the United States have long allowed sentence reductions for substantial assistance. South Africa's Criminal Procedure Act allows a witness who answers fully and honestly to be absolutely discharged from prosecution for the offence he discloses. We are not doing this here. And every Member knows the lesson of Italy: the wall of *omertà* around the Sicilian Mafia stood for a century – silence – , until the Italian government gave Tommaso Buscetta a lawful reason to talk to a judge, Giovanni Falcone. And what happened? We are talking about the Sicilian mafia in Italy. When that judge was allowed to talk to him, hundreds of men who thought themselves untouchable were convicted on this one man's evidence and on all those who followed him.

On 15 October, Madam Speaker, I said to those who organised the violence against this country: *pena place kot zot pou kapav cachiette*. Today, I add this. After this Bill, it will be even harder for you to hide. The people you paid, the persons you used, the rioters you encouraged: the law will now give each of them a reason to speak, a lawyer to speak with, a Court to speak before, and a victim who will be told.

This Bill asks nothing of the innocent. It asks the guilty to choose between loyalty to those who used them – and now they are paying the price – and true justice. Why should they who have been used be allowed to pay the price alone? And this Bill asks this House to give our investigators, our prosecutors and our courts a tool that every serious democracy has given its own.

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

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Madam Speaker: I want to make sure that the DPM seconded. Did you second the motion? I am not quite sure. You seconded the motion of the Prime Minister.

An hon. Member: Yes, she did.

Madam Speaker: Alright.

So, now, we will call on the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Ms J. Bérenger: On ne *break* pas pour le thé ?

(5.16 p.m.)

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr C. Baboolall): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: Inform at least!

Ms J. Bérenger: *B kapav informer non* ?

Madam Speaker: One moment. I do not understand what is going on.

Ms J. Bérenger: We do not break for tea? *S'il n'y a plus de* tea break, *il faudrait informer* !

Mr Bérenger: Madam Speaker, on a point of order.

Madam Speaker: Yes, yes.

Mr Bérenger: You should at least inform that we will not break for tea. We are not going to object.

Ms J. Bérenger: Last week, it was the same.

Mr Bérenger: Last week, it was the same thing.

Madam Speaker: Alright.

Mr Bérenger: At least inform all of us.

Madam Speaker: Alright. I was not really aware that it was tea time. Are we going to break for tea?

Hon. Prime Minister, as Leader of the House, you have to decide. Yes, we can break?

The Prime Minister: Yes.

Madam Speaker: We can break for half…

Ms J. Bérenger: Madame la présidente, …

Madam Speaker: One moment! Let me finish!

Ms J. Bérenger: Ok, pas de souci.

Madam Speaker: You raised a point and I am trying to find a solution.

Ms J. Bérenger: Okay.

Madam Speaker: So, we can break for half an hour?

The Prime Minister: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Thank you very much.

Ms J. Bérenger: J'aurais juste aimé clarifier si les procédures ont changé. Ce n'est pas qu'on insiste pour avoir un break pour le thé. On n'insiste pas dessus, mais si les procédures ont changé, parce que la semaine dernière, c'était la même chose, qu'on nous informe au moins. Il n'y a pas eu de break la semaine dernière. C'est la même chose cette semaine. Qu'on nous informe. C'est tout !

Madam Speaker: D'accord. Très bien. Vous avez entendu.

You please let me know in due course so that I can inform everyone. Thank you very much. Okay, so, we raise for half an hour.

At 5.17 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.59 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Please be seated. Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition.

(5.59 p.m.)

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr C. Baboolall): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I rise as the Leader of the Opposition and I want to begin where a Leader of the Opposition should begin. Not with the Government, but with the country. There is a mother in this country tonight who cannot sleep because she does not know where her son is. There is a shopkeeper who has put up a shutter that was not there last year. There is a family that has waited years for someone, anyone to tell them the truth about a death, as rightly pointed out by the hon. Prime Minister. There is a teacher who has watched a strip of paper soaked in a

chemical pass from hand to hand at the school gate. These are the people for whom we sit in this House. They do not care which side is right. They care whether the guilty are caught, whether the innocent are safe, and whether the law that does it, is a law they can trust. This as well has been pointed out by the hon. Prime Minister.

Let me say it plainly so that nobody can misquote me tomorrow. This side of the House wants the corrupt caught. We want the traffickers caught. We want the organiser, not only the foot soldier. We want a State that is strong against organised crime. I say it as a man who wants this country to succeed, whoever sits on those benches. But a strong State and a State of unlimited power are not the same thing. The first protects the citizen. The second is something the citizen must be protected from. The history of every Parliament from Westminster to Port Louis is the history of learning that difference. James Madison wrote it in The Federalist: "If men were angels, no government would be necessary and if angels governed men, no control would be necessary."

We are not angels, Madam Speaker, neither are those who will govern us after. I have one question for the hon. Prime Minister. I will put it now and I will put it again before I sit. What is the point to rush? On 01 September, this Government brought the Road Traffic Amendment Bill. It was presented on Tuesday morning and passed the same day without one amendment. Heavy fines, prisons, seizure of vehicles. A month later, what do the newspapers tell us? That the seizure provision is still not in force. That the forms of the new procedure before the magistrate did not reach the police station in time. That the Police who must build the cases were hardly consulted. A law passed in a day that cannot be applied in a month is not a strong law, Madam Speaker. It is a loud one.

Then came the 07 to 13 October. Mauritian in the street, anger, fire, fear. They wanted to be heard and the Government's answer was a curfew. Then approved by the Cabinet on Friday 16th and passed in this House on Tuesday 20, four days later, The Police (Amendment) Bill. A curfew order that may cover the whole of Mauritius with no limit of duration, no publication, and no report to this House. Passed again without one amendment. We never said that a lawful curfew power was wrong. We said that the power of that size needs a limit and a light. The Government said there is no time and then something happened.

The Government told this country that it will not rush the National Crime Agency. The Bar Association asked for time unanimously on 09 October and the Government listened. I say so openly because an Opposition that cannot say ‘bravo’ has no right to say ‘no’. It proved one

thing: when this Government slows down, it is right. So I ask, why is the one text that lets a single man forgive any crime still on the Order Paper?

Of nine texts, one is left. Not the Agency, not the code of surveillance, not the panel that is to watch the Agency. With whom will the Director deal with when the Agency does not exist? Which case is waiting for this Bill? The hon. Prime Minister gave some examples, but is it enough to pass only one bill when we are talking about changing the whole criminal justice system? Let me be fair because fairness is what I am asking for. We do not oppose the principle of this Bill. A State that wants to catch the organiser may need the word of a man who stood beside him.

Many countries have such laws. If this Bill helps to find the guilty, we want it. But let us measure what we are being asked to give. After the power to punish, the power to forgive is the most serious that a State possesses. When a judge sentences a man, he does it in public. With reasons and the man may appeal. When the State forgives a man, it says to the victim, your loss will not be answered. That may sometimes be necessary. It may sometimes serve justice. But a power of that weight must be given with eyes open. In daylight, with limits that binds the good and the bad alike. The test of such a power is not how it is used by a good man, it is what it allows a bad one.

The Government, as the hon. Prime Minister always says, follows the UK model. It is a tired excuse. So, let us read the model to the end. England has had such a law since 2005. English lawyers have documented four things about it –

- Secrecy – Nobody knows how many immunities were requested or refused and some prosecutors have declined to say what deals they made.
- Discounts – The Court of Appeal fixed half to two-thirds of the sentence as the norm and more only in most exceptional circumstances. Yet, English lawyers describe discounts that went much further even in a more serious corruption case.
- Witnesses – A man who has been given a lighter sentence is a man the jury is told to doubt and in England, prosecution have collapsed after relying on such witnesses.

- Rarity – English prosecutors call immunity 'wholly exceptional'. In two whole years, the Prosecution Service and the Serious Fraud Office granted none. In England, ‘wholly exceptional’; in this Bill, any offence.

England is not a shield, Madam Speaker, it is a warning. England has paid dearly to learn the lesson of fair trial. In Northern Ireland in the 1980s, men were convicted on the word of a single informer who had been promised his freedom. When the Court of Appeal looked again, 18 of 22 convictions in one case were overturned. All of them in another. 24 or 25 in a third. The system was dropped in 1985 and brought back only in 2011. England is telling us today what it thinks of the structures around it.

In January, the British Home Secretary published a White Paper: From Local to National. It says that 43-force model, nearly unchanged in 60 years, is no longer fit for purpose. It says and I quote –

“In too many areas the criminals are now ahead of the police”.

It recalled that public confidence in the police fell from 79 to 67% in 9 years and that the share of people very satisfied with the police fell from 41 to 23. Britain is folding its National Crime Agency into a national police service. In May, its own inspectors found the agency's computer systems not fit for purpose and its resources short of the demand. I will not pretend that the White Paper speaks of immunity deals. It does not. But when London is rebuilding what it built, we must copy it, not in a rush and in pieces.

Now, let us read the Bill as a window would read it. The hon. Prime Minister explained the clauses, but there are still some doubts. Clause 3, Madam Speaker, says that the Director's powers under Section 72 of the Constitution are unaffected, save as expressly agreed otherwise by the Director. Agreed by whom? Can a Director bind himself and can the next Director undo it? That is a constitutional question and it deserves a constitutional answer.

Clause 4: The Director or an officer he authorises, not below Assistant Director, may give full immunity. As we said, all offences. Murder is not excluded. Rape is not excluded. Offences against the children are not excluded. The man who organised the crime is not excluded. No reasons are required.

The words further serious offence are not defined. Nothing says that immunity covers only what has already been done and no court approves the notice. On the face of the text, it is

a blank check for executive convenience. The hon. Prime Minister referred to clause 9 that the court approves. Read it. The court approves the opening of the negotiation, Madam Speaker. It does not approve the deal. Clause 13 says the court is not bound by it. So, the informant does not know where he stands and neither does the family.

Madam Speaker, I come to clause 5, and here the House must pay attention. Clause 5 says that what an informant tells the Director cannot be used against him in proceedings under Sub-Part II of the Asset Recovery and Unexplained Wealth Act 2026. Which Act, Madam Speaker?

This House has not passed it yet. It is a Bill announced in a package of nine, and it sits behind the National Crime Agency Bill that the Government has just taken off on Tuesday's agenda. So, we are asked to shield a man from the law that does not exist yet, whose clauses nobody has debated and whose numbering may change tomorrow in a committee so that clause 5 points at nothing or at something else. We are asked to buy a lock before we have seen the door. That is not legislation.

This is a promissory note signed by the House and payable by the people. Look at how this is meant to work. Who will bring the informant to the Director? An agency that does not exist under which code? A code that has not been written. Watched by any panel? A panel that has not been appointed. Governed by regulations that the hon. Attorney General will make as he thinks fit and brought into force section by section on dates that he alone will choose.

On 01 September, the Government hopes to give the National Crime Agency Bill its First Reading. The draft was not ready. A road law with no forms. A curfew law with no limits. An immunity law with no agency. Each time a text for today and a promise for tomorrow. And the same refrain: trust us.

With respect, Madam Speaker, that is not democracy. Democracy is when the House sees the whole machine before it hands over the key. We have not been told how this law will be applied, or by whom, or when, or with what money.

Clause 6, a Court may go below a minimum sentence. Even a sentence is fixed by law. Last Tuesday, this House passed a minimum fine for a man in the street. What sentences this week? A minimum for him. None for the informant. Who has the most to give? Not the little courier. The man near the shop who knows everything. The Bill gives the greatest reward to the man with the most to trade.

Now, the fair trial. Section 10 of our Constitution guarantees a fair hearing. Look at the Bill, clause 6(5), Madam Speaker, lets the court keep a reduction out of open court and gives written notice to the prosecutor and to the informant. Not to the man he testifies against.

The Bill does not say in terms that the co-accused must be handed the agreement. In England, such an agreement is treated as disclosable because a deal is an inducement and the jury must know about it. In a fair criminal justice, this is how it works.

Clause 7 says that anyone told under the Act must keep it a secret. Can a man on trial use the deal to cross-examine the witness? Or is he gagged as well? A man cannot defend himself against a deal he is not allowed to see. Clause 7, Madam Speaker, allows the Director to bring a prisoner back before before the court at any time.The court may reduce or increase, and there is an appeal. We acknowledge it. But is the Director alone who chooses that moment?

Clause 8, Madam Speaker, allows the public to be excluded from such a review, but only where safety requires it. We accept that test. It touches Section 10: the right to a fair hearing. It touches Section 12: freedom of expression, and it touches the rights of the victim which no section protects as it should.

A Bill that touches the Constitution at four points should not be settled in one afternoon by those who drafted it. It should be examined by those who must live under it. The Constitution already gives the Director the power to institute, to take over or to discontinue proceeding.

So, let a committee ask the plain question: what can the Director not do today that he needs this Bill to do? Let the Director come and say it. Let him be questioned. Let the Bar Association come. Let the victims association come. Let the Commissioner of Police come because it is his officers who will bring the informant. A select committee has the power to call for persons, papers and record.

That is precisely what this Bill needs. Precisely, a debate in this Chamber cannot give. Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister, himself, has shown that he knows it. Look at the Order Paper of the same sitting. The hon. Prime Minister has moved for a Select Committee on Children in Conflict with International Laws. It is to have the power to call for persons, papers and records and to consult psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists and other specialists.

We do not object to the principle. But I put it to the hon. Prime Minister: if the root causes of a juvenile delinquency deserve a select committee with experts, does the power to forgive a murder deserve less? There are some political reasons as well.

A Select Committee is not a defeat for a government. It is a proof that a government is confident. A government with a majority has nothing to fear from questions of his own Parliament. It is only a government that doubts its text that refuses to have it examined.

Second, a law made by consensus is a law that lasts. The power that you give to the Director today will be exercised tomorrow under another government. The cost of delays is small. The hon. Prime Minister talked about the Kistnen inquiry. Two years have already been wasted but for this one, what are we asking? A Select Committee for everyone to come forward, give their ideas. Eight Bills have already been on the shelf. So, what I am saying is the cost of delay is small, nothing for a power that no agency can yet use, and what does it cost to be wrong? A man who has been forgiven cannot be prosecuted again. A record that has been sealed cannot easily be unsealed. A widow who had been told and silenced cannot be un-silenced. You can correct a road law next month. You cannot take back a pardon.

Fourth, the country is asking, the Bar Association is asking, the Bar Council asks unanimously, the leader of the FMP, hon. Paul Bérenger, asks it, the press asks for it and when the Government listened on the National Crime Agency, nobody said it was weak. They said it was wise, and so, the FMP makes this offer without conditions: if the Government sends this Bill with the other eight texts to a Select Committee with Members from both sides, we will sit on it. We will not obstruct. We will bring our proposals. We will hear the Director, the Bar, the victims, the Police, the people of Rodrigues. We will report as quickly as possible. This is how we should govern, and if the Government refuses, then these are our propositions. A Judge must approve every Immunity Notice with reasons recorded; every family that grieves, every honest officer and every citizen who have never been asked. If we want to change our criminal justice system, Madam Speaker, what is the point to rush? Take time, Madam Speaker, hear the Bar, hear the victims, hear the country.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Minister of Labour!

(6.23 p.m.)

The Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations (Mr R. Uteem): Madam Speaker, this Bill was first read together with eight other Bills concerning the National Crime Agency. However, this very important Bill does not concern the National Crime Agency only. As the hon. Leader of the Opposition himself mentioned, this Bill covers all offences. There is no offence that has been excluded from the purview of this Bill.

So, today, with this Bill, the Director of Public Prosecutions can give an Immunity Notice to any offender, not someone just concerned with the National Crime Agency or any other agencies for that matter. Unlike what the hon. Leader of Opposition thinks, there already exists this power in our laws. Section 72 of the Constitution already gives the power to the Director of Public Prosecutions to institute prosecution, but also to decide not to institute prosecution, the power to stay any proceedings, and the power to give immunity was recognised by the Supreme Court in the case of ICAC v DistriPC Ltd in 2019. I quote –

> "We hasten to add that it is open to the DPP to consider on a case-by-case basis whether to offer pursuant to 72 of the Constitution and in the public interest, immunity from prosecution."

So, it is already in our law. We are not inventing anything. And I am surprised, the hon. Leader of the Opposition who he is a lawyer, he takes exception when he reads section 3(2) –

> "(2) Save as expressly agreed otherwise by the Director of Public Prosecutions…"

He is asking what is this agreement about, which is binding upon the DPP, but this Bill itself provides written agreement when you are going to have a restricted use. You have to agree in writing. The DPP has to agree in writing with the offender: 'I am not going to use this information'. Once he has agreed to that, obviously, he cannot then flat section 72 of the Constitution and say whatever I have agreed is not valid. This is what the section 3(2) says, except as agreed otherwise. So, there is nothing sinister about it.

Quite the contrary, this Bill, as the hon. Prime Minister says, takes all the precautions to ensure that we are not treading on the constitutional powers and prerogatives of anyone here. He is talking about the National Crime Agency. The law is very clear. Who can provide the immunity from prosecution? The DPP. Who can provide the Restricted-use Undertaking? The DPP. Who can ask the court to consider a Sentencing Reduction Agreement? The DPP. And this is not unusual because if we take the case – which I am sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition knows very well – of Luchmun v The State in 2021, the accused was a Police

Constable. He pleaded guilty to a charge of procuring the importation of heroin. He was sentenced to 15 years penal servitude and a fine of Rs100,000. The accused challenged the sentence by saying that the Police had promised him immunity during the inquiry, and you know what the Supreme Court said? The Supreme Court clarified that it is only the DPP who had the power to grant an accused immunity from prosecution. It will not be the National Crime Agency. It will not be the Commissioner of Police. It will not be an investigator. Only the Director of Public Prosecutions will give this immunity, and this is consistent with the Constitution as has always been consistently upheld by the Supreme Court.

I do not understand the Leader of the Opposition. In the morning, he took strong objection that in two years, no arrest, no progress in the Kistnen report and now, when the hon. Prime Minister is saying that we are introducing this law to give a tool in the hands of the DPP to enable those offenders who have the information to come forward, those offenders who want to reveal the truth, when we are doing this, he is asking why are we rushing – 'what is the rush?' He said we are trying to pass a Bill in one day. Let me remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition that as far back as September last month, Cabinet took the decision to circulate all the draft Bills, including that Bill, and the former Deputy Prime Minister, he had a copy of all these legislations when he was still Deputy Prime Minister. So, it is not now in *catimini* that we are circulating in the last minute that Bill. Everybody has had time to read, consider and comment on it. But what is the rush? The rush is we want to tackle the crime head on.

Now, why do we need this Bill? The hon. Paul Bérenger like to say that in a case of corruption offence: *kan ou kokin ou pa donn resi* – when you steal, you do not give receipts. How do you prove? You have an offence of corruption; the person gave bribe, the person took bribe behind closed doors, no eye witnesses. How do you prove the offence if both decide to take their constitutional right against self-incrimination, their constitutional right to remain silent? How do you prove? By giving an incentive. By telling one of the offenders: 'we are not going to use this information against you'.

How do you prove the offence if both decide to take their constitutional right against self-incrimination, their constitutional right to remain silent? How do you prove? By giving an incentive. By telling one of the offenders, we are not going to use this information against you. By telling the court, when you are going to sentence him, take into account that he collaborated with us, or by giving him immunity against prosecution of certain cases. This is how we help

the DPP, help the prosecution conduct inquiry, and bring the accused to trial and secure conviction.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition talks about we should not be following blindly UK. I agree with him. In fact, we are not following the UK. To be accurate, this Bill is substantially modelled after the Cayman Islands Criminal Justice (Offenders Assisting Investigations and Prosecutions) Act of 2022. So, if you look at the provisions, it has been substantially modelled after the Cayman Islands, taking precisely into consideration all the shortcomings which are in the UK legislation.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition rightly said that in England, you do not have data, statistics, figures for you to be able to know whether this policy works or not. We are rectifying it. It is in Section 15 of the Bill. Section 15 of the Bill says that "the DPP shall, as soon as possible, after the expiration of the year and in any event not later than the 31st day of March in any year, submit to the Attorney General an annual report on the application of the Act, setting out the following. So, you have statistics –

(a) the number of Immunity Notices issued;

(b) the number of Restricted-use Undertakings;

(c) the number of sentencing reductions and reviews; and

(d) statistical outcomes, without disclosing identities."

So, yes, we are taking into consideration the criticism that had been levelled at the English law governing the immunity, and we are providing it in Section 15 of the Bill.

The Leader of the Opposition then goes on to criticise Section 5(2). Yes, he is right. There is reference in that section to the Asset Recovery and Unexplained Wealth. But what does this section say? We have to read it completely. Section 5 (2) reads as follows –

"This section applies to –

(a) criminal proceedings;"

All criminal proceedings. Whether instituted under the NCA, under the Asset Recovery and Unexplained Wealth, any criminal proceeding is covered. So, you do not need to wait for

the NCA Bill to be passed or to the Asset Recovery and Unexplained Wealth Bill to have come to force.

Then

"(b) ancillary proceedings (…)."

A term of art which is linked to the criminal proceeding, for example, proceeds of a crime. You have money laundering. You are tracing the proceeds of drug trafficking, proceeds of trafficking in person. This is ancillary proceedings. Then, the section goes on to say, including, and including under the Interpretation and General Clauses Act does not in any way limit. If anything, it gives for illustration purposes. What they meant by "ancillary proceedings", it includes those under Sub-part III of Part II of the Asset Recovery and Unexplained Wealth Act 2026. So, it is immaterial whether that Act has been enacted or not.

The remainder of the section, that is, we can have this Restricted-use Undertaking in relation to any criminal proceeding or any ancillary proceeding. It works. We do not need to wait for the NCA Bill. We do not need to wait for any other legislation in order to pass this Bill as it is currently drafted.

Now, the next thing that the hon. Leader of Opposition mentioned is confidentiality. Clause 6 (5), again, the Leader of the Opposition says that this is against Article 10 of the Constitution, when you are going to hide from the public that you have given a discount on a sentence. But it is not a general application. It is limited in scope. If we read Section 6 (5), it tells you, it is the court, first of all. It is not the DPP. It is not the prosecution. It is not the Police. It is the court. The court must be of the opinion that it would not be in the public interest to disclose any information. We can well see an example where the court does not want it to be known that someone has cooperated with the Police because he may be afraid of the safety of the witness. If it is found that he collaborated with the DPP, that is when, for example, the court will decide to keep it confidential.

It is the same reasoning when we come to clause 8, about exclusion of the public. Again, the hon. Leader of Opposition thinks that excluding the public is in breach of Section 10 of the Constitution. But we already have many examples of cases in our statute. When we are dealing with minors; when we are dealing with rape victims; when we are dealing with sensitive information, the court has the power to exclude. Here also, it is the same thing. The power is

given to the court. The court will exclude the public only if it is necessary to protect the safety of any person and in the interest of justice.

We have a star witness. He is going to come and depone against the drug cartel. He is going to dismantle the drug mafia. Do you think that we want the drug mafia out there to know who is that witness? Do you think we want them to know so that they can intimidate the family of that witness? It is for the court, when it takes everything into consideration, including the safety of the witness, to decide to hold it in camera if it is in the interest of justice. Again, nothing sinister about this, Madam Speaker.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition should also take comfort that this power to grant immunity is not for the mere asking. If we look at clause 4 (1), the DPP must be of the opinion that, for the purpose of an investigation or a prosecution for an offence, it is appropriate to offer a person full immunity from prosecution for the offence, the Director may, in exceptional circumstances – it is in the law – and in the public interest, issue the person with an Immunity Notice. It is there. It is not for the mere asking. We are not changing the system and telling people: 'Come on, denounce your friend and the other one, you will go scot-free. We know the danger of securing a conviction on the testimony of co-accused. We know the warning which the jury have to give themselves before relying on uncorroborated evidence of the co-accused. This is not giving a blank cheque to anyone to come and get immunity, as the hon. Leader of Opposition seems to suggest.

But if really, like the hon. Prime Minister was mentioning, you have a case where there is a gang rape and the witness has been blindfolded. Everybody will go scot-free. If one comes forward and does a plea bargain with the Director of Public Prosecutions, which will enable securing conviction for the others, and maybe he will plead to a lesser offence, why can't we give that witness the benefit of this Immunity Notice or reduction in sentencing?

Madam Speaker, I have tried to deal as comprehensively as possible with all the point raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. This Bill is a very important Bill. This Bill has been vetted by the Director of Public Prosecutions. There is one clause in this Bill which is fundamental, and which, unfortunately, the Leader of Opposition did not even mention, and that is clause 13 of the Bill. Clause 13 of the Bill says that a Court shall not be bound to accept an Immunity Notice, a Restricted-Use Undertaking or an agreement for a reduced sentence. This is the greatest guarantee that we can get. The Executive, the Parliament, today, we are not

treading on the prerogative of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court will still be able to exercise its absolute discretion.

They can set aside the Notice. They can disregard the Restricted-Use Undertaking or disregard the agreement for reduced sentences.

Madam Speaker, to conclude, this Bill will encourage someone with important information such as a witness or insider to testify or provide evidence they otherwise might withhold. This Bill will facilitate the arrest, the prosecution and conviction of criminals who otherwise would go scot-free. This Bill, most importantly, shows that this Government means business. This Government will leave no stone unturned to fight crime.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lobine!

(6.40 p.m.)

Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, before I proceed with my intervention on this Bill, it is important that all hon. Members take a close look at what we have in the Explanatory Memorandum. This Bill is about providing immunity from prosecution and reduced sentences in certain circumstances and for matters incidental and connected thereto.

So, this Bill is independent of any other debates that might occur, that might happen with regards to the other eight Bills associated with it. This Bill should be read as a roadmap as to the powers of the DPP. The hon. Prime Minister, the hon. Minister Uteem have clearly explained the importance and role of the Director of Public Prosecutions in our legal penal ecosystem and this piece of legislation, Madam Speaker, it is only a roadmap to show how the powers of the DPP, when coupled with legislation, would ensure that we have a proper access to justice and also deliver in a modern way as to certain crimes being committed in our country.

Madam Speaker, in this Bill, there is a difficult but legitimate question to ask: When should the State or any authority offer immunity or reduced sentence to an offender whose assistance can help bring others to justice? This is a very important question. The hon. Prime Minister gave a broad objective of this Bill and I support the principle behind this legislation

because, Madam Speaker, organised crime, corruption, as rightly pointed out by hon. Uteem, and financial crime often operate behind a wall of silence.

Evidence from within those networks can be essential. But the prospect of leniency also creates an incentive to exaggerate, conceal one's own responsibility, or falsely implicate another person. That is why, Madam Speaker, our task in this august Assembly, is to legislate in order to secure useful cooperation while protecting the integrity of justice.

Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister pointed out, we have got other Commonwealth jurisdictions whereby this practice is an established one. Comparable mechanisms already exist in England and Wales. The Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 provides for immunity and restricted use undertakings alongside a statutory framework for sentence reductions and reviews under the Sentencing Act 2020. Prosecutorial guidance treats immunity as exceptional and requires careful assessment of the value and reliability of the assistance. Mauritius, Madam Speaker, is therefore following an established approach. We should also adopt the discipline that accompanies it.

Other benchmarking example, Madam Speaker, Australia, the hon. Prime Minister pointed out. Section 23 of the New South Wales Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act expressly provides that a reduced penalty must not be unreasonably disproportionate to the nature and circumstances of the offence. So, on this, I invite Government to consider including an equivalent safeguard in this Bill. In South Africa, Madam Speaker, they offer another useful comparison. Under Section 204 of its Criminal Procedure Act, a prosecution witness may earn discharge from prosecution by answering questions frankly and honestly, with the court assessing compliance. Although that mechanism differs from ours, it demonstrates the importance of judicial scrutiny and truthful cooperation.

Madam Speaker, there are welcome safeguards in this Bill. Written Immunity Notices, judicial determination of sentence reductions, provisions concerning victims, and annual reporting to this Assembly. However, some clauses require clarification. For example, Clause 4 provides that proceedings covered by Immunity Notice may not be brought, subject to the terms of the Notice. While Clause 13 states that a Court is not bound to accept that Notice. There are questions that are being raised on this issue, Madam Speaker.

For example, at what stage will the Court consider the arrangement? If it is rejected after cooperation has begun, what happens to the information already disclosed? What protection

remains for someone who has acted honestly on the strength of the undertaking? These are the practical questions for both the person concerned and the lawyer advising him. That is why, Madam Speaker, these provisions must be reconciled. An individual must know before providing incriminating information, when protection becomes effective, how judicial scrutiny will operate, and on what grounds the protection may cease. The same operative clarity is necessary for Restricted-use Undertakings.

Clause 9, Madam Speaker, recognises legal representation and the right to appeal for legal aid, but permits self-representation subject to judicial approval. Given the consequences of these negotiations, I urge that an independent legal advice be the normal requirement, supported by effective legal aid and a clear procedure for any exceptional waiver. We must protect the person against whom an assisting offender gives evidence.

The Bill preserves the DPP's disclosure duties, which I welcome, Madam Speaker. Operational rules should also require recorded interviews, careful investigation of inconsistencies, and a documented search of independent supporting evidence. The defence must receive the information necessary to challenge the witness's credibility and the benefits offered and this is where there is this novel approach, Clause 12, Madam Speaker. It it gives the opportunity for victims to submit representations, discretionary. Wherever reasonably practicable, victims should have a meaningful opportunity to be heard before an agreement is finalised, with reasons recorded where this cannot safely be done. Their participation, Madam Speaker, must of course respect the independence of the DPP. That is why in Clause 14, where they recognise that an offender who assists the authorities may face danger. It refers to witness protection programme and identifies measures such as relocation, anonymity, and protective custody. Those provisions are welcomed, Madam Speaker.

However, we need to disseminate how this will operate in practice. Who will administer the programme? What resources will support it? Can urgent protection begin during negotiations? How will risks to family members be assessed and can protection continue after proceedings if the danger remains?

So, Madam Speaker, witness protection must be operational and properly funded. The DPP's Office must also receive the personnel and resources needed to assess agreements, discharge disclosure obligations and monitor compliance and this is where I urge Government that we need to come forward with this National Prosecution Service Bill.

This Bill will give the impetus to the Director of Public Prosecution and his team to have the required personnel and financial resources to administer and to properly give his opinion/views and exercise his duties as per the law and as per the Constitution.

Madam Speaker, this Bill should thus be about cooperation and serving the truth. Leniency to remain proportionate and the independence of the DPP and the authority of our courts to be fully respected.

I support this Bill, Madam Speaker.

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

(6.50 p.m.)

The Junior Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr H. Narsinghen): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me the floor. The present Bill brings a substantial reform, not a mere technical reform as alluded in some quarters. Obviously, this Bill is not reinventing the wheel. Immunity to offenders already exists as a matter of practice and our adherence to common law of UK.

As we all know, Madam Speaker, we follow French substantive criminal law, le Code Pénal, but we tend to follow the English Common Law for criminal procedures. We have also embodied some of these practices into a number of statutory instruments. The Bill of today, Madam Speaker, provides a written framework to immunity, sentence reduction and production and protection of information. However, all precautions have been taken to leave the powers of the DPP intact with regard to prosecution. The hon. Prime Minister did hammer on this point, and some seem not to understand. Similarly, the court retains its full powers with regard to sentencing.

My intervention will harp on the following points: the actual status of the law, the rational for rewarding offenders, certain categories of offenders, an improvement of the criminal justice system, but also, I would like to hammer on safeguards and involvement of victims. But before, even if I have to sacrifice some of the points which I want to raise, I would like to rebut some of the points raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

I may be wrong, but I get the impression that when I am listening to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, as if this discretionary power did not exist under our law. No, hon. Leader of the Opposition. By virtue of Section 72, as explained very clearly by the hon. Prime Minister,

this power has all has always been in existence. Also, by our adherence to common law, this has been the practice. But what we are doing, we are codifying and improving the law.

The second point, which I have retained, is as if for each and every law that we are going to pass in this Parliament, we need a select committee. So, after the sort of statement made in the US, *un gouvernement des juges*, does the Leader of the Opposition now want a government by way of select committees? I do agree that the select committee is important, and we have to promote it. *Mais certainement, l'honorable leader de l'opposition, il ne faut pas banaliser un select committee aussi. En fait, le Parlement et ce gouvernement, ont un mandat.*

As explained by the hon. Prime Minister, this law has been ready since September. It is not now that the law is being cooked up. So, this is very important to take note. Also, another important point, as I just mentioned, there is no rush. And this is a sort of paradox. When the Government takes time to come with a law, some people in some quarters, they criticise Government. But when we come with a piece of legislation – I can tell you that for this piece of legislation – the right balance has been struck. The hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned that, in a way, we are breaching Section 10 of the Constitution, which ensures the protection of giving a fair trial to accused and suspects. This is not being breached.

This time, when we are coming with a piece of legislation, which has been able to strike the right balance, taking onboard – one of the rare occasions where we are adopting what is known as the victimology approach – we also take into consideration not only the rights of the accused under Section 10, but also the rights of the victim, as rightly explained by the Prime Minister. I think this is a sort of innovation that we are bringing into this law.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition also mentioned about the danger of relying on such type of testimony and evidence from a witness who has been granted immunity. This has always existed. Our trained magistrates and judges fully know, and the Leader of the Opposition, who is also a seasoned criminal lawyer, fully knows that magistrates and judges give a corroboration warning. So, this is already in the law and the practice. So, there is absolutely no danger.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition also mentioned that we are blindly following UK's law. There is no need. I mentioned it a couple of times in Parliament and outside, in the press, that we have to seek inspiration. The Leader of the Opposition can rest assured that the best

practices – I am sure the hon. Attorney General and his team and officers have done the work – from multiple jurisdictions, not only from UK, have been followed.

The hon. Prime Minister has explained how we have improved on what exists in the UK. These are very important points. One point which took me aback: the Leader of the Opposition mentioned that we are giving a blank check for executive convenience. Well, the executive is not involved in that procedure.

In fact, we are consolidating and structuring more the powers which are already given to the DPP, and also consolidating, this time, a judicial sort of supervision by the court. So, we have to be careful. When you look at Section 72, Madam Speaker, when you look at the structure of the Constitution, the DPP and the Commissioner of Police both form part of the executive. What we have done in Mauritius – it is very important to note – that we have not followed blindly the classical separation of powers of Montesquieu. Here, I would like to coin the term used by the former Chief Justice, Justice Glover preferred to use the term juxtaposition of powers. There are nuances between separation of powers and juxtaposition of powers. In the sense that within the so-called executive, in broad term, there is a further differentiation where these two features of the Constitution, brought about by the Father of the Constitution, Professor De Smith, this further differentiation makes a difference. We can rest assured.

Also, I hope that I am wrong. I get the impression – if I am wrong, I would like to apologise – that why should such important power be conferred on the DPP? This is a unique mechanism, a unique provision which has been provided under the Constitution, giving the powers to the DPP for all important decisions in criminal matters where he is completely immune from the executive.

These were the few points. I will not repeat what my learned friend, hon. Uteem has already pointed out. I just want to refute these few points.

So, what is the status of the actual law, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker, as I mentioned, section 72 of the Constitution already empowers the DPP to institute takeover and discontinue criminal proceedings. In fact, section 72 guarantees the independence of the decision-making process, and furthermore, he is not under any control or direction from anybody – all this is guaranteed in section 72 of the Constitution. What this present Bill is doing? Section 3 – as pointed out by hon. Uteem – of the Bill expressly preserves, expressly this time, preserves his constitutional powers. I quote from the Bill –

"(2) Save as expressly agreed otherwise by the Director of Public Prosecutions, nothing in this Act shall affect the powers conferred upon him under section 72 of the Constitution."

So, what more do we need in terms of guarantee for the independence and not touching the powers of the DPP? Similarly, very important to note – I would say hammer on that – there is absolutely no encroachment on the powers of the court with respect to sentencing. In fact, section 13 of the Bill provides this guarantee. I quote from the Bill –

"A Court shall not be bound to accept an Immunity Notice, a Restricted-Use Undertaking or an agreement for a reduced sentence."

So, in fact, Madam Speaker, we are improving on what exists in Common Law, in what exists as a matter of practice, and we have to commend that. We are improving it. We are not regressing.

In the same vein, you will notice, Madam Speaker, nothing can be imposed on the offender, accused and accomplice. So, this is why I am surprised when the Leader of the Opposition is alleging that we are breaching section 10. The protection of the accused, of the offender, under section 10 of the Constitution remains intact. It has not been touched and this is very important to note. Over and above Section 10, there is a string of cases and precedents which guarantee the concept of fair trial. Section 3(1) reads –

"(1) Nothing in this Act shall affect the right of an accused to plead guilty to a charge without entering into any undertaking under this Act."

So, this provision is of critical importance, Madam Speaker, to preserve the golden principle of fair trial enshrined in the letters and also in the spirit of our Constitution.

Therefore, we have in front of us a Bill which formalises existing practices and Common Law. In the recent case of Busowah, my learned friend hon. Uteem also mentioned other cases, the Supreme Court considered accomplice witnesses who had received immunity from the DPP. So, this has been a very constant practice which existed, and now we are regulating it to make it better. The case of Mohit also established that prosecution decisions are not wholly immune from judicial review. So, the court is there if ever there is any abuse. At one time we thought that the DPP, I am sorry to use that term, is a little less than God. This is not true. Some of the decisions – we have to categorise – of the DPP can be subject to judicial review. So,

what I want to point out, there are ample sorts of safeguards which will give us absolute guarantees.

Madam Speaker, I want also to underscore that the Bill adds a general statutory structure for cooperation arrangements and modalities – and we have to listen carefully, compared to the existing practices, compared to the common law that we have – this time the Bill will ensure certainty, more transparency and fairness, and especially consistency. Consistency is very important.

Madam Speaker, I have got a lot to say. I prefer to stop here. I prefer to rebut my learned colleague, the Leader of the Opposition. So, I would like to thank you for your attention.

Madam Speaker: Yes, I enjoyed it, but time is running. Thank you very much. Yes, hon. Minister.

(7.04 p.m.)

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Mohamed): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Since I have listened to everyone who has spoken before me, and in spite of the – I mean that by no disrespect – very timid reservations that the hon. Leader of the Opposition may have had, I honestly have the impression after having listened to the press conference of the Leader of the FMP, and one of the sentences that was pronounced by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, that there is consensus. In fact, in principle, we agree, all of us, that there is the need to bring this piece of legislation, and there is indeed an urgent need. So, let me concentrate on not what divides us, but what unites us. The principle is the most important. The rest is detail.

Now, it is clear from the arguments of my good friends who have spoken before me, the hon. Members, that the arguments put forward by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, do not stand really. So, I think the form, the method, the process have all been explained, and I will not go through it again. Suffice it to say that there are important clauses, six clauses that I believe are very important in this legislation that I would like to go on again. It is clause 4, where the DPP alone, an independent constitutional office, decides. That is clause 4. Then we go to clause 9(c), the court must approve negotiations. If the court does not approve negotiations, if the DPP does not manage to convince the court, there is no agreement. The court is not bound by any such agreement, any such deal under clause 13. Clause 7(4), a sentence can be increased if promises are not forthcoming. Very simple. Perjury is also

prosecutable under clause 5(4). Victims are consulted and informed, clause 12, and clause 15, an annual report comes to this House, the Attorney General brings it.

So, this is the gist of the law, and this is why I say we have all agreed on the principles. But let me, before I go forward towards the third part of my speech, the second part is about what I myself have lived through. It is not theory. It is not me reading the press. It is what I have lived through. I remember the days, once upon a time, in my life as a barrister, I once represented a man who was arrested, and I took all my precautions before saying what I am saying today. I am not going to mention his name.

Madam Speaker: Speak in the mike! Speak in the mike!

Mr Mohamed: It is there, do not worry.

He was arrested with a quantity of Methamphetamine – the drug for the rich: Methamphetamine (Meth) – and he was arrested sometime back with that amount of drugs. And then he wanted, and this is public because he said it in public eventually, he said: 'I want to tell the Police exactly where I got it from. I want to give the names of the suppliers. I want to give the roots. I want to give the names of who funds it. I have evidence. Allow me to speak. Come to take my statement. I am in prison pending trial. Please, come to me. Come to me'. So, I thought that it was quite normal. I mean, if someone wants to give details of that nature, the Police would be the first ones to come to the scene and say, 'well, tell us'. But at the same time, he said: 'since I am in detention, could you please protect me because a lot of those people I am going to talk about and give evidence against in writing, they are next to me, not far away. So, I do not want to be killed, beaten up, maimed or hurt in any way whatsoever, please' .

So, the Police were formally written to by myself and they were told, 'come, give him security; speak to the DPP'. In those days, before this Bill, I could only speak to the officer because as we have said, there is no proper statute for any such practice. There is no statute, nothing in writing. The Police never showed up, so much so that I sent reminders. They never showed up. I went to see them. They never showed up. Then I started asking myself questions. Why is it that an officer of ADSU, who is a highly placed officer, written to, told, 'come and take everything in writing and stop that network in its dangerous deeds', never comes up; not bothered; not interested. I go to Court, make a motion.

In that motion, I say that for him to have a fair trial, he should, at least, be allowed to state what he wants to say, and let the court later on decide whether he has contributed to breaking down a network and take that into consideration for his sentence. The court calls upon the main enquiring officer. Once, he never comes. Two times, he never shows up. Three times, he never shows up. The fourth time, the court says, if he does not show up, there will be a warrant for his arrest. Then he shows up. He stands in court. He says: 'I do not know.' Plausible deniability, according to him. So, that was the state of affairs in those days. That would still be the state of affairs if we do not come up with this piece of legislation.

What this piece of legislation would, therefore, change is that it will no longer be in the hands of one officer. Under clauses 4 to 6, it will be the Director of Public Prosecutions alone who will be able to decide.

Under clause 9, the person has a right to a lawyer. The person has a right to legal aid. He has the right to be explained all his rights before negotiations – clause 9. What he says can be protected by a Restricted-use Undertaking under clause 5. Negotiations are done under clause 9 (c).

For the first time in the law, someone who cooperates, whose safety is at risk, may be admitted, under clause 14, to a Witness Protection Programme. For the first time. So, it changes the whole process. If this had existed then, if we had had an Attorney General and a government who had the knowledge, the political will to fight crime, this would have helped that person, I once upon a time represented, be given protection, obviously, subject to the DPP agreeing. He would have been explained his rights. He would have helped break down a drug network that started in Europe, that goes through many other countries, which ended up in Mauritius. He would have explained who were those behind it. He would have explained the delivery schedules, the place where it is delivered, where used, where packed, and who exactly is behind it. He could not until today. This is the only law that would make it possible now.

So, I say congratulations to the Prime Minister for having thought it important. Congratulations to the Attorney General and the officers who have drafted this piece of legislation. This is a very important piece of legislation.

To come back to what was discussed this morning, the hon. Leader of the Opposition – and I will conclude on that – seemed so in a hurry to sort out and to come to a conclusion –

like all of us want – about the Kistnen matter. What would you, therefore, tell his widow if you say: let us go to a select committee? Let us be serious! Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Yes, hon. Prime Minister, your winding up speech!

(7.13 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank all the hon. Members who took part in that debate.

The first thing I want to say, I am a bit not sure on what my good friend, Minister Shakeel Mohamed, said. He said there is consensus, which I thought too. But then – I was noting what the Leader of the Opposition said – first of all, he rightly said, we do not want to catch just the foot soldier, but the instigators. We agree. And then he says: why are we rushing? He spoke of the transport case. He spoke about the curfew. But we have not withdrawn the NCA. I got the impression he said that. Maybe I am wrong. We have not withdrawn it. What we have done is – some people have made comments – we said we will give a bit more time. But we are not withdrawing it. Do not forget, Parliament is sovereign. You seem to forget. We were elected to bring change. Now, what are we going to do?

Hon. Lobine, I think, very rightly pointed out, to look at the Bill itself, the introduction. It is there. It is very clear. And I must also thank him for what he said because I said it too, that this Bill is part of the architecture, but at the same time, it stands alone. As hon. Uteem rightly said, it does not concern just one case; everything else: murder, drugs and everything. So, I cannot understand where this difference comes from.

Clause 13 is clear. We said it. It is for the Court to accept the deal, not anyone else, not the Police, not the DPP. It is for the Court. But hon. Lobine rightly pointed out what happens, and I thank him for this. Let me see where I wrote it. He made a good point. He said, you start negotiations for an agreement, and the Court rejects it. I think that is basically what you said. The Court does not accept the deal. I think in that case, it is for the DPP, who knows the case, who agrees to the agreement, to go and convince the Court that this deal is a good deal. I think that is the answer that I can give at this point.

But the other thing is, and you rightly pointed out – I think hon. Uteem and hon. Narsinghen also – the Constitution is not affected here. When we say the DPP or the Assistant DPP, it is not a blank cheque for the Executive. As you said, it has nothing at all to do with the Executive. Section 10 guarantees a fair hearing, as hon. Narsinghen quite properly explained.

I think the Leader of the Opposition said, what if the prisoner or the accused makes the deal and then he says he has not seen the deal. But how can he not see the deal if he makes the deal? I am not sure how this happens. We said it in the Bill. The Court will see whether he was competent. That is he understood; he was informed – consent in other words – he understood what the agreement is. So, he cannot come and say now that he has not been clear.

And also, I should add, both the DPP and the CP have been consulted. Now, we cannot keep consulting everybody. I keep saying we are sovereign. We want to listen; we listen. We are a government which listens, but we cannot go on listening, listening, listening. And then what will you say? What you said this morning? You want to see these people in prison. But we cannot delay by discussing all the time. I like the way hon. Narsinghen said it 'we cannot govern by select committees.' It has to be very select with select committees. We cannot just delay and not bring any change.

Also, I forgot to mention, when the DPP decides on immunity, it must be on the public's interest. Not just for the say! Now, today, he has to explain. He has to give evidence. He has to do it in writing, which he did not have to do before.

Let me see if I have covered everything because I wrote as they were speaking.

I was surprised that the hon. Leader of the Opposition said we should even consult anthropologists, if I understood you well.

Madam Speaker: No, he was mentioning about the other select committee.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Oh, I am so sorry.

An hon. Member: He is very select.

The Prime Minister: I am so sorry. I did not understand this properly.

As I said, this is a Bill that is important and essential. It was not brought in a rush, as I said. I think hon. Uteem said, we circulated it. The former DPM even had it before. We circulated it; we allowed people to give their impression. But to say that we have to keep discussing and delay, that is not my purpose and that is not my intention. We want to bring change. We were elected for change. And change, there will be!

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes, so now you commend the Bill to the House again?

The Prime Minister: I commend the Bill to the House.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Okay, thank you very much.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE (OFFENDERS ASSISTING INVESTIGATIONS AND PROSECUTIONS) BILL

(No. XXIV of 2026)

The Criminal Justice (Offenders Assisting Investigations and Prosecutions) Bill (No. XXIV of 2026) was considered and agreed to.

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

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Criminal Justice (Offenders Assisting Investigations and Prosecutions) Bill (No. XXIV of 2026) was read a third time and passed.

MOTION

SELECT COMMITTEE - BREACH OF LAW, ANTISOCIAL & VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR BY CHILDREN, PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

With leave of Madam Speaker, Dr. the hon. Prime Minister did not move for the following Motion standing in his name on the Order Paper, as set out below –

"This Assembly resolves that a Select Committee of the Assembly, comprising such Members as may be appointed by Madam Speaker, be appointed to consider –

(a) the root causes of breach of the law, and antisocial and violent behaviour, by children;

(b) the appropriateness of bringing in amendments relating to parental responsibility and the offence of parents inciting minors under their care to commit offences;

(c) the capacities of institutions and personnel dealing with children in conflict with the law, abandoned children, those who drop out of school and children in street situation, and matters ancillary thereto; and

(d) whether there is any need to review the minimum age of criminal responsibility of children, taking into consideration all relevant factors, with the power to call for persons, papers or records, and to consult such experts as may be needed including but not limited to child psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists and other specialists, and to make such recommendations as it deems fit."

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with your permission, after we have listened to different comments from different quarters, including from the Opposition, we think we might have to make some amendments. We will probably do that to the motion and, therefore, I am not, with your permission again, moving the motion today.

Mr Mohamed rose and seconded.

Madam Speaker: Motion standing in your name.

The Prime Minister: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Alright, I have no objection. So, in fact, the motion will lapse. So, you will have to come with a new motion in due course. Alright. Motion can be seconded again? Motion not to go ahead.

Mr Mohamed rose and seconded.

Motion, by leave, lapsed.

Madam Speaker: I am sorry, I now have to find my next step.

Adjournment of the House, hon. Prime Minister.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 10 November 2026 at 11.30 a.m.

Mr Mohamed rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Now, the House stands adjourned. There is no adjournment matter today.

Ms Anquetil: C'est fermé.

Madam Speaker: Oui, mais ce n'est pas cette semaine-ci. C'était la semaine dernière. Non, mais c'est toujours *once every fortnight. It is once every fortnight. I will explain later.*

At 7.26 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 10 November 2026 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

PERMANENT SECRETARIES & SENIOR CHIEF EXECUTIVES – ACTING ACCOUNTING OFFICERS - DISCIPLINARY FRAMEWORK

(No. B/1398) 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 Permanent

Secretaries and Senior Chief Executives acting as Accounting Officers, he will state the disciplinary framework applicable thereto, indicating –

(a) the authority responsible for initiating proceedings following adverse findings of the Director of Audit, and

(b) whether the absence of a scheme of service constitutes an impediment thereto.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS POLICE FORCE – PROPOSED REFORM –LEGISLATIVE MEASURES

(No. B/1399) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (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 proposed reform of the Mauritius Police Force, he will state where matters stand, indicating –

(a) the specific legislative measures being envisaged to strengthen police accountability, especially, following the recent incident in which Mrs E. T. was injured, and

(b) whether urgent consideration will be given thereto.

(Withdrawn)

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS – CALLS & INFLAMMATORY MESSAGES DISSEMINATION – SUSPECTS

(No. B/1402) 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 dissemination of inflammatory messages and calls for violence through social media platforms, he will, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether they have the requisite technological capabilities and legal powers to identify persons suspected thereof considering the constitutional rights of freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly, indicating whether the expertise of Meta has been sought to identify persons using anonymous profiles therefor.

(Withdrawn)

NATIONAL ECONOMY – FISCAL RESILIENCE RESTORATION – PURCHASING POWER IMPROVEMENTS

(No. B/1403) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) 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 economy, he will state the –

(a) progress achieved in strengthening fiscal discipline, reducing the public debt-to-GDP ratio and restoring the country's fiscal resilience to date, and

(b) measures being envisaged to ensure that the benefits of economic growth translate into tangible improvements in the purchasing power, real income and standard of living of the citizens.

(Withdrawn)

RIOTS (RECENT) – PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE DAMAGES – ESTIMATED COST

(No. B/1404) 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 recent riots, he will –

(a) obtain information regarding the number of reported incidents, indicating the locations and estimated cost of damages caused to public infrastructure, including police stations and vehicles, CCTV cameras, traffic lights and of private businesses and individuals and estimated economic losses sustained, and

(b) state whether consideration will be given for the introduction of an emergency financial assistance scheme to benefit affected small and medium enterprises.

(Withdrawn)

POLICE OFFICERS - SERVICE FIREARMS - CIVILIAN INJURIES & FATALITIES

(No. B/1405) 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 service firearms, he will –

(a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported incidents wherein Police Officers discharged same whilst on duty over the past five years, indicating the number of civilian injuries or fatalities having resulted therefrom, and

(b) state whether consideration will be given for a review of the existing operational protocols, training and use thereof.

(Withdrawn)

BANK-RELATED CYBER FRAUD – SENIOR CITIZENS – MONEY LOST

(No. B/1406) 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 bank-related cyber fraud, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of reported cases thereof since January 2024 to date, indicating the –

(a) total amount of money lost in connection therewith and number of senior citizens affected therewith and the total amount of money they have lost, and

(b) number thereof wherein suspects have been arrested, prosecuted and convicted in connection therewith, if any.

(Withdrawn)

RIOTS (RECENT) – DAMAGED POLICE ASSETS – REPLACEMENT

(No. B/1408) Mr A. Duval (Fourth 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 the damage caused to police assets during the recent rioting and incidents throughout the country, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of Safe City cameras, and police stations and vehicles damaged, indicating, in each case, the estimated timeframe for the replacement, remedial works and/or repair thereof, as appropriate, and giving a breakdown thereof locality-wise.

(Withdrawn)

IMPORTED GOODS – IMPOSED PROCESSING FEE – REVENUE COLLECTED

(No. B/1409) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) 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 non-refundable processing fee of Rs 150 imposed on goods imported by post/courier under Category II and III, from 01 September 2026, he will –

(a) obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, information regarding the –
    (i) amount of revenue collected as at date, and
    (ii) justification therefor, giving the cost breakdown of services provided, and
(b) state whether consideration will be given for a review/suspension thereof regarding personal consignments valued at less than Rs1,000.

(Withdrawn)

RIOTS (RECENT) – MAJOR DRUG TRAFFICKER ARREST – CHARGES

(No. B/1410) Mr G. Lesjongard (Fifth 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 the major drug trafficker arrested during or in the aftermath of the recent riots, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the nature of the charges preferred against him and where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

RIOTS (RECENT) – DAMAGED/DESTROYED POLICE STATIONS' CASE FILES & COURT CASES – REMEDIAL ACTIONS

(No. B/1411) Mr A. Duval (Fourth 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 the police stations damaged during the recent riots, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the –

(a) estimated number of case files found thereat pertaining to investigations and court cases which have been damaged or destroyed, and
(b) remedial actions being envisaged in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

BRIGADE DES JEUX – OFFICERS, VEHICLE FLEET & CASES

(No. B/1412) 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 Brigade des Jeux, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of –

(a) officers posted thereat to date gender-wise;
(b) vehicles put at the disposal thereof, and
(c) cases dealt with, indicating the number thereof referred to the Financial Crimes Commission.

(Withdrawn)

ROAD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT – MECHANISMS & PROCEDURES – TRAFFIC ALLEVIATION

(No. B/1413) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (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 road traffic management, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the –

(a) mechanisms and procedures in place therefor, particularly, during peak hours, including policies, protocols and procedures applicable in the event of road traffic accidents, vehicle breakdowns or road blockages, and
(b) additional measures being envisaged to improve same and alleviate traffic congestion.

(Withdrawn)

MR J. K. Y. T. MURDER – INQUIRY

(No. B/1419) Mr C. Lukeeram (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) 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 inquiry into the murder of Mr J. K. Y. T., he will, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand, indicating whether –

(a) any potential link with the cannabis plantation adjacent the murder site is being investigated;

(b) CCTV footage of main access points to murder site have been secured and, if not, why not, and

(c) the services of foreign ballistic/experts are being solicited.

(Withdrawn)

AIR MAURITIUS LTD & GRANT THORNTON LTD – ADVISORY FEES – FCC INQUIRY

(No. B/1420) Mr R. Jhummun (Second 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 inquiry initiated by the Financial Crimes Commission in connection with the advisory fees paid by Air Mauritius Ltd. to Grant Thornton Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand, indicating whether all persons interrogated in connection therewith are still in Mauritius.

(Withdrawn)

CHILDREN'S ACT - AMENDMENT - JUVENILES CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY AGE – CHILD-RIGHTS IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(No. B/1421) Mr G. Lesjongard (Fifth 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 the proposed amendment to the Children's Act with a view to bringing down the criminal responsibility of juveniles from 14 to 12 years, he will state whether a comprehensive child-rights impact assessment has been commissioned to determine the potential impact thereof on juvenile delinquency.

(Withdrawn)

CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO SOVEREIGNTY – UK'S NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER MEETING – OUTCOME

(No. B/1424) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) 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

ratification of the Treaty between the United Kingdom and Mauritius for the transfer of sovereignty of the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius on 22 May 2025, he will state where matters stand following his meeting with Mr J. P., the United Kingdom's National Security Adviser, on 02 October 2026 in London.

(Withdrawn)

NHDC HOUSING ESTATES – SYNDIC SYSTEM – REFORM – MAINTENANCE & MANAGEMENT COMPLAINTS – JUNE 2026

(No. B/1450) Mr S. Pierre (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the proposed reform of the Syndic system for the National Housing Development Co. Ltd. housing estates, he will state where matters stand, indicating whether he is aware that following the letter of information issued to the residents concerned in June 2026 therefor, existing syndics in several such housing estates have reportedly ceased/reduced the provision of essential maintenance and management services and, if so, indicate the measures being envisaged.

(Withdrawn)

CONSTITUENCY NO. 13 – NHDC HOUSING UNITS – ALLOCATION – 2014-OCTOBER 2026

(No. B/1451) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the provision of housing units by the National Housing Development Co. Ltd. in Constituency No. 13, Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of housing units –

(a) allocated since 2014 to date, and

(b) earmarked for allocation, indicating the expected timeframe therefor.

(Withdrawn)

FRUITS & VEGETABLES - PESTICIDE RESIDUES - MEASURES

(No. B/1452) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the reported high level of pesticide residues detected in fruits and vegetables, he will state the measures –

(a) taken by his Ministry in relation thereto

(b) being envisaged to curtail the use of pesticides in the production thereof, and

(c) being taken or envisaged, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Wellness, in respect of the potential consequences thereof on public health.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/1444)

WORLD KNITS LTD & ASSOCIATED COMPANIES - RECEIVERSHIP - EMPLOYEES - FINANCIAL SUPPORT

(No. B/1454) Mr G. P. Venkatasami (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to World Knits Ltd. and associated companies under receivership, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

(a) the number of Mauritian and foreign employees affected, indicating the measures taken to –

  (i) safeguard their rights and welfare, and

  (ii) provide financial support, placement opportunities/alternative employment thereto, and

(b) whether consultations have been held with the receiver and relevant authorities to ensure full compliance with applicable labour laws.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS – INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL CENTRE – CONSOLIDATION

(No. B/1456) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning whether, in regard to the consolidation of Mauritius as an International Financial Centre, she will state the –

(a) measures being implemented to strengthen the credibility and attractiveness thereof, and

(b) initiatives being undertaken to attract new international financial institutions to promote financial innovation and encourage the development of high-value financial services.

(Withdrawn)

QUATRE BORNES – *RÉSIDENCE LYS* LEISURE PARK, BASSIN ROAD – INFRASTRUCTURAL WORKS

(No. B/1458) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the infrastructural works undertaken at Résidence Lys Leisure Park, Bassin Road, in Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand, indicating the expected completion date thereof.

(Withdrawn)

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS SCHOOLS – COMPLAINTS – 2024-2026

(No. B/1461) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to Special Education Needs schools, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Special Education Needs Authority, information as to –

(a) the number of complaints received in relation thereto over the past two years, indicating the –

(i) nature thereof, and

(ii) actions taken in relation thereto category-wise, and

(b) whether any of the said schools have been found to be operating without the requisite registration and, if so, indicate the remedial actions taken.

(Withdrawn)

EL NIÑO PHENOMENON – RAINFALL PATTERNS – IMPACT

(No. B/1462) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the El Niño phenomenon, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether an assessment of the likely impact thereof on the country has been carried out in respect of rainfall patterns, water availability, agricultural production, food security, public health and extreme weather risks and, if so, state where matters stand regarding the formulation of a national preparedness and response plan thereto.

(Withdrawn)

SEAPLANE ACCIDENT – TOURIST DEATH - INQUIRY

(No. B/1463) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the seaplane accident wherein a tourist died, he will obtain information as to the findings of the inquiry initiated thereinto, indicating the actions, if any –

(a) taken against the seaplane operator, whether he possessed a valid permit therefor and, if so, indicate the date of issue, issuing authority and terms and conditions thereof, including regarding passenger safety and operational requirements, and

(b) implemented by his Ministry following same.

(Withdrawn)

MOLASSES - SALE - GENERATED REVENUE

(No. B/1465) Mr R. Beechook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the revenue generated from the sale of molasses over the past financial year, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain the detailed breakdown of the distribution thereof by category of stakeholder, indicating the methodology and formula used for the computation of the amount payable thereto.

(Withdrawn)

PROFESSIONAL FISHERMAN CARD – APPLICATIONS

(No. B/1466) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the Professional Fisherman Card, he will state whether consideration will be given for the issue of invitations for applications therefor and, if so, when, indicating whether priority of consideration will be given to longstanding fishermen who depend primarily on this activity for their livelihood.

(Withdrawn)

HALLOOMAN & TAGORE ROADS, RICHE MARE, CENTRAL FLACQ – FLOODING – REMEDIAL MEASURES

(No. B/1469) Mr R. Beechook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the recurrent flooding occurring along Hallooman and Tagore Roads, in Riche Mare, Centre de Flacq, during heavy rainfalls, he will,

for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Land Drainage Authority, information as to the remedial measures being envisaged in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

SUGAR-SWEETENED PRODUCTS – EXCISE DUTY INCREASE

(No. B/1471) Mr S. Pierre (Third Member for Stanley & Rose-Hill) asked the Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the budgetary measure consisting of increasing excise duty on the sugar content of sugar-sweetened products, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether joint technical meetings have been held between relevant stakeholders and the Ministry to discuss the implications thereof and, if so, indicate where matters stand in addressing the concerns raised.

(Withdrawn)

PESTICIDES REGULATORY OFFICE – OFFICERS – REDUCTION

(No. B/1472) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the Pesticides Regulatory Office, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the reasons for the reduction in the number of officers posted thereat from five to three, indicating whether consideration is being given for the restoration of the staffing level thereof, having regard to the remarks made by the Director of Audit in respect of the use of pesticides in Mauritius.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/1444)

MAURITIUS FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE – VEHICLE FLEET – PUMP UNITS

(No. B/1473) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

(a) the number of vehicles in the fleet thereof, indicating the number thereof currently out of service, further indicating whether the number of operational vehicles is adequate to respond effectively to fire outbreaks and flooding incidents island-wide, and

(b) whether the pump units acquired in 2021 at a cost of approximately USD 500,000 have been put to operational use and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)