



EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 08 APRIL 2025

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THE CABINET

(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. Paul Raymond Bérenger, GCSK	Deputy Prime Minister
Hon. Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack Mohamed	Minister of Housing and Lands
Hon. Rajesh Anand Bhagwan	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. Mrs Marie Arianne Navarre-Marie	Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare
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 Ramtohl	Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Lutchmanah Pentiah	Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms
Hon. Ranjiv Wochit, OSK	Minister of Local Government
Hon. Mahendra Gondeea, OSK	Minister of Arts and Culture

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Madam Speaker	Hon. Mrs Shirin Aumeeruddy-Cziffra
Deputy Speaker	Hon. Vedasingam Vasudevachariar Baloomoody
Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Hon. Mohamed Ehsan Juman
Acting Clerk of the National Assembly	Gopall, Mr Navin
Adviser	Lotun, Mrs Bibi Safeena, CSK
Clerk Assistant	Seetul, Ms Darshinee
Clerk Assistant	Naika-Cahaneea, Mrs Prishnee
Clerk Assistant	Tayelamay, Mr Niteshen
Adviser, Hansard Matters	Allet, Mrs Marie-Hélène Caroline
Assistant Hansard Editor	Hurdoss, Miss Doushika
Parliamentary Librarian and Information Officer	Jeewoonarain, Ms Prittydevi
Acting Serjeant-at-Arms	Seegobin, Mr Somduth

MAURITIUS

Eighth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 10 of 2025

Sitting of Tuesday 08 April 2025

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

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Office of the President

- (a) The Municipal City Council and Municipal Town Council Elections (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 29 of 2025)
- (b) The Annual Report of the National Human Rights Commission for the period 01 January 2024 to 31 December 2024. (In Original)

B. Prime Minister's Office

Ministry of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications

Ministry of Finance

Ministry for Rodrigues and Outer Islands

- (a) Certificate of Urgency in respect of the following Bills (In Original):
 - (i) The National Agency for Drug Control Bill (No. VI of 2025); and
 - (ii) The Vallée D'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation (Repeal) Bill (No. VII of 2025).
- (b) The Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 31 of 2025)
- (c) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Media Trust for the year ended 30 June 2024.
- (d) The Financial Statements and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Discharged Persons' Aid Committee for the year ended 30 June 2023.
- (e) The Sugar Insurance Fund (Reduced General and Fire Insurance Premiums) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 32 of 2025)

C. Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change

The Environment (Application Fee) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 33 of 2025)

D. Ministry of National Infrastructure

The Professional Quantity Surveyors' Council (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 30 of 2025)

E. Ministry of Health and Wellness

The Chikungunya (Health Assessment of Incoming Passengers from Reunion Island) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 34 of 2025)

F. Ministry of Financial Services and Economic Planning

The Annual Report and the Audited Financial Statements of the Financial Services Commission for the year ended 30 June 2024.

G. Ministry of Local Government

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the District Council of Rivière du Rempart for the year ended 30 June 2023. (In Original)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

NEW CANCER HOSPITAL – SURGICAL INTERVENTIONS – PATIENTS’ DEATH

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr G. Lesjongard) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the death of patients H.C. and T.S. which occurred on 09 March 2025 at the Victoria Hospital and on 11 March 2025 at the Sir Anerood Jugnauth Hospital, respectively, and having both undergone prior surgical interventions at the New Cancer Hospital, he will state if any inquiry has been carried out thereinto and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof, in each case.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister!

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, allow me at the very outset to convey my deepest sympathy to the bereaved families.

I am informed that patient H.C. was referred from Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital to the National Cancer Centre. Madam Speaker, I have the full medical record for the patient, but as it is confidential information and without the patient’s written approval, in this case, the relative’s written consent, I cannot disclose same today in Parliament.

Madam Speaker, with regard to patient T.S., he was referred from SSR National Hospital on 17 February 2025. I cannot again, Madam Speaker, state the medical history of the patient and the treatment received without the relative’s written consent.

I wish to inform the House that, in both cases, preliminary investigations have been carried out and there is no evidence of medical negligence. They were extremely complicated cases. Nevertheless, the newly constituted Medical Negligence Committee will review both cases.

Madam Speaker, upon my assumption of office, I took note that there were 30 outstanding cases of alleged medical negligence which required immediate attention.

My Ministry is currently carrying out an audit of these cases and, to date, 15 cases have already been audited. These two cases will also be audited in due course. In fact, I noted that the procedures, which were put in place earlier, were very lengthy, resulting in significant delays in the resolution of such cases. There has been a growing dissatisfaction among members of the public, with several complainants expressing their frustration and dissatisfaction on the prolonged time taken for the conclusion of investigations which spans over years.

In order to address these shortcomings, I have reviewed all procedures and have already set up the new Medical Negligence Committee (MNC). The new Medical Negligence Committee will be chaired by Mrs R. Veerapen, Senior Adviser at my Ministry, and will comprise the following members –

- Dr. Pauvaday, Senior Adviser;
- Dr. Gujadhur, Senior Adviser;
- a representative of the Attorney General's Office;
- a Manager Human Resources, Hospital Services, and
- Consultants/Specialists in the relevant field will be co-opted as and when required.

For each case of suspected medical negligence, a team will be appointed by the Director Health Services for hospital services comprising –

- a Regional Health Director (from a hospital other than the one where the negligence is alleged to have occurred), and
- a Consultant(s)-in-Charge in the relevant speciality (from a hospital other than the one where the negligence is alleged to have occurred).

In order to ensure prompt action, the team will collect all necessary information and submit a report to the MNC within 48 hours.

The MNC will have the power to convene any officer concerned and the complainant(s) for further explanations, as required. The MNC will submit its report to the Senior Chief Executive of my Ministry with its recommendations for further action within one month of receipt of the preliminary report.

Appropriate actions in line with the PSC regulations will be taken where required.

In addition, the following measures are being introduced to improve the patients' safety in our healthcare system –

- a) weekly mortality meetings will be chaired by the Regional Health Directors to review all deaths reported in the hospitals, identify preventable causes and address lapses in care. Monthly reports will be submitted to the Director of Health Services for follow-up, and
- b) clinical auditing will be introduced across all health regions to identify errors with a view to reducing medical negligence. In the same line, healthcare providers will

be trained in auditing, and findings will be incorporated into the Continuing Professional Development Programme. Monthly audit reports will be submitted to Regional Health Directors to track progress and ensure continuous improvement in care.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that the National Cancer Hospital is equipped with four surgical operation theatres, but no human resource planning has been carried out to have the services of even a single oncological surgeon. Because of that, we are having the collaboration of foreign teams, especially from India to carry out surgeries of complex cases of cancer.

The National Cancer Centre was inaugurated last year on 08 May 2024, and equipment lied idle, locked up in rooms in the Centre. In addition, consumables had already expired.

After a site visit, which I effected immediately after taking office, I gave instructions for all equipment to be installed and surgeries to be carried out promptly.

As of now, 62 surgeries regarding cancer have been conducted. As of 07 February 2025, 12 surgeries were conducted by foreign surgeons and 50 were conducted by the local team. Unfortunately, there have been two deaths.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that Pancreatic Head Cancer is a type of pancreatic cancer that arises in the head (rightmost part) of the pancreas, which is near the duodenum. It is the most common location for pancreatic cancer and unfortunately carries a high mortality rate. Median survival is often 6 to 12 months, or less without treatment.

The mortality is high as it is often diagnosed late, as early symptoms such as jaundice, weight loss, abdominal pain are vague. The tumour is aggressive and fast-spreading, especially to nearby vessels and lymph nodes. Response to chemotherapy and radiation is limited compared to other cancers. Overall, survival rate is less than 10%.

Cholangiocarcinoma is a bile duct cancer and has a generally poor prognosis, largely due to its often-late diagnosis and aggressive nature.

Prognosis depends on factors such as tumour location, stage at diagnosis, and whether surgical resection is possible.

Median survival: 6-12 months, depending on response to chemotherapy. Survival rate is less than 5%.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the medical team, despite all the risks involved in complex cases, in the performance of their duties.

I wish to inform the House that Dr. D., Senior Consultant and Head of Minimal Access Oncologic Surgery, Department of Surgical Oncology, Sparsh Hospitals Bengaluru, India, performed the surgery. He is known to be an efficient and well-established surgical oncologist with a wide experience in performing several oncology surgeries. I would like to thank the medical team. And despite all risks involved in complex cases, I wish to inform that another Mauritian doctor was also involved in the operation. He is also fully qualified, and he has conducted a series of surgical operations in our country.

I would like to thank both of them for the work that they have done. Unfortunately, two deaths have occurred, and for this, we are utterly sorry.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, supplementary question?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. I also wish to convey my deepest condolences to the bereaved family.

This is a very serious issue, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Minister to confirm whether the ICU at the New Cancer Hospital is operational, or whether, patients, after undergoing surgery, have to be transferred to other hospitals for post-surgery monitoring?

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, this is a fact that we do not have an ICU as of now in the New Cancer Hospital. Before opening any hospital, it should have been the duty of the then government to take cognizance of the fact that this is a cancer hospital. Nothing was done!

And, secondly, Madam Speaker, we have hundreds of people, hundreds of patients queuing up over there in order to undergo such treatments, and it is extremely impossible for any government to send all those cancer patients to India – extremely impossible! And, that is the reason why we have started surgical operations, keeping in mind that at the Flacq Hospital, we have got a modern and complex ICU, where patients are sent, and also at Victoria Hospital. It is a fact; everybody should understand that this was in all fanfare that the hospital was opened, but, in fact, there was nothing, not the least equipment which was in use. And thanks to this Government, our Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister who have their eyes on that hospital, we are doing our utmost best. Even the PET Scan will be operational within a month or so.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: *Redir li. Li pann comprend.*

An hon. Member: *Medpoint la sa non?*

Mr Bachoo: *Oui.*

Mr Mohamed: *Bisin asize!*

Madam Speaker: Will you please ...

Mr Lesjongard: He has said what...

Madam Speaker: One moment!

This is a very serious matter. I don't think we should joke too much. We understand what the Minister said; we also understand what he said about the past government. Let the hon. Leader of the Opposition carry on with his supplementary questions. You can also ask supplementary questions. Please!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, he is now the Minister.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr Lesjongard: He should have taken the right decisions.

Madam Speaker: Don't say 'he'!

Mr Lesjongard: Will he agree ...

Madam Speaker: Don't say 'he'!

Mr Lesjongard: Will the hon. Minister agree...

Madam Speaker: That's it.

Mr Lesjongard: ... that this procedure is not only problematic, Madam Speaker, but also dangerous and catastrophic?

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, when 62 surgical oncological operations had been undertaken, unfortunately, as I told you, there had been two deaths. What should the government have done though we do not have an ICU? In fact, in the months to come, we will be having a modern ICU in that hospital. There was no other way than to start the operation; I can't allow patients to die without being attended to medically.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Thank you!

An hon. Member: Jagutpal *sa!* Jagutpal!

Mr Lesjongard: Will he confirm that after a very complex surgical intervention, patient T.S. was transferred from the New Cancer Hospital to SAJ Hospital at Flacq, which is 45 minutes to one hour away, thereby exposing that patient to complications, infections and life-threatening conditions, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: Be short and sweet, and direct in your answer, please!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, please.

Mr Bachoo: The patient himself expressed the wish to be operated; he expressed the wish, and we had to do it. And as I told you, in Mauritius, we have got one modern Intensive Care Unit, which is found at Flacq.

Madam Speaker, I have to be short, yes. The House should know that my ministry has got a debt of Rs2.2 billion; a debt left by the previous government. How can you expect us overnight to start a new Intensive Care Unit? They have not paid Rs575 million for COVID-19, though they were charging Rs2 per litre of petrol; they have taken that tax, but they have not paid that money. They owe almost Rs1.2 billion as overtime to those medical and paramedical workers who are working in the hospitals. Despite all these constraints ...

An hon. Member: Shame!

Mr Bachoo: ... I can say thank you to all the paramedical and medical staff.

Hon. Members: Shame! Shame!

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: Is the hon. Minister aware that that patient sent a mail to his Ministry, expressing his apprehensions of being operated in Mauritius? Because he had been in front of a medical board whereby they had approved that he be operated abroad, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister!

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, normally, there is a board comprising three medical experts; they take all cases one by one. All cases are dealt with by them, and that board decides whether the patient is fit to travel or not, and there are other aspects that have to be

taken into consideration. Let me remind the hon. Member that 4-5 cases are sent to India almost every week, which is in itself something extraordinary; something which was not there in the past. Had this been referred by the medical team, definitely we would have taken the decision to send him abroad.

Madam Speaker: Okay!

Mr Lesjongard: So, he is aware of the mail that was sent on 20 February to his ministry by that patient. Can he also confirm whether the other patient, Mr H.C., was also, after his operation, transferred to Victoria Hospital for post-surgery monitoring and that the patient passed away two days later?

Mr Bachoo: I have already mentioned since the beginning that the National Cancer Hospital was almost naked when we took over! I could not leave patients to die without being treated! That would have been a crime according to the law of this country! We had to save lives. The hon. Member did not tell the House that that patient expressed his wish to be operated on by a foreign doctor. In fact, his wish was fulfilled. But, unfortunately, as I told you, it was pancreatic cancer. I am not a doctor, but everybody knows – we have to speak the truth, and nothing but the truth— that it was almost impossible to survive. But we did our best because there is hope as long as there is life.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Yes, one moment. He caught my eye – hon. Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: One moment. He already asked me for the floor.

Dr. Aumeer: May the hon. Minister of Health inform and confirm to the House that the percentage of complications of such high-risk surgery, be it pancreatic surgery or colonic surgery, is more than 20%? In this case, it is 2 out of 50, which is only 3%! We have to be grateful to the surgeons who came from India, and not make political mileage on the dead bodies!

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, I have just mentioned it; it is true. It is 2 cases out of 60. Though two is too much, we still have to thank the doctors and the medical team for the work that they are performing.

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: You should recognise your...

Mr Bachoo: I do not want to sound wrong, but if you look at all the hospitals in the country, the percentage of death – I am sorry to say so – is higher than what it is in the National Cancer Hospital. I am sorry to have used this language.

Madam Speaker: Yes, of course. Your next question!

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether all the foreign doctors were granted temporary registration under the Medical Council Act? If so, can he confirm whether the necessary documentations were issued?

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, I have to look into the matter because normally, the procedures are done by the staff/officers concerned of my ministry. But the answer I am getting is ‘yes’.

I will say one thing again. It is important that we do not impute motives to foreign friends who are coming to serve our country because they do not charge money. Most of them travel to our country; we provide them with accommodation and, at most, one dinner. That is all. They are performing miracles in our country. We have to be *redevable envers* them.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, your next question!

Mr Lesjongard: If he says so, will he table the necessary documentation with regard to...

Madam Speaker: I do not see the point. You have asked your question!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes! I am asking him whether he will table...

Mr Bachoo: What was it? I could not get that.

Madam Speaker: Whether you will table...

Mr Lesjongard: Whether he will table...

Madam Speaker: Let me! Whether you would table the documentation regarding his last question about foreign doctors.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, ...

Madam Speaker: If there is nothing to hide, ...

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, I do not have anything to hide. But as the procedures stand, I have to get the clearance from the State Law Office.

Madam Speaker: Of course!

Mr Bachoo: At least legal advice. But I would like to ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition that he should have apologised to the House for the incompetence of the former Minister of Health!

An hon. Member: Jagutpal!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, he cannot ask me questions! I ask him questions now!

Madam Speaker: What can I do? I mean...

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Non!* He asked you to apologise...

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, is he aware...

Mr Mohamed: *Mem kan to ti dan pouvoir to pa ti pe...*

Mr Lesjongard: ...that one of the doctors who performed surgery at the New Cancer Hospital did not have the necessary authorisation from the Medical Council?

Mr Bachoo: I have just mentioned that I am going to ask the officers because this work is done by the officers of my ministry with the doctors. I have to ask! But, again, I would like to say that I do not have anything against the doctors who, most of them, are voluntarily coming to perform surgical operations in Mauritius. If such types of questions, simple questions, start cropping up, that will deter them from coming to Mauritius because they are serving our nation. Do not forget about it!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you have to put in the balance what is more important. Do you see what I mean? What is more important.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: Now, given the serious concerns regarding patients' safety...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Let him talk!

Mr Lesjongard: ...at the New Cancer Hospital and the recent deaths that I have mentioned, would the Ministry support the setting up of a fact-finding committee chaired by an independent person to look into those cases?

Mr Bachoo: I find it very strange because the hon. Member, at that time when dozens of them passed away without food, shelter and basic necessities, did not deem it fit to condemn those actions! Today, he wants a fact-finding committee to be set up. I have already told you of the preliminary report which was submitted to me. Unfortunately, I cannot read it out because of certain things which are very secret. According to that preliminary report, everything was done well to the satisfaction of my ministry and the doctors. Despite that, we have submitted it to the negligence committee, and they will look at it.

Madam Speaker: I was going to say that there is already the Medical Council with a committee to do this kind of investigation. They are mandated by law.

Yes, hon. Mr A. Duval!

Mr A. Duval: The hon. Minister has mentioned a backlog of cases – 15 cases audited so far. He has mentioned the audit of alleged medical negligence cases. Can I ask the hon. Minister, in view of the backlog, especially in cases that occurred during the COVID-19 period, which were not properly looked into, is he prepared to bring to Parliament an amendment to law for the extension of the limitation to bring a claim against a doctor or the State or any other medical practitioner for medical negligence...

Madam Speaker: No, he cannot!

Mr A. Duval: ...which is two years?

Madam Speaker: You cannot ask that to the hon. Minister because it does not concern just his ministry. It concerns everybody.

Mr A. Duval: May I rephrase it? Is Government prepared to review the limitation period, which is only two years and, in many cases, is unsatisfactory, in view of the backlog?

Mr Bachoo: I get the feeling...

Madam Speaker: You do not need to answer that! The hon. Attorney General will address this issue in due course.

Mr Juman: *10 an ti kumsa...*

Madam Speaker: This is an overall question. It does not concern... I am saying again...

(Interruptions)

Please sit down!

(Interruptions)

I am talking!

(Interruptions)

I am saying again that you cannot ask him for his ministry because claims against Government come on any sort of subject. So, you cannot ask him to give you that answer! But I am sure he has noted it, and maybe Government has noted it too, and this question may be thrashed out at one point.

We have only a few minutes left!

Mr Lesjongard: I have one last question.

Madam Speaker: Yes, your last question!

Mr Lesjongard: Now, can I ask the hon. Minister to confirm to this House whether those patients who had undergone surgery at the New Cancer Hospital had to undergo multiple reoperations due to complications related to the first surgery?

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, I mentioned 62 cases. The answer I am receiving is 'no'. They did not have to go through multiple types of intervention. That is not the case.

Madam Speaker: But even so, it is a medical issue. It is a medical issue and not a political issue!

Mr Juman: *To ban informater inn bez twa dan erer!*

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Okay, that's it! Thank you very much everybody.

Ms Anquetil: *Bravo Anil! Bravo!*

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ B/286 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms. PQ B/294 will be replied by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister, time permitting. PQs B/268 and B/270 have been withdrawn.

Now, I call the hon. Third Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil, Mr Ramkalawon!

PRB REPORT 2026 – PUBLICATION & PREPARATION

(No. B/267) Mr C. Ramkalawon (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the forthcoming publication of the Pay Research Bureau Report, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand regarding the preparation thereof, indicating if same will be published as scheduled.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, as the House is aware, since 1982, the Pay Research Bureau has conducted the general review exercise on pay and grading structures every five years, except for 2016, where the report was published after a period of three years. The 2016 PRB Report, however, re-established the periodicity of the general review exercise to five years, as it was before, and, consequently, the last one was in 2021. The next report will, therefore, take effect on 01 January 2026.

I am informed, Madam Speaker, that the preparation for the next report started in March 2023 according to a pre-set work plan, and relevant information was gathered.

These are impacting the Bureau's calendar of activities because I found out that there was some delay because they talked to the different ministries/departments, local authorities and also the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. There are 126 parastatal bodies that fall under the purview of the PRB. The Bureau has to gather the maximum information to facilitate the interaction and exchange of views with all the stakeholders.

So far, the Bureau has had 578 meetings with Staff Associations and Management of both Parastatal Bodies and Civil Service. 1,315 interviews have been conducted in relation to job description and 12 site visits have been effected to examine the alleged problem areas highlighted by the stakeholders.

As a matter of fact, the officers of the Bureau are presently in Rodrigues holding consultations with Unions and Management of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

I have been informed, Madam Speaker, that the Bureau is facing several constraints, including delay from stakeholders to submit the relevant information. These are impacting the Bureau's planned calendar of activities. The publication date of the Report is now scheduled for December 2025.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Prime Minister.

PHOENIX – NEW POLICE STATION – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/268) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) 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 construction of a new Police Station at Phoenix, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

Madam Speaker: The hon. Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac! Yes, Dr. the hon. Ms Daureeawo!

PRISONS & DETENTION CENTRES – HYGIENIC CONDITIONS – PRISONERS' MEDICAL TREATMENT

(No. B/269) 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 prisons and detention centres, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to the –

- (a) current hygienic conditions thereof, and
- (b) time taken to provide medical treatment and/or care to prisoners.

The Prime Minister: I am informed, Madam Speaker, by the Acting Commissioner of Prisons that detainees are admitted to prisons either on remand or as convict following an order from the Court.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the Prison Service is meant to ensure that hygienic conditions are maintained in all institutions. The measures taken include the provision of personal toiletries, clothing and bedding as well as adequate toilet and bathroom facilities. A laundry system for washing clothing and bedding is also put at their disposal. Cleaning of cells and dormitories are performed by detainees under the supervision of Prison Officers.

Furthermore, the Prison Service undertakes routine maintenance and upgrading works. Regular pest control interventions are also conducted by trained Prison Officers. Additionally,

fogging exercises are carried out by the personnel of the Ministry of Health and Wellness upon request.

Inspections by the National Preventive Mechanism Division of the National Human Rights Commission help to ensure the compliance with living standards.

Moreover, workplace hygiene is regulated in accordance with the Occupational Safety and Health Act. The Prison Service actively monitors cleanliness through designated Prison Officers in each prison and also by visits by the Safety and Health Officer twice a week.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the Prison Service operates three fully functional in-patient wards that are opened round the clock. They are located at the Melrose Prison, the Central Prison, and the Women's Prison at Beau Bassin.

Other Institutions, namely Grand River North West Remand Prison, Petit Verger Prison, Richelieu Open Prison, and Phoenix Prison, have each a dispensary where medical treatment and primary care are dispensed during office hours from Monday to Saturday. During weekends, public holidays, and at night, Prison Health Service Officers from the Central Prison, Beau Bassin, attend these institutions in case of emergency.

Detainees requiring medical care are attended to at the three in-patient wards and four dispensaries.

Detainees requiring further investigations or specialised care and treatment, are then referred and admitted to Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital where two wards have been converted for male and female detainees. These two wards offer a 24-hour in-patient service and are manned by nursing and medical staff of the hospital.

An ambulance equipped with Basic Life Support devices is on stand-by mode at Beau Bassin Prison for the transportation of persons who are not well from prisons to public hospitals. In addition, the services of the SAMU are solicited to attend to life-threatening emergencies for conveyance of the detainees to the nearest public hospital.

As regards part (c) of the question, Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Acting Commissioner of Prisons that the Prison Institutions are not overcrowded as they are currently occupied at 75.32% of their optimum capacity.

TELEVISION PROGRAMMES – MBC ACT & IBA ACT – AMENDMENTS

(No. B/270) Mr P. Venkatasami (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) 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 television programmes produced locally, he will state if Government will consider bringing amendments to the –

- (a) Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation Act with a view to ensuring that same are fair and impartial, and
- (b) Independent Broadcasting Authority Act to grant private operators the right to broadcast same.

(Withdrawn)

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière, Mr Quirin!

MBC – LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL SPORTING EVENTS – BROADCASTING

(No. B/271) 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 the broadcasting of local and international sporting events, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to –

- (a) the annual budget allocated therefor;
- (b) the measures taken to secure the live transmission of the FA English Premier League and UEFA matches, and
- (c) whether negotiations have already started with suppliers and organisers for the upcoming local and international events and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, why not.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the annual budget allocation of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation for the broadcasting of local and international sports events varies between 25 to 30 million rupees.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the MBC that for the FA English Premier League, the Corporation currently broadcasts 33 live matches per season, that is, one

live match every Saturday under its Free-To-Air rights package and three FA English Premier League magazine programmes each week.

I am also informed that the MBC has already secured the rights for the next three FA English Premier League seasons up to the year 2028 and this Free-To-Air rights package includes four FA Cup matches annually.

Concerning UEFA matches, I am informed that the MBC has already secured a partnership with New World TV for the broadcasting rights of one UEFA Champions League match and one Europa League or Conference League match per match day, including the quarterfinals, semifinals, and finals.

I am also informed that after several years, the MBC is now broadcasting the Spanish Football League Competition known as ‘La Liga’ with one match per weekend.

Madam Speaker, regarding part (c) of the question, I am informed that for local events, the MBC works in close collaboration with event organisations and sports federations for live broadcasting of same. The MBC also intends to produce and broadcast future Club M matches played in Mauritius. Moreover, the upcoming horseracing season will be produced and broadcast live on the MBC. In addition, major sports tournaments, such as, the Mauritius Sevens Rugby Tournament are currently in the planning phase and will be featured as part of the Corporation’s expanded sports programming.

Efforts are also being made by the Corporation to enhance the MBC11 channel with a view to promoting youth engagement and the development of regional and gender-inclusive sports coverage.

Madam Speaker, in regard to international events, I am informed that the following negotiations have been undertaken by the MBC –

- (i) an Agreement has been concluded for the live broadcast of the FIFA World Cup 2026;
- (ii) the MBC is exploring avenues to secure rights for other major events, such as, the FIFA Club World Cup, Africa Cup of Nations, World Athletics, and the Para-athletics World Championships, and
- (iii) the negotiations are ongoing for the broadcast of cycling events and other international competitions, based on rights availability.

Madam Speaker, it is apposite for me to underscore the fact that while Free-To-Air broadcasting rights are subject to limitations imposed by international organisations and their appointed regional distributors, the MBC remains committed to securing a diverse and representative sports offering for the population.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Prime Minister. Yes!

Mr Quirin: Merci, Madame la présidente. L'honorable Premier ministre peut-il dire à la Chambre, et en particulier aussi aux amateurs de football anglais, suite à l'annonce que lui-même avait faite durant la dernière campagne électorale à l'effet que tous les matchs de la *Premier League* seraient retransmis en direct à la télévision – je conviens, tous les matchs, cela va coûter énormément – ne serait-ce pour ceux qui n'ont pas les moyens de s'abonner aux chaînes payantes, si la *MBC*, à travers le Premier ministre, envisage de retransmettre ne serait-ce les matchs phares de chaque weekend, afin de permettre aux amateurs de football anglais de visionner leurs équipes préférées ?

The Prime Minister: In fact, I thank the hon. Member for saying, given the financial situation of the country; but, actually, the MBC is looking to do exactly that, if possible.

Madam Speaker: Of course!

Yes, the hon. First Member for Savanne and Black River!

IFCM LTD – ROLES & FUNCTIONS – FUNDS INVESTED & DISBURSED

(No. B/272) 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 Industrial Finance Corporation of Mauritius (IFCM) Ltd., operational as from May 2022, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) role and functions thereof;
- (b) amount of funds invested therein;
- (c) amount of funds disbursed in support of enterprises therefrom, and
- (d) list of beneficiaries thereof, indicating in each case the amount of funds allotted thereto.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed that the Industrial Finance Corporation of Mauritius (IFCM) Ltd was incorporated in August 2021, but was officially launched and became operational in February 2022.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am tabling a copy of the roles and functions of the IFCM.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that a total amount of Rs1,699,899,000 have been invested in the IFCM as follows –

- (i) Rs1 million by the Government of Mauritius at the time of its incorporation, and
- (ii) the balance of Rs1,698,899,000 through the National Resilience Fund.

Madam Speaker, I am also informed that a Special Line of Credit to the tune of Rs5 billion has been made available by the Bank of Mauritius to the IFCM to operate its various schemes.

Regarding part (c) of the question, I am informed that a total amount of Rs4.29 billion has been disbursed to some 298 enterprises since the operationalisation of the IFCM to date.

With regard to part (d) of the question, I am tabling a copy of the list of the beneficiaries and the amount of funds allotted thereto.

Madam Speaker, even a cursory look at the list would suggest the gross abuse of public funds where huge amounts were disbursed to the cronies of the previous regime.

Let me just give you a few blatant examples –

- (i) Rs41 million to Kuros Construction Solutions Ltd – Rs41 million;
- (ii) Rs64 million to RGT (Healthcare) Ltd, belonging to Avinash Gopee, and
- (iii) Rs9.6 million to Artemis Hospital.

A thorough audit will be undertaken to find out how these funds have been disbursed, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you very much. Yes!

Mr Babajee: Will the hon. Prime Minister consider doing some investigations in regard to those allocations?

Madam Speaker: I think he just said that.

The Prime Minister: I just said that, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Yes! Okay, thank you.

Hon. Ramdass!

CONSUMER GOODS HIGH PRICES – RUPEE STABILISATION –INFLATION RATE CONTROL

(No. B/273) 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 relatively high prices of consumer goods in Mauritius, he will state the actions being envisaged by his Ministry to stabilise the rupee and control inflation rate in order to address this issue.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, it is the Bank of Mauritius which has the primary duty to maintain price stability while promoting orderly and balanced economic development. It does this through its monetary policy and the management of the exchange rate.

Prior to November 2024, there was a total disarray and inconsistency in the conduct of monetary policy by the Bank of Mauritius, which led to the continuous increase in the inflation rate, massive depreciation of the rupee and consequently, the continuous increases in the price of consumer goods.

First, the increase in the key rate by a cumulative 265 basis points during 2022 was not enough to correct for the inflation expectations and prevent the depreciation of the rupee.

Second, the Bank of Mauritius' decision in September 2024 to lower the key rate by 50 basis points was done for political purposes, just prior to the general elections, and this further stoked inflationary pressures in the economy.

Third, the excessive money-printing by the Bank of Mauritius to finance the budget deficit and the MIC aggravated the excess liquidity situation in the banking system and, again, caused prices to surge.

Madam Speaker, the new Management of the Bank of Mauritius, which took office in November 2024, acted promptly to remedy the situation.

Measures taken by the Bank of Mauritius include –

- (i) raising the key rate by 50 basis points to 4.5 per cent per annum in February 2025;
- (ii) increasing the supply of forex in the domestic foreign exchange market to prevent rapid depreciation of the rupee, as was the case before;
- (iii) instructions to commercial banks to ensure that all dealings in foreign exchange, including swaps and other derivatives are effected through financial institutions duly licensed by the Bank;
- (iv) stricter regulation of intercompany transactions in foreign currencies, and lastly
- (v) instructions to banks to ensure that forward transactions are priced in a fair manner and in accordance with market fundamentals.

Madam Speaker, Government complemented these measures by imposing that at least 85% of the proceeds from sales of villas under the Property Development Scheme should be converted into rupees.

Furthermore, Government reduced the prices of gasoline and diesel by Rs5 per litre in December of last year.

And the Government mitigated the impact of inflation and price rises by awarding a 14th Month Bonus covering more than 90% of workers, and the 2025 Salary Compensation.

It should be highlighted that, since mid-November 2024, the rupee has actually appreciated by around 4.5 per cent compared to the US dollar and the inflation rate has since been maintained on a downward trajectory.

In fact, the inflation rate, which was at a peak of 11.3 per cent in February 2023, is now at 2.5 per cent in March 2025.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Finance will continue to coordinate with the Bank of Mauritius to ensure coherence in our approach to curb inflationary pressures in the economy. In this context, we are working on fiscal measures that will be announced in the forthcoming budget.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Yes, hon. Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles...

(Interruptions)

I am sorry, you didn't catch my eye in time! Yes!

Mr Ramdass: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, further to the Statement made by the hon. Prime Minister sometime back in Parliament on the State of the Economy, it is now of public knowledge that the previous government has been tampering with the calculation of economic indicators, including the rate of inflation, and that, to hide the true, the real economic situation in Mauritius. Will the hon. Prime Minister be in a position to enlighten the House as to the real, the true annual rate of inflation from the years 2019 to 2024?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I could, but it is long. I take it you want headline inflation rates? Well, if I go by month, actually it is 2.5%, but, as I said, at one point it reached 11.3 %. I can table the whole table if you want.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Ramdass: One more question. Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister of India has, in the course of his recent visit to Mauritius, announced that Mauritius and India will trade in Mauritian rupees. Will the hon. Prime Minister consider the advisability of seeking similar arrangements with other trade partners, precisely with a view to eliminate the risks and consequences of the depreciation of the rupee in Mauritius and, of course, to the benefit of the price level of our imports in Mauritius?

The Prime Minister: Unfortunately, I know of no other country that is prepared to do what India has done for us, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. That's it, you are done?

Hon. Jhummun, please!

HORSE RACING – BETTING TAX RATE EVOLUTION – REVENUE GENERATED

(No. B/274) 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 horse racing, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain for the period 2015 to 2024 from the –
 - (i) Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to the evolution of the rate of betting tax thereon;

- (ii) Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to the amount of revenue generated therefrom as tax, and
- (b) state if consideration will be given to shift the tax burden from players to operators.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a)(i) of the question, I am tabling the information, for the period 2015 to 2024, relating to the evolution of the rate of betting tax on horseracing.

Concerning part (a)(ii) of the question, I am informed by the Mauritius Revenue Authority that the total amount of revenue generated for the period 2015 to 2024 was Rs4.5 billion as betting tax on horseracing.

Regarding part (b) of the question, the proposal to consider the shifting of the tax burden from players to operators will be again examined in the context of the forthcoming budget.

Madam Speaker: Yes! That's it! Okay.

Hon. Rookny, Third Member for Pamplémousses and Triolet!

PORTS & AIRPORTS – ILLICIT DRUGS DETECTION – EQUIPMENT & PROTOCOLS

(No. B/275) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplémousses & 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 fight against drugs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police and the Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to whether the airport and port of both mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues are sufficiently equipped for the detection of drugs illegally imported, indicating the equipment and protocols used by the authorities therefor.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the Police Department, in particular ADSU, and the Mauritius Revenue Authority are the two main agencies responsible for the fight against drugs, in particular the prevention and illegal entry of drugs into the Republic of Mauritius.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that both the Police Department and the Mauritius Revenue Authority officers work in close collaboration for the detection of illicit drugs at the ports and the airport. They make use of an array of surveillance and detection tools for that purpose.

I am sure the hon. Member would appreciate that, for obvious reasons, I cannot give details of the equipment in use nor the protocols that have been put in place.

I am also informed, Madam Speaker, that as the *modus operandi* of drug traffickers keeps on evolving and they make use of the latest sophisticated equipment, it is imperative that our surveillance system be continuously enhanced to keep pace with the latest trend. Consequently, there is need to provide our law enforcement agencies with state-of-the-art equipment and to ensure that they have a replacement policy for obsolete equipment.

Moreover, these agencies should ensure that provisions are made to enter into maintenance contracts so that all new and existing equipment are fully operational at all times for cost-effectiveness and efficiency purposes. This was not the case before.

In addition, Government will invest in tailor-made capacity-building programmes for the upskilling of the personnel with regard to the detection of drugs, including synthetic and novel drugs.

I wish to reiterate, Madam Speaker, that the fight against drugs is one of the topmost priorities of this Government. We are already translating our pledges into actions, which are now showing results. To this effect, from November 2024 to March 2025, drugs for a street value of around of Rs1.2 billion have been seized.

In the same vein, in line with the Government Programme 2025-2029, we will today itself introduce the National Agency for Drug Control Bill into the National Assembly to provide for the establishment of a National Agency for Drug Control, which shall be the apex body for addressing the drug issue, including prevention and drug controls.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes!

Mr Rookny: Madam Speaker, it is a fact that we have noticed an increase in drug abuse in our country. I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister if our intelligence gathering agencies have at least detected an increase in import of drugs through our main ports? Thank you.

The Prime Minister: Yes, that is the case! That is why we had this large uphold of – I think I mentioned the figure – Rs1.2 billion.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Yes, the hon. Second Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien!

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – PARALLEL RUNWAY CONSTRUCTION – LAND ACQUISITION

(No. B/276) Mr T. Apollon (Second 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 proposed construction of a parallel runway at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, as provided for in the Airport Master Plan, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Airport of Mauritius Ltd., information as to where matters stand regarding the acquisition of land from the inhabitants of the region therefor.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Chief Executive Officer of Airports of Mauritius Co. Ltd (AML) that the Airport Master Plan of 2004 made provision for the construction of a parallel taxiway of the length of 3,450 metres, which was also to be used as a runway in emergency situations. Six years later, that is, on 12 April 2010, AML decided to construct the taxiway of length of 2,450 metres only. The additional length of 1,000 metres would require the acquisition of private lands/properties along the ex-Airport Road at Chat Gaon and Solitude villages. This taxiway was commissioned in July 2013 and is operational since that date.

With regard to Chat Gaon Village, for the period 2007 to 2014, 42 properties were acquired for an amount of Rs104,309,109, excluding Notary, Registration Fees and Land Transfer Tax. In addition, another 63 properties had to be acquired. Accordingly, after a bidding exercise, the services of a Chartered Property Valuer and Land Surveyor were retained in 2019 to carry out a valuation exercise of these properties. To date, AML has acquired 14 of the 63 properties, for a total amount of Rs60 million, excluding all relevant fees, as I said.

Regarding the village of Solitude, a survey of residential properties was carried out by a professional Land Surveyor in November 2011. They wanted to acquire 32 properties to create an operational safety buffer zone around the airport. As at December 2024, 20 plots of land/properties had been acquired for the total sum of Rs47,653,114. 12 plots of land/properties have not yet been acquired as some of these owners did not have title deeds or same were not in order while others wanted an alternative plot of land and they were also not agreeable with the proposed amount.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Apollon: Thank you. Can the hon. Prime Minister consider this matter as soon as possible? Because the inhabitants from this region are living with daily stress as they cannot invest in or renovate their existing houses.

The Prime Minister: The exercise is ongoing. The evaluation report of the plots of land of both villages dates back to 2011. AML is now planning to appoint a new Chartered Property Valuer and Land Surveyor to review and update the existing reports of the 49 properties at Chat Gaon and the remaining 12 at Solitude village. Negotiation will start thereafter.

Madam Speaker: Yes, the hon. Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac!

TOTALISATOR OPERATORS – GAMBLING LEVY – YEAR 2020

(No. B/277) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and 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 Totalisator Operators, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority and the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to the amount of responsible gambling levy collected therefrom in 2020, indicating how same were spent.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Mauritius Revenue Authority that the total amount of responsible gambling – it is the term in the law; so, I am using the same term –, the levy collected in 2020 was Rs66.1 million, out of which, Rs1.8 million were from totalisator operators.

I am also informed by the Gambling Regulatory Authority that a total amount of Rs9.6 million was spent in 2020 as follows –

- Rs4.5 million on laboratory tests;
- Rs3.2 million on consultancy and capacity building, and
- Rs1.9 million on operating expenses.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: Can Dr. the hon. Prime Minister confirm how the funds are being spent from November 2024, as I understand that the levy was initially imposed to educate the operators/gamblers?

The Prime Minister: You want to know how the levy is being used?

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: From 2024 onwards.

The Prime Minister: We are looking at all this in the coming Budget. I will come up with an answer in the Budget.

Madam Speaker: Okay! Yes, hon. Fourth Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue!

DIRECTOR OF AUDIT REPORT (2023-2024) – WASTE & POOR MANAGEMENT – PREVENTIVE MEASURES

(No. B/278) 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 recent report of the Director of Audit highlighting systemic issues of waste and poor management, he will state how Government intends to proceed in order to prevent any future recurrence thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, it is an understatement to speak of waste and poor management.

The Report of the Director of Audit for the Financial Year 2023-2024 was tabled on 25 March of this year. As in previous years, the report exposed a litany of scandals, highlighting how public funds have been dilapidated by the previous government.

The publication of the Report of the Director of Audit cannot continue to be an annual ritual where we take stock of misuse of public funds without any concrete actions being taken to put an end to such a scandalous situation.

Madam Speaker, it will not be business as usual! Stringent actions will be taken to ensure a judicious use of public funds where the principle of value for money will be strictly adhered to.

In fact, after the tabling of the Report of the Director of Audit, I requested my colleagues to analyse all the issues raised by the Director of Audit concerning their ministries and departments with a view to promptly addressing them.

Furthermore, we are already taking major steps to ensure judicious use of taxpayers' money.

First, we are re-introducing the Performance-Based Budgeting based, as I said last time, on outcomes and not on the amount of money spent.

Second, we have already announced and taken a commitment to introduce a Fiscal Responsibility Act.

Madam Speaker, as stated in the Government Programme, to foster greater transparency and accountability, we propose to make it mandatory for the Public Accounts Committee to look into the Annual Audit Reports with the Accounting Officer in attendance.

We will also ensure that the Report of the Director of Audit is debated in the National Assembly and is submitted to the relevant institution for investigation, where appropriate.

I will come up with additional measures in the Budget, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Yes, you are directly concerned with the Public Accounts Committee!

Mr A. Duval: Yes, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, there is an alarming issue which is recurrent in the reports of the Director of Audit, that is, the non-filing of financial statements by statutory bodies and other entities of the State. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister what he proposes to do, as a matter of urgency, to ensure that government bodies are compelled to provide their financial statements to the Director of Audit within the time frame that the law provides?

The Prime Minister: This is precisely the point. The law provides for a time frame, but they just ignore the time frame! No action was taken! We will ensure that this is remedied.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Prime Minister.

Time is up! The following PQs have been withdrawn: B/282, B/283, and B/285.

Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQs B/307 and B/333 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Land Transport. PQ B/325 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity. PQ B/334 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports.

Now, we proceed with Questions to Ministers! I call the hon. Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue, Mr Caserne!

BUS STOPS – PUBLIC ROADS – PARKED VEHICLES

(No. B/288) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to bus stops on public roads, he will state if he has been made aware of inconveniences caused, by vehicles parked thereat and opposite same, to passengers and road users and if so, indicate if consideration will be given for the provision of yellow lines thereat.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Madam Speaker, I am informed that provisions are made under subsection 2(c)(i) of Section 72 of the Parking on a Road as per G. N. No. 53 of 2010 of the Road Traffic (Construction and Use of Vehicles) Regulations 2010, as subsequently amended in G.N. No. 170 of 2010, to prohibit motor vehicles other than a bus to be parked –

- (i) within a distance of 12 metres before, and 8 metres after the bus stops sign post;
- (ii) 20 metres opposite the restricted length covered in – [...].

Therefore, it is a traffic offence for vehicles, other than a motor bus, to park over a distance of 8 metres ahead and 12 metres behind a bus stop sign or 20 metres opposite without the provision of yellow line markings. The rationale behind siting of bus stops revolves around several key principles that prioritize passenger safety, its efficiency and accessibility within a catchment for promoting use of public transportation.

However, Madam Speaker, from daily observations and past surveys, it can be seen that parking of vehicles at, and opposite some bus stops create traffic problems as well as road safety issues. Parked vehicles can block the path of buses trying to pull into the bus stop, forcing passengers to board or alight further away from the designated area, sometimes on the road itself, which poses a safety risk. Obstructions can also make it difficult for larger buses to manoeuvre and can impede the flow of general traffic. Therefore, the provision of yellow lines beyond the prescribed limitations may be considered at those problematic locations.

Madam Speaker, there is merit in the question of the hon. Member as regards if consideration will be given for the provision of yellow lines around bus stops because many people do not know about the distances to be respected. Too often, vehicles have to wait lengthily behind stationary buses alighting or boarding passengers at bus stops because there are vehicles parked on the opposite side of the bus stop thereby hindering traffic flow.

Madam Speaker, I, therefore, believe that consideration should be given for the provision of yellow lines, as questioned by the hon. Member, in extreme and priority places. However, it may not be feasible for all such cases given the considerable impact this measure

will have on the neighbourhood. Consideration will be given to the special query of the hon. Member and of the hon. Members on a case-to-case basis.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Caserne: Madame la présidente, comme souligné dans la question, c'est une situation assez embarrassante et qui cause des bouchons et congestions routières. Il est aussi noté qu'il y a des opérateurs ou des chauffeurs qui agissent comme deux fonctions, c'est-à-dire comme chauffeur et receveur, qui aussi occasionne ce genre de bouchon et de congestion. J'aimerais demander à l'honorable ministre si cette pratique est légale et courante à son intention ?

Madam Speaker: Vous connaissez la réponse !

Mr Osman Mahomed: In fact, both of them are illegal. To keep people waiting behind the buses and the fact that they do not have conductors is definitely not legal because we are paying; Government is subsidizing drivers and conductors, and the bus companies in general. Definitely, it is not legal.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Third Member for Grand'Baie and Poudre d'Or.

AMBASSADORS, HIGH COMMISSIONERS & PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES OF MAURITIUS ABROAD – QUALIFICATIONS & SALARIES

(No. B/289) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Permanent Representatives of Mauritius posted at Mauritius Embassies abroad over the period 2015 to 2024, he will give a list thereof, indicating in each case the –

- (a) date of posting and of accreditation;
- (b) qualifications thereof;
- (c) basic salary drawn, including the detailed allowances paid thereto, and
- (d) other amount, if any, refunded thereto as medical expenses.

Mr Ramful: Madam Speaker, allow me with your permission to answer PQs B/289 and B/342 together as they both relate to the expenses in relation to the posts of ambassadors.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister!

Mr Ramful: Madam Speaker, Section 87 of the Constitution of Mauritius provides for the ‘Appointment of principal representatives of Mauritius abroad’. As such, the power to appoint persons to hold offices of Ambassador, High Commissioner or other principal representative of Mauritius in any other country or accredited to any international organisation is vested in the President, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister.

Madam Speaker, I am tabling the list of Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Permanent Representatives; their date of posting, qualifications and basic salary, dates of accreditation, and allowances.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (d) of the question, allow me to inform the House that all medical expenses are refunded to Ambassadors in line with provisions made in the PRB report and their contract of employment which are as follows –

90% of amount of medical expenses be refunded for themselves, spouse and dependent children aged up to 20 years subject to –

- (i) the production of duly signed and certified copies of medical certificates and prescriptions, invoices and receipts.
- (ii) The claim being submitted on prescribed form as determined by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade duly signed by the officer making the claim and upon the recommendation of the head of mission.
- (iii) Medical bills falling within the protocol and guidelines approved by the Government.

In case of hospitalisation, for surgical intervention, medical expenses incurred in respect thereof are refunded in toto subject to the conditions set out in the above provisions to an officer, his or her spouse, dependent children aged up to 20 years and accompanying dependent of unmarried carrier diplomats upon their posting to overseas mission.

There is also an exclusion list of treatments for which no refund is entertained such as cosmetic treatments and contact lenses. I have, therefore, tabled the list of medical expenses refunded to Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Permanent Representatives.

Madam Speaker, with regard to PQ B/342, as per their roles and responsibilities, Ambassadors actively manage and maintain diplomatic relation between home country and

host countries as well as accredited countries. They also engage in political and economic negotiations, and safeguard the home country's interest in the host country.

To be able to fulfil these obligations, Ambassadors are called upon to travel to various countries for the following reasons –

- (i) presentation of credentials to accredited countries and accredited international organisations;
- (ii) represent the President and the Prime Minister in summits and high-level meetings;
- (iii) represent ministers in conferences, meetings and negotiations, and
- (iv) attending national days and having bilateral meetings with foreign dignitaries.

All overseas missions undertaken by Ambassadors need to have been approved by the Ministry. During their overseas mission, *per diem* is paid to Ambassadors, High Commissioners to cover the cost of accommodation, meals, internal transportation and other related expenses. The rate payable, which is approved by the Ministry of Finance, depends on the country which they are travelling to.

Ambassadors based abroad are sometimes also required to travel to Mauritius for consultations in specific cases. For example, the presence of an ambassador may be required during high-level visits of foreign Presidents, Prime Ministers of countries to which the ambassador is accredited to. Ambassadors are therefore paid a *per diem* of Rs7,340 per day for a maximum of 15 days to cover costs of accommodations and meals.

Madam Speaker, with your permission, I am tabling two lists –

- (i) the first one pertaining to period 2015-2019, and
- (ii) the second one for the records of 2020 to 2024.

However, Madam Speaker, allow me to say that it has been highlighted that some politically appointed ambassadors as opposed to career ambassadors travelled to Mauritius in October 2024 just before the elections, on public funds, under the guise of urgent consultations, and were seen to be involved in election campaigns.

Further, the last Director of Audit Report has made mention of a number of adverse findings on a few politically appointed ambassadors who have made abuse of their privileges. For example, converting their annual and sick leaves into official duties whilst in Mauritius,

thus, benefiting from public funds, and some even extending their stay in Mauritius on disguised official missions while benefiting from chauffeur driven cars at the expense of government.

The Findings of the Director of Audit Report are being looked into by the Internal Audit Committee at the level of my Ministry to take remedial actions.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister!

One moment! One moment! I have an announcement to make.

ANNOUNCEMENT

UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL'S SPECIAL ENVOY FOR ROAD SAFETY– MR J. TODT – VISIT TO MAURITIUS

Hon. Members, *j'ai l'honneur de saluer la présence à l'Assemblée nationale de Monsieur Jean Todt.*

Mr Todt is the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety. Seated in the distinguished VIP Gallery, he is known for his global advocacy for road safety.

He is currently in Mauritius on an official 24-hour visit at the invitation of Dr. the hon. Prime Minister, during which he will be having meetings with key stakeholders to discuss strategies for reducing road accidents.

Bienvenue parmi nous, Monsieur Todt.

Thank you for your attention.

Mr Etwareea: Madame la présidente, je voulais attirer l'attention de la Chambre sur les abus commis par les anciens diplomates, notamment les nominés politiques et dans certains cas, des loyers des plus de R 500 000 à R 1 million par mois ont été payées pour les loyers de servir les diplomates. Il y a d'autres cas et je voulais poser la question au ministre, s'il est au courant que dans une ambassade au Moyen-Orient, une dizaine de voitures ont été achetées dans un espace de temps très court.

Madam Speaker: Monsieur le ministre, vous avez la réponse ?

Mr Ramful: Yes, as I have mentioned in my reply, there are a number of abuses on the part of ambassadors that have been highlighted and at the level of my Ministry, there is an

Audit Committee which has been set up chaired by the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry studying the Audit Report. And, as I have said, remedial actions will be taken.

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

Mr A. Duval: Does the hon. Minister agree that it is high time to do our cost...

Madam Speaker: No, talk to me! Talk to me!

You are addressing the Minister!

Mr A. Duval: Yes, I am. I am talking, yes. Does the Minister agree that it is high time to do a cost benefit analysis of our foreign diplomatic missions abroad and to align with the Singaporean model that is, that ambassadors are based in Mauritius but travel and arrange all their meetings, their working sessions, etc., for specific periods of time to save public funds and also to merge embassies; for example, in the case of France and the embassy in Germany, which does not necessarily have a high *raison-d'être* ?

(Interruptions)

Well...

Madam Speaker: I think he got your message.

Mr A. Duval: Is he prepared to do that?

Mr Bhagwan: *Lakoz Speaker inn pran ene mwa inn voyaze...*

Madam Speaker: Let the Minister answer!

Mr Ramful: Well, this question, Madam ...

Madam Speaker: Mr Bhagwan, the Minister is just behind you, trying to answer.

Mr Ramful: This proposition will have to be studied but then the hon. Member should also bear in mind that we have diplomatic relations with a lot of countries and we have to be very careful when taking the decision to close embassies etc. So, the question will be studied but then ...

Mr A. Duval: to merge...

Mr Ramful: ... we will come up with propositions.

Mr Jhummun: *Bizin pa pran pension.*

Mr A. Duval: If I may, Madam, just to ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No, no! You don't clarify, you put questions!

Mr Jhummun: *Pa pran pension Speaker...*

Mr Bhagwan: *Al voyaze!*

Madam Speaker: You can put your supplementary questions.

The Deputy Prime Minister: He cannot speak from a sitting position!

Madam Speaker: Yes, don't speak from a sitting position but everyone is doing that.

Mr A. Duval: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the proposition is for the merging of certain embassies.

Madam Speaker: No! No! Question!

Mr A. Duval: Yes, the question is ...

Madam Speaker: We all received your proposals and I know what I am talking about. Don't forget. Okay, question! Question!

Mr A. Duval: May I ask – Madam Speaker, around half of our diplomatic missions are costing us more money than they should really...

Madam Speaker: Question!

(Interruptions)

Mr A. Duval: Their question is – since ambassadors have not yet been appointed for most of them, it is now a perfect time to do that. Will he do so, now?

Mr Ramful: I can assure the hon. Member that we will not do like the previous government to nominate or appoint political agents at the level of our embassies. So, we will definitely look at competent people who can, of course, bring resources to the country.

Madam Speaker: Thank you!

Mrs Savabaddy, your question.

CONSTITUENCY NO. 4 – WASTEWATER SEWERAGE NETWORK – EXTENSION & TIME FRAME

(No. B/290) Mrs A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to wastewater

sewerage network, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to the regions which are not presently covered therewith in Constituency No. 4, Port Louis North and Montagne Longue, indicating if consideration is being given to extend same to these regions and, if so, the time frame to implement same.

Mr Assirvaden: Madame la présidente, la *CWA* m'informe que la Circonscription No. 4, Port Louis Nord/Montagne Longue, comprend des zones d'équipées non-raccordées aux réseaux d'égouts.

Une partie des zones de cette circonscription relève du Projet 3 d'assainissement de Baie du Tombeau, mis en œuvre par phases. Les zones actuellement non-raccordées aux réseaux d'égouts sont : Caro Lalo, Vallée des Prêtres, une partie de Le Hochet Terre Rouge, Morcellement Raffray, Morcellement Tara, Bois Pignolet, Riche Terre, Montagne Longue, Notre Dame, Crève-Cœur et Congomah.

Madame la présidente, afin d'assurer la continuité de l'extension du réseau d'assainissement dans la Circonscription no. 4, la *WMA* met actuellement en œuvre un projet d'assainissement à Caro Lalo, Vallée des Prêtres pour un montant de R 216,28 million.

Parallèlement, les demandes de raccordement des maisons et d'extension des réseaux d'égouts, si techniquement faisable bien sûr, réalisable, sont examinées dans le cadre de deux accords-cadres en cours.

Madame la présidente, pour l'exercice 2025-2026, la *WMA* prévoit de mettre en œuvre un autre projet d'assainissement à Capitaine Pontré à Sainte-Croix. Ce projet fait suite à une pétition des habitants se plaignant des débordements récurrents des fosses en raison de l'imperméabilité des sols. La *WMA* a soumis une demande de financement au ministère des Finances. A l'issue du projet, une cinquantaine des maisons seront raccordées au réseau public.

Je suis aussi informé, Madame la présidente, que la *WMA* procède de manière progressive et que les régions restantes sans égouts, dans la Circonscription no. 4, seront prises en compte dans le cadre du plan directeur de 2025 et au cours des prochaines exercices financiers, bien sûr, sur la base du financement fourni par le gouvernement.

Madam Speaker: Merci. Yes, supplementary question.

Mrs Savabaddy: Thank you Madam Speaker. I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. May I impress upon him to act diligently as my Constituency *à été l'enfant pauvre du système d'évacuation d'eaux usées* and the problem requires an urgent attention? Thank you.

Mr Assirvaden: C'est tombé dans l'oreille de quelqu'un qui entend. Alors bien sûr, dans le plan directeur, votre circonscription sera prise en compte. Merci.

Madam Speaker: C'est bon, Madame Savabaddy?

Mrs Savabaddy: Oui!

Madam Speaker: Next one is hon. François!

RAINWATER HARVESTING – AMENDED LEGISLATIONS – INCENTIVES & REBATES

(No. B/291) Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to rainwater harvesting, he will state if consideration will be given to –

- (a) amending the relevant legislations to make it mandatory for newly constructed residential, industrial and commercial buildings to be equipped therewith, and
- (b) reviewing the incentive and rebate on property tax on investment for a rainwater harvesting system.

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, at the very outset, allow me to thank the hon. Member for this interesting question. The suggestion of making it mandatory for newly residential, industrial and commercial building to be equipped with rainwater harvesting system is very relevant.

I will explain comprehensively on what is being done on this subject.

The Building and Land Use Permit, that is, the BLUP, is issued under Section 117 of the Local Government Act which stipulates that every application for a Building and Land Use Permit shall be in accordance with the following enactments and any guidelines issued thereunder –

- a) The Construction Industry Authority Act 2023;
- b) The Town and Country Planning Act 1954;
- c) The Planning and Development Act 2004;

- d) The Environment Act 2024;
- e) The Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service Act 2013;
- f) The Climate Change Act 2020, and
- g) Any other enactment as may be prescribed.

Also, at present, the law does not make provision for the installation of a rainwater harvesting system for major projects requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment, that is, the EIA License or an approved Primarily Environmental Report that is, the PER. Proponents are advised to adhere to sustainable principles including rainwater harvesting.

I am advised that at present, developers having an EIA Certificate or approved PER are being monitored as regard their adherence to requirements. Currently, the Local Government Act is being reviewed.

Mr Woochit: In this context, amendments will be brought to the existing legislation to make it mandatory for new industrial and large commercial buildings to be equipped with a rainwater harvesting system. It will also be mandatory for promoters to include the rainwater harvesting system in new residential complexes.

Similarly, existing commercial and industrial buildings will be given a period moratorium to implement rainwater harvesting system. It is understood that for small business owners and households, it may be difficult to implement a rainwater harvesting system given the acquisition of space and cost. However, a Cost-Benefit Analysis would need to be carried out before making it compulsory for low-income households and small businesses to install rainwater harvesting systems.

Consideration is being given to raising public awareness on the advantages of having a rainwater harvesting system. My Ministry will therefore work with the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change and the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities to create awareness on the need for each household and business operator to have a rainwater harvesting system.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Ministry of Finance that grants/subsidies for rainwater harvesting systems have been provided.

In the Financial Year 2024-25, an amount of Rs4 m. has been earmarked for the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change to implement the Rainwater Harvesting Programme in 10 schools and 10 NGOs in order to encounter the

problem of water stress during times of water shortage. These ten schools and NGOs were selected following an open invitation launch by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change on 23 January 2025 among schools and NGOs.

To implement the rainwater harvesting system for the project just mentioned, a bidding exercise was launched by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change on 23 January 2025 for the –

- (a) supply, fixing and commissioning of 20 rainwater harvesters, and
- (b) supply, fixing and commissioning of 16 sets of 9,000 litres rainwater harvesting system and four sets of 5,000 litres rainwater harvesting systems with pre-treatment system with screen basket, piping system for rainwater collection, inclusive of fittings.

Opening of bid was carried out on 21 February 2025. Three bids were received and same are being evaluated. The evaluation has been completed in the beginning of April 2025 and the project implementation is due to start shortly. In addition, a scheme for rainwater harvesting system investment allowance income deduction for individuals has been introduced by the Ministry of Finance. Under this scheme, an individual may deduct from his net income the full amount invested during an income year in the rainwater harvesting system to capture, filter and store rainwater under the rainwater harvesting system investment allowance when filling the income tax returns.

The scheme includes the election for consultancy, design works, excavation works, gutters and specialised water tanks in relation to the setting up of rainwater harvesting system. In the case of a couple, the total amount invested may be claimed either by one spouse or in equal proportion by both spouses. The full cost of the rainwater harvesting system can be deducted from the income tax claim. Any unrelieved amount of an income year may be carried forward and deducted against the net income of succeeding years.

An assessment of this scheme will be made in course of the next financial year to determine the uptake.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister. We have nine minutes left! The hon. Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière!

CONSTITUENCY NO. 20 – DRAINS CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/292) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the construction of drains in Constituency No. 20, Beau-Bassin and Petite-Rivière for Financial Year 2024-2025, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Land Drainage Authority, information as to the –

- (a) amount of funds budgeted therefor, indicating the projects completed as at date together with their respective costs, and
- (b) ongoing projects, indicating in each case the location and respective cost thereof.

Mr Gunness: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Land Drainage Authority that the Constituency No. 20, Beau-Bassin and Petite-Rivière, nine drain projects to the tune of some Rs48.6 m. have been completed during the Financial Year 2024-2025.

With regard to part (b) of the question pertaining to ongoing projects, I am informed that one project has been finalised for implementation, namely flooding mitigation measures at Splendid View, Albion for a total cost of around Rs114.9 m. The project comprises the construction of –

- (i) culvert along Albion Approach Road;
- (ii) drains towards Albion Approach Road, overflow structure and trial pits, and
- (iii) drains and culverts towards Morcellement Serenis and reinforced concrete drain below Magenta Canal.

I am informed that works order to the tune of around Rs13.8 m. has already been issued by the RDA on 12 December 2024 for the construction of the culvert along Albion Approach Road and works are expected to be completed by mid-September 2025.

On the other hand, works order for the remaining scope is expected to be issued by the NDU by the end of this week. Works are expected to start by 12 May 2025 for a duration of five months. Madam Speaker, I would also like to highlight that bidding documents have already been prepared for the following projects –

- (i) flood mitigation measures along B78 and B105 roads at Albion for an estimated cost of Rs216.5 m. which will be implemented by the RDA, and
- (ii) construction of mitigating measures in the region of Coromandel which will be carried out by the DICL for an estimated cost of Rs563.8 m.

Bids are expected to be invited once financial clearance is obtained from the Ministry of Finance. Moreover, I am informed by the NDU that four projects for a total sum of Rs433.5 m. are currently at consultancy stage and would be implemented subject to availability of funds. These projects are –

- (i) construction of collected rain starting from the junction of Subramanien Bharati Road and Bakoorising Road to sugarcane field passing in front of MITD, Verger Bissambar, Mont Roches;
- (ii) construction of drain at Victor Hugo Street, Beau Bassin;
- (iii) construction of drain at Allée Rousaille and surroundings, Gros Cailloux, and
- (iv) construction of drain at Dwarka Lane off Riche Lieu Branch Road, Coromandel.

I am also informed that some additional 14 drain projects in Constituency No. 20 estimated to cost Rs149.7 m. have also been identified for implementation subject to availability of funds.

Madam Speaker, with your permission, I am tabling the list of the completed and ongoing drain projects.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. François, do you have a new question?

Mr François: That is fine, Madam Speaker.

COP30 – NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTION 3.0

(No. B/293) Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) 3.0 update for the forthcoming COP30, he will state where matters stand, indicating –

- (a) if consultations have been held thereon with the community at large;
- (b) the financing mechanisms and strategies put in place therefor, and
- (c) the outcomes of the previous NDC.

Mr Bhagwan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The House may wish to note that in line with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, the preparation of the NDC 3.0 is being carried out with the collaboration of the

GIZ, a German development partner, under its NDC Partnership Resilience Support Programme.

The GIZ expert team has started the consultation process with the Department of Climate Change of my Ministry since November 2024 and has already conducted a stock taking exercise.

The GIZ expert team which was in Mauritius from 17 February to 21 February 2025 has presented the outcome of a draft desk review to stakeholders of the Climate Change Committee and provided the highlights of a road map, which identifies the process of updating the NDC. The draft desk review and road map include recommendations for the development of the NDC 3.0 and an accompanying NDC development plan.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, consultations had already been held at the level of the Climate Change Committee at its meeting held on 17 February 2025 under the Chair of my Ministry and which saw the participation of all its members from the public and private sector, the civil society, including officers of the *Commission de l'Environnement* of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, virtually, in the presence of the GIZ team. The GIZ expert team, moreover, held several bilateral meetings with key Ministries and Departments to consolidate the roadmap, outline clear steps, roles and responsibilities of national stakeholders, as well as identify potential international experts to support the development of a sectoral pathway for the NDC 3.0.

Madam Speaker, my Ministry is in the process of finalising a calendar of activities to pursue the dialogues and consultations. National consultations will be held shortly to the public at large, including that of Rodrigues, to invite them to submit their suggestions and vision for a national climate agenda. Madam Speaker, any suggestion from members of Rodrigues in this august Assembly would be most welcomed.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, responding to the climate challenges requiring significant financing, the Nationally Determined Contribution of 2021 had estimated the climate requirement of the Republic of Mauritius to be USD 6.5 billion. It is expected that the NDC 3.0 will indicate a substantial increase in investment required to address climate adaptation and mitigation. In consultation with the Ministry of Finance, an investment plan will be prepared to identify the most appropriate financing instruments to meet the targets of the forthcoming NDC 3.0 which will have a timeline of 2025-2035. An

effective response to climate actions will necessitate more effective access to climate finance at national level, including both public and private sector financing at international level.

Madam Speaker, this Government has already taken initiatives to enhance the financing governance mechanisms by improving transparency and accountability through the introduction of the programme-based budgeting and the targeting of climate expenditures in seven pilot Ministries, including my Ministry. The tagging exercise is expected to be carried out thereafter in all Government Ministries and parastatal bodies.

Madam Speaker, concerning part (c) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the 2021 Nationally Determined Contributions are still valid until year 2030. Moving ahead with 2025, the NDC 3.0 will ensure that ambitions are made more robust and realistic towards making Mauritius a climate resilient and low emission country. The biennial Transparency Report prepared by my Ministry in 2024 which tracked the implementation of a Nationally Determined Contribution showed that only 15% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions were achieved in 2022 against a target of 40%. Only 17% of renewable energy was integrated in the energy mix against a target of 60% by 2030. The House may wish to know that the contribution of renewable energy in the energy mix at national level in 2005 was 25%, and after 20 years, it decreased to only 17%.

In spite of the difficult economic situation, Government will spare no efforts to put in place the necessary resources to meet the target and set and address our climate agenda.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. At this stage, we are breaking. You keep your supplementary for after lunch. Yes!

An hon. Member: It is short.

Madam Speaker: Short, but he will have to reply to you.

(Interruptions)

Vous savez ce que c'est que l'hypoglycémie ? I am going to raise for two and a half hours. He can put his question...

(Interruptions)

One and a half hour...

(Interruptions)

One and a half hour! We will come back at 2.30 p.m.! Everybody is deciding! *C'est incroyable!*

(Interruptions)

Yes, we are raising for one and a half hour.

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

On resuming at 2.33 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Please be seated! Let us go back to the question of hon. François. You have a supplementary?

Mr François: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Being given the complexity of the global climate landscape where Mauritius requires an investment of USD 6.5 billion, out of which 4.2 billion is from international funds and USD 2.3 billion from the Government and private sector, may I humbly request the hon. Minister, through a collective societal approach, to ensure that considerations are given to strengthen our mitigation targets and strategies?

Mr Bhagwan: Definitely, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can reassure my good friend that we are working in that direction with all the different stakeholders, even with the Ministry of Finance especially, and we are definitely going in that direction.

Mr François: Just one more.

The Deputy Speaker: Go ahead.

Mr François: May I ask the hon. Minister, with regard to all the climate change challenges ahead, whether Government is contemplating to include Rodrigues' representatives in the national delegation for COP30 in Brazil in November next?

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Normalement!*

Mr Bhagwan: This is normal. Rodrigues has special attention in our heart as we all know. So, we are preparing all the process of participation. There is even a meeting chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, and definitely when we will have to fix with regard to the delegation and our participants, we will take in consideration Rodrigues, depending normally on financial clearances.

The Deputy Prime Minister: And Agalega!

Mr François: Thank you, even Agalega.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/295, B/296, B/299, B/331, B/336, B/341, B/347, B/348.

ANNOUNCEMENT

MINISTER OF LAND TRANSPORT – PQS B/297, B/298 & B/307 – OUT OF TURN REQUEST

Hon. Members, I have to inform the House that the hon. Minister of Land Transport has made a request for PQs B/297, B/298 and B/307 be taken out of turn as he is taken up in a courtesy call with Mr Jean Todt, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety. I have exceptionally acceded to his request.

So, now, we proceed with B/297. The Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes! Sorry! So, B/298! Same again, he is not here. B/300!

RODRIGUES – CHILDREN'S COURT – SESSIONS & CASES

(No. B/295) Mr F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Attorney General whether, in regard to the Children's Court, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Master and Registrar, information as to the number of sessions thereof held in Rodrigues since its coming into operation to date, indicating the number of cases heard, and
- (b) state if consideration will be given for the establishment thereof in Rodrigues.

(Withdrawn)

OLIVIA ROMAN CATHOLIC AIDED SCHOOL – FENCE

(No. B/296) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the Olivia Roman Catholic Aided School, he will state if he has been made aware of the poor condition of the fence in front of the school constituting a serious security issue to students and, if so, indicate if consideration will be given for the replacement of the fencing and the proposed timeframe for works to be effected thereat.

(Withdrawn)

TOURISTS' ARRIVAL – REASONS FOR DECLINE – REMEDIAL ACTIONS

(No. B/299) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the decline in tourists' arrival over the past three months, he will state the reasons therefor, indicating the actions being taken in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

PUBLIC SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD – OBJECTIVES & ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA – RODRIGUANS' PARTICIPATION SCOPE

(No. B/300) Ms M. R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms whether, in regard to the Public Service Excellence Award, he will state the –

- (a) objectives thereof;
- (b) eligibility criteria to participate therein, and
- (c) scope of participation for public officers in Rodrigues.

Mr Pentiah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this concerns the Public Service Excellence Award. With regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the Public Service Excellence Award was introduced in October 2006, with the following objectives –

- (a) recognising and rewarding innovative efforts of Ministries/Departments and their respective divisions or units;
- (b) encouraging innovation and excellence in public service delivery, and
- (c) promoting a performance-orientated, customer-centric, accountable and environmentally conscious public service.

As regard to part (b) of the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Public Service Excellence Award (PSEA) was open only to Ministries and Departments and their respective divisions or units when the competition was launched. However, with a view to providing equal opportunities to all public institutions to compete on a level playing field, in 2021, the PSEA Framework was reviewed and the scope of participation was broadened with the creation of three distinct categories of awards, namely, Ministries and Departments, Disciplined Forces and local authorities. Furthermore, in 2023, parastatal bodies were also included as a separate category.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (c) of the question, it is to be pointed out that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly is structured around different commissions and as such, Rodrigues has its own specificity. Accordingly, it is considered that it would be more appropriate and advisable for the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to organise similar competitions among the different commissions at its own level. Of course, my Ministry will extend all the necessary support and guidance to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in that endeavour.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you! Next question, Third Member for Pamplemousses and Triolet!

ST MARTIN PIG FARMS – LEASE APPLICATIONS, PRODUCTION & INSPECTIONS

(No. B/301) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the pig farms set up by the Ministry at St Martin, he will state the –

- (a) number of pig farmers granted leases thereat;
- (b) production/yield compared to the optimal production capacity for the land deployed thereat for pig farming;
- (c) frequency at which inspections are carried out thereat and the reports produced, and
- (d) number of applications received for lease of land to operate pig farms at St Martin over the past five years, indicating the number thereof –
 - (i) approved and land allocated therefor, and
 - (ii) turned down and the reasons therefor.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the reply being a lengthy one, I am going to table it. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Third Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle!

STATE LANDS – GRAND PORT DISTRICT – SQUATTERS

(No. B/302) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the prejudice suffered by

families having lived for years in precarious condition on State lands along the southeastern coastal area, he will state the measures, if any, being contemplated by his Ministry to regularise their situation.

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

I thank the hon. Member for his question. With regard to the families living on State lands along the southeastern coastal area, I presume that the hon. Member is referring to squatters occupying State lands in region of Grand Port District.

I am informed that my Ministry has, at date, granted approximately 970 building site leases within the Grand Port District, spanning from Pointe aux Feuilles to Mahebourg.

As per the current policy, pre-July 2015 squatters are considered for regularization subject to their eligibility, availability and suitability of the concerned sites. On the other hand, post July 2015 squatters are examined on a case-to-case basis. A cutoff line, obviously, has to be drawn somewhere. Otherwise, we would be opening the floodgates.

I am informed that following a survey conducted by officers of my Ministry, there are some 20 squatters occupying State land in the regions of Anse Jonchée, Old Grand Port, Rivière La Chaux, Camp Carol and Rose Belle. Out of these 20 squatters, three are pre-July 2015, located in the regions of Rivière La Chaux and one at Grand Sable. In addition, there are 16 post July 2015 squatters, out of which, 14 are located at Rivière La Chaux and one in the region of Old Grand Port and Anse Jonchée, respectively.

Our Government indeed recognises the need to provide all families living in difficult situations with a secure and stable living condition. Therefore, as a rule of thumb, not specific to this case or those cases, the squatters may be considered for regularization on a case-to-case basis through the following measures –

- (i) granting of building site lease *in situ* subject to planning clearance so that these families may live a decent life;
- (ii) relocating the squatters to other suitable sites where essential amenities are available, and
- (iii) referring those cases to the NHDC to explore the possibility of providing them with a housing unit, depending on their specific circumstances.

But let me add, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we should be very careful to understand that there are many people on the waiting list for social housing in Mauritius, more than

50,000, and as such, we are not a government who will encourage squatters while recognising the need for houses. That is why, I always like to put forward the need for all those who are living in a squatting condition to register with the National Housing Development Company but remembering that we have to give priority to those who have registered first; date-wise – very important indeed. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Second Member for Rodrigues!

**RODRIGUAN PUBLIC OFFICERS – MAURITIUS TO RODRIGUES
ESTABLISHMENT –TRANSFER REQUEST**

(No. B/303) Mr F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms whether, in regard to requests made by Rodriguan public officers for their transfer from the Mauritius Establishment to the Rodrigues Establishment, he will state the number thereof posted in the –

- (a) Mauritius Prison Service;
- (b) Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services, and
- (c) other Government department excluding the Police Force, indicating where matters stand thereon.

Mr Pentiah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I, please, first and foremost, thank the hon. Second Member for Rodrigues for his question.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there is a total of 36 Rodriguan public officers who have requested for their transfer to the Establishment of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and they are as follows –

- (a) there are 10 Prison Officers/Senior Prison Officers, including three Women Prison Officers/Senior Prison Officers in the Mauritius Prison Service;
- (b) 13 Firefighters in the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services, and
- (c) 2 Nursing Officers and one temporary Attendant Hospital Services in the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following the setting up of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in 2001, distinct Establishments were set up in respect of posts under the Mauritian Establishment and that of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in the Civil Establishment Order, Mauritius Civil Establishment Order and Rodrigues, respectively.

Whilst the posts on the Rodrigues Regional Assembly are restricted to Rodriguan candidates, posts on the Mauritian Establishment are open to both Mauritian and Rodriguan candidates. Accordingly, the 26 Rodriguan officers in the Mauritius Prison Service, the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services and the Ministry of Health and Wellness were appointed by the Disciplined Forces Service Commission and the Public Service Commission, respectively, to serve in the post on the Mauritian Establishment.

Section 71 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act provides that, and I quote –

“(1) A public officer may, with the approval of the appropriate Service Commission, be transferred to the establishment of the Regional Assembly and such transfer shall be on such terms and conditions of service as are acceptable to the appropriate Service Commission, the Regional Assembly and the person transferred.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Disciplined Forces Service Commission Regulations and the Public Service Commission Regulations do not provide for the permanent transfer of officers from the Mauritian establishment to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. I am informed in the case of the three officers on the establishment of the Ministry of Health and Wellness, the Public Service Commission (PSC) had already informed the officers that their request cannot be considered under the existing provisions of its regulations.

As regards the request for permanent transfer to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly from the Rodriguan officers of the Mauritius Prison Service and Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service, protracted discussions have been held between these two commissions and departments, and advice has been sought from the AG on the matter.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the light of the legal advice obtained and in view of the complexity and sensitivity of the issue, which requires more in-depth discussions with all stakeholders and subsequent amendments, which need to be brought to existing legislations, including amending the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act, which is in accordance of section 75E of the Constitution, the matter is still under consideration.

Finally, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, pending a policy decision on the matter, Rodriguan public officers, on the Mauritian establishment, who are willing to serve in Rodrigues, have the option to apply for and undergo the selection service appointment as Prisons Officer/Senior Prisons Officer, Woman Prisons Officer or Woman Prisons Officer for Firefighter establishment of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly as and when vacancies are advertised.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister. The hon. Third Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil!

MAURICE STRATÉGIE – MANDATE, ROLE & STAFF

(No. B/304) Mr C. Ramkalawon (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning whether, in regard to Maurice Stratégie, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) mandate and role thereof, indicating the strategic support provided to Government since its coming into operation, and
- (b) number of staff currently posted thereat, indicating the number thereof recruited grade-wise between August 2024 to November 2024.

Dr. Mrs Jeetun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Maurice Stratégie was initially set up as a Special Purpose Vehicle under the Economic Development Board. On 14 March 2023, it was incorporated under the Company's Act 2001 as a private ltd company wholly owned by the EDB in accordance with section 5 (2) (c) of the EDB Act 2017. The EDB and Maurice Stratégie signed a Framework Agreement on 04 May 2023 for their effective setting up of Maurice Stratégie. A secondment agreement was signed by the parties on the same day for the provision of staff from the EDB to handle the core activities of Maurice Stratégie.

Subsequently, the Maurice Stratégie Board Act 2024 established Maurice Stratégie as a body corporate to serve as a central research and planning bureau for Mauritius. The Act was assented and gazetted on 31 July 2024 and came into force as from 16 August 2024.

According to section 5 of the Maurice Stratégie Board Act 2024, the function of the Maurice Stratégie are to –

1. Conduct prospective work and inform public bodies about the possible medium and long-term strategic plans that are contemplated for Mauritius.
2. Undertake strategic studies to inform the government of the actions required for the purpose of the preparation of reform, in particular through an analysis of the context of the decision and its forceable impact in the short term and medium term.
3. Participate in the evaluation of government policies.

4. Serve as a resource centre for the identification, organisation and evaluation of public consultations and debates.
5. Identify and publicise the experiences carried out abroad that may enrich inflection on such reforms as may be useful to Mauritius and the ways and means of carrying them out.

I am also informed that the Board of Maurice Stratégie, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, which met on two occasions is composed of –

- the Financial Secretary as Chairman;
- a representative of the Prime Minister's Office;
- every Deputy Financial Secretary of the Ministry of Finance;
- the CEO of EDB or his representative;
- the Director of Statistics Mauritius;
- a representative of the Bank of Mauritius;
- a representative of the MRA;
- a representative of the private sector, and
- a representative of academia.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Maurice Stratégie has been working on various projects and reports, including securing technical support from the Agence Française de Développement and Expertise France, whereby a resident expert is currently supporting Maurice Stratégie. In this context, two short term assistant missions are also being financed through the AFD and Expertise France.

The Maurice Stratégie has conducted economic research and analysis, such as sectoral insights from Mauritius, Economic Review and Outlook 2025 and has published a paper on 'Unlocking Mauritian Trade - A Situational Analysis and Opportunity Assessment Volume 1.'

As regard part (b) of the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Maurice Stratégie has employed 28 staff members. Following the signature of the agreement between EDB and Maurice Stratégie on 04 May 2023 for the provision of staffs to handle the core activities of the institution, nine staffs comprising seven technical staff from the Strategic Planning Directorate and 2 messenger/drivers were seconded from the EDB.

Following the enactment of the Maurice Stratégie Board Act, out of the nine seconded staffs, eight officers were employed on a permanent and pensionable establishment of the EDB opted to be transferred to Maurice Stratégie as from 01 July 2023 on the same terms and conditions governing human resources matters at the level of EDB in accordance with section 24 (1) of the Act.

The Head of Department of the Strategic Planning Directorate of EDB who was employed on a contractual basis since September 2015, was seconded as Officer-in-Charge to Maurice Stratégie on 01 July 2023. Following the institutionalisation of Maurice Stratégie, the officer was appointed Executive Director on a contractual basis for a period of three years with effect from 09 September 2024.

Furthermore, one staff who has been seconded from the Ministry of Finance through the enactment is currently employed as Lead Research Analyst at Maurice Stratégie from 19 September 2024.

In September 2024, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Maurice Stratégie called for application from suitable candidates to join its team. Subsequently, on 03 October 2024, an offer of employment was made to the following –

- six Researchers;
- two Senior Analysts;
- five Analysts;
- three officers, and
- two Secretaries.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Now that the hon. Minister of Land Transport is in the House, we will go back to PQ B/297.

Hon. Ms Stephanie Anquetil!

QUATRE BORNES, KOOSEEAL AVENUE – ROAD MARKINGS & CONVERSION

(No. B/297) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to Kooseeal Avenue, from Chemin Bassin towards Palma Road, he will state if consideration will be given for –

- (a) the installation of road markings, signage, cat's eyes, speed limits and speed breakers thereat, and
- (b) conducting a study to assess the feasibility of converting same into a one-way traffic road.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the arrangements made.

I am informed that Kooseeal Avenue is over a stretch of 1 km from Jawaharlal Nehru Road, commonly known as Chemin Bassin, to Palma Road, Quatre Bornes. The width of Kooseeal Avenue varies approximately between 3.5 metres to 5 metres. Part of Kooseeal Avenue, where the road width is approximately 3.5 metres wide, is already a one-way traffic, that is, from its junction with Chemin Machine up to its junction with Palma Road, the B2 Road.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, given that the width of Kooseeal Avenue is less than 5.5 metres wide, centre line markings cannot be provided. It is too narrow for two lanes. Similarly, edge markings cannot be implemented as this will reduce the width of the traffic lane.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member will surely agree that for such narrow road where neither centre line nor edges marking can be provided, cat's eyes would not be possible. However, stop lines have been marked at all junctions where the lateral roads connect with Kooseeal Avenue.

Moreover, 40 km speed limit signs have already been provided by the TRMSU since the beginning of the year, 06 February 2025, to warn road users of the prevailing speed limit. The situation is being monitored and additional traffic calming measures or devices will be provided if necessary.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, pertinent question. However, the hon. Member will surely agree that converting a two traffic into a one-way traffic road can sometimes be complicated as it disturbs the traffic flow, the traffic flow patterns and dynamics of the whole region. Nevertheless, I reassure the hon. Member that the TRMSU will consider the advisability of converting Kooseeal Avenue into a one-way traffic after consultations with all the relevant stakeholders including the Municipal City Council of Quatre Bornes and the inhabitants of the locality. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Ms Anquetil.

Ms Anquetil: *Je vous remercie, M. le président.* Would the Minister inform the House whether he is aware of the numerous accidents and complaints from the residents of that front in this consideration.

Mr Osman Mahomed: We do get information every now and then but after the hon. Member has asked the question and the inhabitants must be thankful her. We are paying particular attention to the region now and would, like I said in my original reply, consider the possibility into converting a one-way traffic.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka.

ST PIERRE VILLAGE & TRAFFIC CENTRE – LACK OF PARKING FACILITIES – SURVEY

(No. B/298) Mr P. Venkatasami (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the problem of traffic congestion in the village of St Pierre and lack of parking facilities at the St Pierre Traffic Centre, he will state –

- (a) if any survey has been carried out by his Ministry thereinto and, if so, indicate the main recommendations contained therein and if not, why not, and
- (b) the measures being envisaged to address same.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the village of St Pierre like many other villages has seen a lot of developments taking place along roadsides with buildings abutting the road networks. As a result, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, traffic congestion is a dire reality and remedial actions thereto are limited in as much as there is not enough space available to undertake any capacity enhancing measures. Because of the fast development that has occurred there in so far as road infrastructure are concerned. Specifically, it is not possible to introduce additional traffic lanes nor a turning filter lane at junctions due to the already heavy built-up environment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the TRMSU that due to the prevailing situation limiting the traffic mitigating actions, no specific engineering survey has been carried out. Moreover, the casual factors contributing to traffic congestion were well-known namely; narrow roads, high vehicular movement and road side parking. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regard to part (b) of the question, the TRMSU is proposing to carry out the following to alleviate the problem –

1. A traffic count survey with a view to optimising traffic lights at signalised junctions thus reducing waiting times.

2. Implementing parking restrictions along certain roads in the village in consultation with the Moka District Council.
3. Stringent enforcement by the Police and the NLTA for parking violations.
4. Promoting the use of public transportation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, although the scope for physical upgrades is extremely limited in St Pierre, like I mentioned earlier, due to its heavy built-up environment, my Ministry remains committed to implementing operational, regulatory and planning measures in collaboration with relevant stakeholders in order to improve the overall traffic condition and commuting experience in the village. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Do you have any supplementary questions?

Mr Venkatasami: Would the hon. Minister consider to meet even some private land owners just around the traffic centre, to have meeting with them to secure some space to relocate the traffic centre, please?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, if that can facilitate. I think with the relevant authorities concerned, I will be willing to meet up to see how going forward we can alleviate the situation but that does not depend only on my Ministry. I think several of the Ministries and Departments will have to be consulted for that purpose.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Third Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central.

IMMACULEE CONCEPTION SCHOOL (FORMER) - PREMISES - SECURING

(No. B/305) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the former Immaculee Conception School located at corner Jules Levieux Street and Monseigneur Leen Street, Ward 4, he will state the measures taken by his Ministry to secure the premises thereof.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the former Immaculee Conception School is found over a plot of State land of an extent of about 93 perches over which stands a ground plus one concrete building. The then Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology informed the then Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning on 01 December 2021 that the former Immaculee Conception School is no longer being used for educational purposes since 2017.

If I may add, in fact, when I perused the letter that was sent to the Senior Chief Executive of my Ministry on 01 December 2021. One of the paragraphs of that letter, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can read and I quote –

“In light of the above, and given that the site is no longer being used by the Ministry since 2017, it would be appreciated if your Ministry can take back control of the land and ensure necessary and appropriate measures be taken accordingly”.

Nothing was done ever since 2021, to make it worse, nothing was done ever since 2017. So, for all those years this school was left in a totally abandoned state. The classrooms are clearly being used by people dealing in meshed things which are totally unlawful. There is rubbish and overgrown grass. It is totally *insalubre* and this is in the middle of the capital city of Port Louis.

So, I wonder, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, why is it that the then hon. Minister of Housing and Land, when he – if I am not mistaken very close to where they had shown some interest to obtain some Land – so, how is it that he seems to be unaware, at least in those days, of anything going on with any State land in that particular region. So, he said, but I do not believe it. So, nothing was done, the building that once housed the former Immaculee Conception School, as I said, haven for illegal activities.

Now, there are two options available, one, to inform the Ministry of Local Government through City Council of Port Louis to initiate cleaning of the site and then under sections 128 and 129 of Local Government Act to make provisions for shoring up and securing the building but there is another option. The other option is to retrieve the land altogether. This was what was requested for ever since 2021 and so many years later on whilst the others were asleep at the helm. Now, we are not asleep at the helm, and we will do what needs to be done. 93 perches in the middle of capital and when we are looking for land, the elected members of that Constituency, all of them have been looking for land in order to put up projects, there we go, land is available and was sleeping there and the former Government did not bother.

So, I thank the hon. Member for that question; I have given instructions already to the Senior Chief Executive of my Ministry to retrieve, to take it back and then I shall consult with the hon. Members from Constituency No. 2 in order to find out together with themselves and other future, soon to be elected, members of the alliance of the Municipal Council to decide on the proper way forward to make use of that prime property.

I would like to thank the hon. Member once again for having put that question because that question brought me to a document that shows that back in 1962, and if I am not mistaken, it could be, it was Mohamed, the first Minister of Housing and Lands in our family

who was the one who gave the lease for that school. So, it is quite an interesting matter with history that I am dealing with it today in order to give it back its letter *de gloire*. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, one supplementary!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This property, this premises is in an extreme derelict state, lying in the city of Port Louis. May I ask the hon. Minister as a matter of urgency and a short term measure, whether he could liaise with the Commissioner of Police to ensure that this premises is not being used as a drug den daily and also harbouring petty criminals on a 24/7 basis at the moment, just immediate measures for the security of the inhabitants living in the surroundings? Thank you.

Mr Mohamed: I thank the hon. Member for his concern and I think that his concerns are totally called-for and very legitimate. I must therefore beg leave to table four photographs of the site in question that will show exactly the very bad state these premises are in. As in, we have already contacted the Commissioner of Police and the officers in order to do the needful.

I have been speaking about this problem with my hon. colleague, the Minister of Environment, who has graciously offered his services and his help in order to clean up the site and I thank him for that.

However, I am of the view and I say it again, that those premises could be used for other projects as the Constituency No. 2 has been calling for but it seems that for the past ten years, no one was listening.

Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, next question. Hon. Third Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien!

SHELTERED FARMING PROJECT, PLAINE MAGNIEN – BENEFICIARIES & REALLOCATION

(No. B/306) Mr C. Lukeeram (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to sheltered farming park at Plaine Magnien, he will state and table a list of the beneficiaries thereof, indicating –

- (a) if all the units have been leased and are under cultivation, and

- (b) the amount of rent due, if any, by each beneficiary and, if so, further indicate if consideration will be given for the re-allocation thereof in case of default.

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

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the sheltered farming project at Plaine Magnien, is a resounding failure of the previous government.

Phase I of the project was meant for young, unemployed graduates to gain skills and experience in entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector. The project was launched in April 2018 with the setting up of 10 net houses of 2000 square metre each and equipped with electrically powered irrigation system costing a sum of around Rs15 million.

Theses net houses were allocated to trainees who had followed training in basic sheltered farming system. However, one of them withdrew from the programme and the net house was reallocated to Food and Agricultural and Research Extension Institute which is running a demonstration centre thereat.

I am informed that no lease agreement has been signed with the trainees in respect of the allocated net houses and that no rent has been paid.

With your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the list of beneficiaries under this project. I am informed that at present, only two beneficiaries are active on sites besides Food and Agricultural and Research Extension Institute. The remaining ones have abandoned the site due to inter-alia problems associated with bedrocks on the plots that were allocated, damaged to netting systems occasioning entry of birds and pests and inadequate monitoring and follow-up by FAREI.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Phase II of the sheltered farming park at Plaine Magnien, comprising 20 net houses of approximately 2000 square metres each was completely in November 2020 for an amount of Rs36.8 million. None of the units has been allocated since 2020 due to the non-availability of water and electricity; clearly demonstrating poor management and lack of overall coordination of the project where more than Rs50 million of taxpayers' money had already been invested.

Over the years, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the unoccupied net houses under both phases have reached a deplorable state. While vegetation has grown within the net houses and the surrounding areas, the nets and drip lines have been damaged and accessories and fittings have been stolen from the pump houses.

I am advised that the cost of rehabilitation of one net house is estimated at around Rs600,000; this sum excludes the cost of supplying water from the boreholes to the net house. An amount of Rs5 million has been made available in the budget for current financial year for the rehabilitation of net houses at Ville Bague and Plaine Magnien but this amount obviously is insufficient to rehabilitate both phases of the project at Plaine Magnien.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is clear that this project has been plagued by serious shortcomings and serious negligence. Out of the 30 net houses, only three are being currently operated and none of the 20 net houses of the second Phase has ever been allocated to date. Considering that the shift from opened field to sheltered farming is one of the means of improving production capacity in the face of adverse impact of climate change, the project needs to be revisited.

I have given firm instructions to the Senior Chief Executive and Food and Agricultural and Research Extension Institute to review the sheltered farming project.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. Next question, hon. Third Member for Montagne Blanche and Grand River South East!

MELROSE-DEEP RIVER ROAD – COVERED BUS STOPS – SURVEY & MAINTENANCE

(No. B/307) Mr R. Saumtally (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to public transport, he will state if his Ministry has carried out a survey to assess the need for covered bus stops along the route from Melrose to Deep River and, if so, indicate the findings thereof and actions proposed in relation thereto, if any.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Road Development Authority that along the road from Melrose to Deep River – classified road network – there are 44 covered bus stops and around 12 bus stops which are covered.

With regard to the covered bus stops, 15 of these constitute of iron sheets which require some uplifting. I am also informed that the RDA will accordingly proceed with painting and repair works thereat.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also informed by the TMRSU that following a survey carried out, it has been observed that 6 bus stops from Sebastopol to Deep River have to be upgraded. Inasmuch as the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit does not currently

have a framework to allocate work to a designated contractor, like usually this is the case, because same has expired; a fresh tender exercise is being floated for the contractor to undertake such jobs. The RDA could consider upgrading these bus stops the more so, they are located on classified road and also, if it is deemed to be in the interest of time.

Else, once the contractor of the TMRSU has been selected, the TMRSU can undertake the works.

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

CONSTITUENCY NO. 6 – PIPE REPLACEMENT PROJECTS

(No. B/308) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre D'or) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the pipe replacement projects undertaken in the village of, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to where matters stand, indicating –

- (a) when remedial works will be undertaken for the resurfacing of Triangle Road up to La Boutique Perron and Melle Jeanne, in Goodlands, and
- (b) the expected completion date thereof.

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, la *CWA* m'informe qu'un total de 3,4 km des tuyaux ont été remplacés dans la région de Goodlands dans le cas des deux contrats PME.

En ce qui concerne la remise en état des routes, je suis également informé que les travaux le long de Telugu Temple Road, Piver Avenue et une partie de Triangle Road ont déjà été achevés. Pour le chemin Triangle Road jusqu'à La Boutique Perron et Mademoiselle Jeanne, la *CWA* avait lancé un contrat distinct pour la remise en état de la route. Cependant, comme je l'ai expliqué dans ma réponse à la question B/219 lors de notre séance du 25 mars 2025, M. le président, le coût du projet ayant été dépassé, la *CWA* ne peut actuellement pas procéder à l'attribution des contrats pour la réfection des routes.

Une demande de financement supplémentaire a été déposée au ministère des Finances et cela est en cours d'examen. La *CWA* a lancé un appel d'offres pour l'exercice 2025-2026, afin de financer un nouvel appel d'offre pour la remise en état des routes. L'attribution du contrat est prévue pour septembre 2025 et l'achèvement des travaux, on espère, est prévu pour octobre 2025.

Mr Beejan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister implement strict mechanism to prevent similar delays in future projects, particularly in densely populated areas?

Mr Assirvaden: *Oui.* We will.

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

CONSTITUENCY NO. 6 – LODGING ACCOMMODATION PERMIT – INSPECTION TIME FRAME

(No. B/309) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to Lodging Accommodation Permit, he will state the –

- (a) expected time frame for an inspection to be carried out upon receipt of a new application therefor, and
- (b) number of permits granted in Constituency No. 6, Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or since 2019 to 2024, giving details thereof.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, lodging accommodation for foreign migrant workers is governed by the Occupational Safety and Health Act 2005 and the Occupational Safety and Health Employees Lodging Accommodation Regulation 2011.

With regard to Part (a) of the question, I am informed that the expected time frame for an inspection to be carried out by officers of my Ministry upon receipt of an application for Lodging Accommodation Permit, is normally 5 working days.

However, I am informed that the lodging accommodating permit is usually issued within a month after receipt of the application at the National Occupational Safety and Health department of my Ministry.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it should however be noted that when submitting an application for lodging accommodation permit to my Ministry, health and fire clearance should accompany the application and the obtention of those clearances from the Ministry of Health and Wellness and from the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services may take quite some time even several months. The reason for that is very often, the accommodation has to be modified physically to meet the requirements of the Ministry of Health and fire clearances.

Now, the inter-ministerial committee set up to look into the whole issue of migrant workers is considering how to streamline the process to reduce the time it takes to get the lodging accommodation permit. For the time being, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, an applicant wishing to recruit foreign workers needs to get the lodging accommodation permit first and then apply for the work permit. While he is applying for the work permit, he has to pay rent sometimes for several months.

So, what is being proposed by the committee now is to have a system of parallel application. So, at the time an employer will apply for a work permit, at the same time, he will apply for a lodging accommodation permit. Then, once he receives it, he will be able to do it. Consideration is also being given to the possibility of issuing lodging accommodation permit to the owner of the building who will then be able to lease the whole or part of the building to different employers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerning part (b) of the question, the number of permits which have been granted in Constituency No. 6, Grand Baie and Poudre d'Or for the period 2019 to 2024, including both new and renewed permits, is 229. I am tabling the breakdown of the number of permits issued in Constituency No. 6 from 2019 to 2024.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Jhummun!

Mr Jhummun: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister inform the House, once such a permit has been provided, how frequent inspections are made and what are the measures taken for non-compliance? Thank you.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, inspections are regularly carried out after a LAP has been issued either on an ad hoc basis or following a complaint received from either the migrant worker or more often from the trade unionists. For example, for the period 2024 to February 2025, 91 follow up visits were carried out at the employee's lodging accommodation, including joint visits with the Ministry of Health and the Mauritius Fire Services.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question!

Mr Jhummun: What actions are taken for non-compliance?

Mr Uteem: Well, for the time being, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Occupational Safety and Health (Employees' Lodging Accommodation) Regulations 2011 makes provision, under Regulation 23, for the enforcement authority – usually, it is my Ministry – to serve an

enforcement notice on the employer so that he has a delay to comply with that enforcement notice. If not, then, the lodging accommodation permit is revoked and the employer will then have to make alternative provisions to accommodate the employees.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, the hon. Fourth Member for Rodrigues, hon. Edouard!

14th MONTH BONUS – PAYMENT – NON-COMPLIANCE

(No. B/310) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to the payment of the 14th month end of year bonus, he will state the number of companies which have not complied therewith, indicating –

- (a) the reasons therefor;
- (b) if his Ministry is in presence of such a complaint from employees of Brilliant Cleaning Services Ltd., and
- (c) the measures taken against these companies, if any.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the population will recall that despite the difficult economic situation that we inherited, Government introduced in December last year the Special Allowance 14th month bonus for some 420,200 employees from both the private and public sectors as well as a one-month allowance to every pensioner, widow, orphan and disabled person in Mauritius.

The Special Allowance Act 2024 provides for a one-off payment of a special allowance to employees drawing a monthly basic salary not exceeding Rs50,000 or equivalent to one-month basic salary.

As far as employees who have been in continuous employment for only part of the year, the employee or his legal representative is entitled to a special allowance on a pro rata basis in line with section 3 (3) of the Act. Special allowance, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is payable as follows –

“In two equal instalments where –

- (i) the first instalment is paid not later than on the last working day of December 2024, and
- (ii) the last instalment is paid on the last working day of January 2025.

Or alternatively, in case there is an agreement between the employer and an employee, the payment can be done in not more than four instalments.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the enactment of the Special Allowance Act in December last year, I am informed as at end of February 2025, 1,503 complaints in relation to non-compliance with the Special Allowance Act were received from employees against 321 employers comprising 291 companies and 30 individual employers.

Regarding part (a) of the question, the main reason put forward by employers for non-compliance is financial constraint faced by them. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Act does provide that the Director General of the Mauritius Revenue Authority can provide financial assistance in connection with the payment of special allowance to qualifying export enterprises, qualifying SMEs and other employers falling within a category as may be prescribed. There has been a regulation in February 2025, the Income Tax (Financial Assistance for Payment of Special Allowance) Regulations 2025 where the category of eligible companies for refund has been set out and they include –

- (a) Charitable institutions;
- (b) Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) registered with the National Social Inclusion Foundation;
- (c) Registered Religious bodies;
- (d) Trade Unions; and
- (e) Enterprises other than export enterprise or SMEs, whose turnover for the Year of Assessment 2023/2024 does not exceed Rs750 million and who are operating in the following sectors –
 - (i) Business Processing Outsourcing (BPO);
 - (ii) Security or Cleaning Services, and
 - (iii) Construction Industry.

In addition, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, financial support has been extended to enterprises in the transportation sector facing financial difficulties to pay the special allowance. I have been informed by the MRA that 10,570 eligible employers have employed for the financial assistance, out of which, 8,677 employers have submitted a special allowance return 2024.

Payments have already been effected to 8,041 compliant employers for a total amount of Rs1, 052, 051,539.

However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to stress that one of the problems which the eligible employers are facing when making a claim to the MRA is that under the provisions of the law, the employer is required to pay the special allowance and then claim a refund from the MRA. Now, there are a number of employers who are not paying the special allowance and making claims for refund by the MRA. That is what is causing delay. So, even though they may be eligible to get the refund because they have not paid the special allowance, MRA is not giving them the money back.

As regards part (b) of the question, on 15 January 2025, my Ministry received complaints from 12 Indian workers to the effect that they have not been paid the special allowance 2024 by Brilliant Cleaning Services Ltd. They had also not been remunerated for November and December and did not receive end of year bonus. After the intervention of officers of my Ministry, their outstanding salaries have been settled. However, the company is yet to pay them their end of year bonus and their special allowance.

On 28 March 2025, the company agreed to pay the outstanding amount in three instalments, on 10 April, 10 May and 10 June 2025. On 10 March 2025, the Chemin Grenier Labour Office received a complaint from 16 local employees of Brilliant Cleaning Services Ltd – the same company – for non-payment of special allowance. When contacted, the Director informed my Ministry that payment could not be effected due to acute financial constraint. I am informed by the MRA that although Brilliant Cleaning Services Ltd is eligible to apply for the refund through MRA, they have not done so, so far.

Concerning part (c) of the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, investigation is ongoing by enforcement officers of my Ministry with regard to those cases where special allowance has not been paid when due. As at February 2025, out of 1,503 complaints received, only seven cases were rejected, 41 cases withdrawn by employees and 151 cases were settled. The settled cases represent a total amount of Rs2.6 m. recovered on behalf of workers after the intervention of officers of my Ministry. The remaining cases are still under investigation by my Ministry.

I wish to highlight that any employer who fails to comply with the provision of the Special Allowance Act shall commit an offense, and shall on conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding Rs5,000. 91 cases against six employers have already been referred to the

Prosecution Unit of my Ministry in order for criminal action to be taken against them. Before lodging the information at the Industrial Court, my Ministry has liaised with the Mauritius Revenue Authority to confirm whether these employers are eligible for financial assistance and have received the financial assistance. The reply from the MRA is awaited.

Allow me to assure the House and workers of this country that criminal action will be taken against all those employers who are not eligible to financial assistance and who are still not complying with the provisions of the Special Allowance Act.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Member?

Mr Edouard: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. I would like to ask the hon. Minister if the refund is related to CSG compliance.

Mr Uteem: I do not know the mechanism which the MRA is doing, whether it is using the funds of CSG to pay it or otherwise. I am only informed that the MRA refunds all the amount of money that is being paid by qualifying employers as required under the Special Allowance Act Regulations.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, next question, the hon. Third Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central!

PUBLIC HOSPITALS – RADIOLOGY SERVICES – OUTSOURCING

(No. B/311) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to radiological investigations carried out in public hospitals over the past four years to date, he will state –

- (a) the number of MRI's and CT scan apparatus available and in use;
- (b) if the radiologists employed in this department are reporting on the MRI's and CT scans carried out and, if not, why not, and
- (c) if the services of radiologists from abroad have been retained therefor and, if so, give details on the contractual agreement thereof.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the number of MRIs and CT scan apparatus available in our public hospitals are four and seven, respectively. Three out of four MRIs and six out of seven CT scan apparatus are functional and are being used.

With regard to part (b) of the question, consultants in charge and radiologists of the radiology department are reporting on MRIs and CT scans on a 24/7 basis per semi-urgent ward and emergency cases. As there are no MRI services at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital for the time being, the department of radiology at the Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital is carrying out the MRI imaging services once per week for cases referred by the Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital. The same radiologists posted at the Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital also carry out MRIs for cases referred by Victoria Hospital after working hours for emergency cases. These arrangements have been put in place to ensure continuous access of MRI services.

At the Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital, the CT scans and MRIs are all functional and are all covered under the maintenance and repair contract to ensure optimum performance and minimise breakdowns. In addition, my Ministry has initiated procurement for acquisition of MRI and CT scan apparatus for Flacq Hospital.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding part (c) of the question, I wish to inform the House that in view of the increasing number of patients awaiting reporting of the MRI and CT scans to decide on the way forward for further clinical management, it was decided to refer imaging to private clinics for reporting. Quotations were invited from private clinics with expression of interest, and clinics proposing the lowest prices were selected for outsourcing of the MRI and CT scan reporting. I am informed that since March 2024, three private clinics have been enlisted for referral of reporting in respect of routine non-urgent cases of MRI and CT scans done at the level of regional hospitals. I am also informed that the enlisted clinics are remunerated as at date.

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

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. There is a contractual agreement that is happening between the Ministry of Health and private clinics for reporting of CT scans and MRIs. It is very unfortunate, and I have a document at hand, that the people who are reporting these MRIs/CT scans are not registered – some of them – to the Medical Council of this country, thus posing a serious threat when it comes to medical legal issues.

Those who are reporting them are not even on site in Mauritius, thereby depriving the patient the clinical picture and that is why there has been serious mistakes whereby a woman who has lost her uterus was told she still has one. So, I will urge the hon. Minister to see to it that primary reporting of MRIs and CT scans are done by our local radiologists and adhere to secondary reporting or second opinion with offsite radiologists from abroad.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have a big problem as far as radiologists are concerned. We have a lack of such radiologists in our country, a big lack in most of the hospitals. Secondly, I am not aware whether outsourcing was done from abroad but I will look into the issue, I can promise, if I can get a copy of paper which you have with you.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, you have a supplementary on that question?

Mr Edouard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is reported that the scan apparatus in Rodrigues is out of order. Will the hon. Minister look into it, please?

Mr Bachoo: Yes, I will.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. First Member for Montagne Blanche and Grand River South East!

PEPSI LANE & BRAMSTHAN ROAD, ECROIGNARD – REMEDIAL WORKS

(No. B/312) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to Pepsi Lane and Bramsthan Road in Ecroignard and Bramsthan, respectively, he will state if he has been made aware of deplorable state thereof and, if so, indicate when remedial works will be carried out thereat and the expected completion date thereof.

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Pepsi Lane at Ecroignard is an area prone to localised water accumulation during heavy rainfall. The capacity of the existing absorption drain is not enough to capture high volumes of water, thereby causing great inconvenience to pedestrians.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that the National Development Unit had awarded a contract for the construction of an absorption drain at Pepsi Road, Ecroignard on 08 July 2024 to mitigate the flooding and water accumulation thereat for a contract value of Rs2.29 m. However, during excavation works, basalt strata was encountered. In order not to put at risk the existing services and causing any infrastructural damages to residential buildings in the surrounding, upon instructions from the NDU, the contractor stopped the works immediately. He was thereafter requested to proceed with the proper backfilling and compaction of the excavated trench and provide for a temporary reinstatement and open the road to traffic. The contract for the absorption drain was eventually terminated.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to tackle the problem of flooding in the region in a holistic manner, I have been advised that a consultant would have to be appointed to carry out a study for the drainage works and relocation of the major CWA services. Bids will accordingly be launched early May 2025.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that the Central Water Authority had excavated two pits at Pepsi Road which will be reinstated by the latter's contractor on 14 April 2025.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the region of Bramsthan, I am informed that pipe replacement works are actually being carried out along several roads by the Central Water Authority. 4.62 km of permanent reinstatement works have been completed and as at date, around 1.28 km is outstanding at Dominique Road, Kalimaye Road No. 1, Shivala Road and Kalipa Road. It is expected that the remaining reinstatement works will be undertaken by the Central Water Authority's contractor as from next week and would be completed in one week's time.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you! Hon. Second Member for Savanne and Rivière Noire!

CONSTITUENCY NO. 14 – OPERATIONAL DISPENSARIES – ACCESSIBILITY & PARKING FACILITIES

(No. B/313) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the dispensaries serving the region of Savanne-Rivière Noire, he will state the –

- (a) number thereof currently operational, and
- (b) accessibility and parking facilities available at the dispensary situated in a rented building at Baie du Cap, indicating if consideration will be given for the relocation thereof.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that in Constituency No. 14, Savanne-Rivière Noire, there is one Area Health Centre which is located at Chemin Grenier and eight Community Health Centres which are located in the following villages –

- Bambous Virieux;
- Case Noyale;

- Chamarel;
- Chamouny;
- Flic-en-Flac;
- La Gaulette;
- Tamarin, and
- Baie du Cap.

All the nine health facilities are currently operational.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that Baie du Cap Community Health Centre is housed in an old rented building which is facing accessibility and parking issues. Attempts have, however, been made by my Ministry since 2017 to relocate the Baie du Cap Community Health Centre to a more appropriate location. All the lands identified within the region for the construction of a new community health centre were found to be unsuitable due to the risk of flooding and sloping topography of the grounds. Furthermore, several expressions of interest were launched by the Ministry since April 2016 to rent another facility within Baie du Cap to house the community health centre. However, there were no responsive bidders during all these exercises.

I am also informed that a new commercial centre is being constructed at Baie du Cap Village and discussions are ongoing between the private developer and my Ministry to look into the possibility of renting a designated space within the building to relocate the community health centre.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the same time, the possibility of requesting the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries to release the existing fisheries post at Baie du Cap, which is apparently not being used for the past eight years, is also being looked into.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Babajee!

Mr Babajee: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Will the Minister consider to have a site visit at those community centres, especially for Case Noyale Community Centre?

Mr Bachoo: Within a week, I will do it.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question! Hon. Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière!

**METHADONE SUBSTITUTION THERAPY PROGRAMME – BUDGET
EARMARKED & DISPENSING SITES**

(No. B/314) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the Methadone Therapy Substitution Programme, he will state the –

- (a) annual amount budgeted therefor since 2019 to date;
- (b) places of distribution thereof region-wise, indicating the number of patients attending each collecting point, and
- (c) number of patients who have successfully completed the programme, on a yearly basis, since 2019 to date.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there is no specific budget allocated for Methadone Substitution Therapy Programme as expenses are being incurred under different items under the budget of my Ministry.

However, the House may wish to note that the approximate amount spent for the purchase of methadone and other related course and allowances for the Methadone Substitution Therapy Programme from 2019 to 2024 are as follows –

- for Financial Year 2018-2019, Rs40,585,832;
- for Financial Year 2019-2020, Rs42,334,842;
- for Financial Year 2020-2021, Rs57,593,713;
- for Financial Year 2021-2022, Rs46,389,430;
- for Financial Year 2022-2023, Rs60,402,179, and
- for Financial Year 2023-2024, Rs57,524,788.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that as at February 2025, there are a total number of 8,851 patients receiving their daily doses of methadone in 75 dispensing sites around the island.

The number of patients attending the different dispensing points region-wise is being tabled.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (c) of the question, it is widely accepted that the assessment of recovery from drug addiction is inherently complex, owing to the

multifaceted nature of the addiction itself. In essence, the complexity of assessing drug addiction recovery stems from the interplay of individual variability, multi-dimensional factors, measurement challenges and the dynamic nature of the recovery process itself. Hence, the exact number of patients who have successfully completed the programme cannot be determined.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes!

Mr Quirin: M. le président, la méthadone, comme tout le monde le sait, est un produit de substitution qui est devenu, malheureusement, un produit d'addiction pour de nombreux patients. Donc, l'honorable ministre peut-il dire à la Chambre s'il envisage d'autres types de programmes plus efficaces, et si, oui, lesquels ?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the days to come, we will be having a legislation on this particular issue. I will request you to be a bit patient, you will get it.

The Deputy Speaker: Pertaining to the question!

Mr Quirin: M. le président, donc, probablement, l'honorable ministre est au courant que dans certains pays, il y a le suboxone qui est privilégié à la méthadone, de par son potentiel d'abus plus faible et un niveau de dépendance physique aussi plus faible. Donc, s'il est au courant que ce produit existe, est-ce que ce traitement peut être considéré et peut-on savoir quand, à-peu-près, compte-t-il venir de l'avant avec ce programme alternatif ?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not a medical practitioner. As I have just said, we are having a new legislation. Please, be patient. Definitely, we will have certain changes.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, the new law is coming for First Reading today. Next time, the hon. Member can have an opportunity to address the House on the Bill and make any suggestion he wants. So, let's proceed with the next question. Thank you.

Hon. Members, I have been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/317, B/320, B/327, B/328, B/329, B/340, B/349, and B/350.

Now, we proceed with the next question. Hon. Second Member of Savanne and Rivière Noire!

MARTINIÈRE RESERVOIR, SURINAM – OPERATION – REMEDIAL MEASURES

(No. B/315) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Martinière Reservoir at Surinam, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to whether same is currently operational and, if not, why not, indicating the remedial measures being envisaged in relation thereto.

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, la *CWA* m'a informé que le réservoir de service de la Martinière à Surinam a été mis hors service en 2016 suite à la construction d'un nouveau réservoir à Mont Blanc d'une capacité de stockage de 255 mètres cubes. Le réservoir de service de la Martinière était insuffisant pour répondre à la demande croissante en eau dans la région. De plus, en raison de son usure, des fuites ont été constatées dans le réservoir.

Un nouveau réservoir de service d'une capacité de stockage de 2 000 mètres cubes a été construit à Mont Blanc. Situé en altitude, il alimente, donc, directement en eau la Martinière, Surinam et une partie de Riambel.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question! Hon. First Member for Montagne Blanche and Grand River South East!

VIRGIN OIL MAURITIUS LTD – TOXIC AIR POLLUTION

(No. B/316) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the Virgin Oil Mauritius Ltd., situated in Montagne Blanche, he will state if he has been made aware of the hazardous and toxic air pollution emanating therefrom and, if so, indicate the measures being envisaged to address this issue.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House may wish to note that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Licence was granted to Virgin Oil Company (Mauritius) Ltd on 27 February 2006 for the setting up of a recycling facility for the refining of used lube oil at Montagne Blanche. The operation of the refinery last started in year 2012.

I am informed that no complaint has been registered at the level of my Ministry with regard hazardous and toxic air pollution emanating from that company. I am further informed that the Environmental Health Engineering Unit of the Ministry of Health and Wellness has also not been made aware of any hazardous or toxic air pollution thereon.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, however, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry received one complaint on 21 January 2025 and two additional complaints on 07 March relating to

odour nuisance, emanating from Virgin Oil Company (Mauritius) Ltd. In view of the recurrent odour nuisance complaints received during the last 8 years, I am informed that an additional condition relating to the submission of a detailed odour management and monitoring plan by the company to the Ministry of Health and Wellness was imposed in the EIA License by my Ministry on 05 October 2021.

In fact, these complaints have been jointly addressed through several site inspections in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Wellness. Pursuant to section 21 and Fifth Schedule of the Environment Act 2024, the Ministry of Health and Wellness is the enforcing agency for odour nuisance.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that in line with conditions contained in the EIA License, the Virgin Oil Company (Mauritius) Ltd. has implemented the following mitigating measures. Refined replant is equipped with a wet scrubber, all equipment is enclosed in corrugated iron sheets and Ashoka trees have been planted around boundaries to act as greenbelt.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, an ambient air monitoring was also conducted on 03 April by the National Environmental Laboratory of my Ministry to assess the ambient air quality prevailing in the nearby residential areas located within Montagne Blanche along 500 to 700 metres of Virgin Oil Company Mauritius Ltd. Results revealed that toxic gases screened on all sites, namely ammonia, nitrogen dioxide, benzene, toluene, hydrogen sulphide and naphthalene, complied with the lowest observed adverse effect in level limit as specified by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Besides the measured concentration level of the parameter, total organic volatile compounds were compliant with the guidelines of the WHO.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry has promulgated the Environment Protection (Collection, Storage, Treatment, Use and Disposal of Waste Oil) Regulations 2006 and it is ensuring that the company abides to its provisions. My Ministry will continue to monitor closely the situation and will take appropriate actions.

HOTEL DIVING CENTRE – ACCIDENT 20 MARCH 2025 – INQUIRY

(No. B/317) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the tragic accident which occurred on 20 March 2025 at a diving center found within a hotel compound in the north of the island, he

will state if his Ministry has carried out an inquiry thereinto and, if so, indicate the outcomes thereof and the actions taken, if any, to avoid the recurrence thereof.

(Withdrawn)

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

RESIDENCE CITÉ LA CHAUX – STATE LAND – LEASEHOLDERS

(No. B/318) Mr C. Lukeeram (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to State land at Residences Cité La Chaux, he will state the number of leaseholders thereof, indicating the mechanism, if any, put in place at the Ministry to regularise these leases and/or if consideration will be given to amending the law to make the lessees owners of their lands.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there are three scenarios at Cité La Chaux, Mahebourg found on *Pas Géométriques* Rivière La Chaux.

First, there are two ex-CHA housing states, namely –

- Residence La Chaux A, and
- Residence La Chaux B comprising some 304 families who are owners of the ex-CHA housing units and are holders of State land leases *en bonne et due forme* over the plot of land on which stand their houses.

Applications for renewal or transfer of leases and subdivision of the plot of land are processed by my Ministry as and when received.

Secondly, I am informed by my Ministry that 51 families who were squatting on State land adjoining Residence La Chaux B Housing Estates and three families who were squatting on surplus of land within ex-CHA Housing Estates have been regularised and granted building site pieces over the plots of land in 2005 and 2016, respectively.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that there are squatters on some plots of State land at Cité La Chaux and officers of my Ministry are carrying out a survey to assess the real situation on site and take any action as may be appropriate. Allow me at this juncture to point out that even though this is not within the scope of this question, officers of my Ministry are indeed carrying out a survey to find out about the squatting situation, squatters all over Mauritius, in order to apprise oneself of the real situation nationally.

As regards whether consideration will be given to amending the law to make the lessees owners of their plots of land, I wish to refer the hon. Member to replies I made to the House to PQ B/38 and PQ B/118 on 04 February 2025 and 04 March 2025, respectively to the effect that *Pas Géométriques* are inalienable and *imprescriptibles*. Consequently, the individual plots of State land at Cité La Chaux cannot be sold to occupiers as per Section 5 of the State Lands Act. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, I have been advised that PQs B/321, B/334, B/339 and B/354 have been withdrawn.

So, next question, B/319, hon. Third Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or!

CAP MALHEUREUX – NEW FOOTBALL PLAYGROUND

(No. B/319) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Ministry and Evaco Group Mauritius for the construction of a new football playground in Cap Malheureux, he will state where matters stand.

The Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms (Mr L. Pentiah): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I please, first of all, thank the Third Member of Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or for this question. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to this question on behalf of my colleague and friend, the Minister of Youth and Sports.

I am informed that on 17 December 2020, an MoU was signed between the then Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation and Evaco Ltd for the construction of a football ground, a pétanque court, an outdoor gym, a kid's corner and related amenities and infrastructure on a plot of land of some 13,000 m² which is vested in the said Ministry at Chemin Vingt Pieds, Cap Malheureux.

I am further informed by Evaco Ltd that the football playground and fencing along the playground has been completed. The public is authorised to use the football playground. Temporary solar led lights have also been installed for use of the playground in the evening.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as per the provisions of the MoU, some infrastructural works, such as the construction of the changing rooms, administrative block and stands, though completed at 60%, are still pending. Provision is being made for the final phase of the project which is currently at procurement stage comprising the following –

- provision of external lighting for football pitch;
- jogging track;
- kids' playground;
- outdoor gym;
- *boulodrome* ;
- external services network;
- footpath;
- roadworks and parking, and
- landscaping.

The expected completion date of the project, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is in October 2025.

HANDBALL – ENHANCEMENT ACTIONS

(No. B/320) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to handball, he will state the actions taken by his Ministry since November 2024 to date to revive same.

(Withdrawn)

STRAY DOGS – INCREASE – REMEDIAL ACTIONS

(No. B/321) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to stray dogs, he will state if he has been made aware of the increasing number thereof over the past years and, if so, indicate the remedial actions being envisaged in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

The Deputy Speaker: We have two minutes left. We move to the next question. Hon. Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka!

MAURITIUS CANE INDUSTRY AUTHORITY – AGRICULTURAL MACHINES & EQUIPMENT – USE & PROCUREMENT

(No. B/323) Mr P. Venkatasami (The Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to –

- (a) the number of agricultural machines and equipment available thereat, indicating the –
 - (i) number currently being used for the ploughing of lands of small planters prior to embarking in new plantation, and
 - (ii) the lead time for the execution of tasks after payment effected therefor, and
- (b) whether there has been any order for the procurement of new machines and, if so, indicate the –
 - (i) number procured, and
 - (ii) expected delivery date thereof.

Dr. Boolell: I thank the hon. Member for putting this question. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, I have been informed by the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority that presently there are 35 operational agricultural machines and equipment available at the Agricultural Mechanisation Unit where 25 tractors are used for land preparation, five bell loaders are used for building and one roller is used for compaction. One hydraulic excavator is due for excavation and splitting of rocks and boulders, and one hydraulic excavator coupled with a cane cutter is used for cane harvesting. There are 27 machines that are not operational and have largely exceeded their lifetime. They cannot be repaired due to the high maintenance costs.

They also represent safety hazards to users. These has been earmarked to be sold as crafts or to be used as spare parts for existing machines.

With regard part (a)(i) of the question, the number of machines currently being used for ploughing of land of small planters is 27, out of which 22 are crawler tractors and five pneumatic tractors. Regarding part (a)(ii) of the question, the waiting time depends on the request of the planters together with payment and signing of the contracts, and also depends on the month of the year when the planter undertakes the harvest. The land preparation is performed after the planter has harvested his field. The allocation of bulldozers is made according to well-defined plan, normally according to regional grouping while maintaining a first come, first served basis.

Notwithstanding the capacity of work that the unit can take, many planters obtain the machine on time. In certain cases, due to breakdown of machines, heavy workloads or adverse climatic conditions, works are delayed and performed at a later stage. However, there are cases where planters are reluctant to abide to the planning and complain when they do not obtain the required services immediately after having submitted their requests.

As regard part (b) of the question, I have been informed by the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority that two contracts were awarded last year for three D6 type crawler tractors and two agricultural pneumatic tractors with accessories. One crawler tractor has been delivered to the MCIA last week, and the remaining equipment will be delivered in May this year after completion of all administrative procedures and commissioning.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. Just one question because time is already over.

Mr Venkatasami: Could the Minister say, how some planters who have already paid since January but till now they have not yet...

Dr. Boolell: I'm sorry?

Mr Venkatasami: Some planters already paid for land preparation since January but till now, no work has been done.

Dr. Boolell: But I can assure the hon. Member that the matter will be looked into, addressed very forcefully so that we can give satisfaction to one and all.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table have been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/324, B/325, B/330, B/332, B/333, B/337, B/351 and B/352. Time is over.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

EXECUTIVE ORDER – REGULATING IMPORTS – RECIPROCAL TARIFF

(4.01 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am making a Statement on the Executive Order entitled “Regulating Imports with a Reciprocal Tariff to Rectify Trade Practices that contribute to Large and Persistent Annual United States Goods Trade Deficits” signed by President Trump on 02 April of this year.

President Trump invoked his authority under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act of 1977 to address the national emergency posed by the absence of reciprocity in

the US trade relationships and other harmful policies like currency manipulation and unfair trade practices.

The Executive Order imposes a baseline 10% tariff on all imported goods as from 05 April 2025. The United States will also impose an individualised reciprocal higher tariff proportionate to the level of its trade deficit with that country as from 09 April 2025.

The Executive Order further states that these tariffs will remain in effect until such time as the President determines that the threat posed by the trade deficit and underlying non-reciprocal treatment is satisfied, resolved or mitigated. Some products that are exempted from this policy are steel and aluminium, copper, pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, critical minerals and energy products. Basically, all these goods are strategic for the United States, which explains their exclusion.

It is our understanding, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the calculation of the reciprocal tariff is based on the trade deficit incurred by the United States with Mauritius in 2024. In that year, Mauritius exported around USD 234.5 million of goods to the United States while it imported only USD 48 million of goods. This results in a trade deficit of USD 186.5 million for the United States.

The trade deficit as a percentage of Mauritius exports to the US is estimated at 80%. Therefore, as per the US calculation, the reciprocal tariff for Mauritius is 80%. However, this percentage was halved and a discounted reciprocal tariff of 40% will be applied for our exports entering the United States market.

The main products exported to the US include live primates, fish, sugar, textiles and apparel.

As soon as President Trump assumed Office on 20 January 2025, he signed the America First Trade Policy Presidential Memorandum which aims at undertaking a number of studies and proposing recommendations to address persistent trade deficits, amongst others.

In February 2025, the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) had requested public comments on unfair trade practices and non-reciprocal trade arrangements affecting the US economy by the deadline of 11 March 2025. Accordingly, Mauritius made a submission highlighting that the top 20 US exports to Mauritius do not attract any tariff at all. The mutual benefits of AGOA were also underscored.

On 03 April 2025, the WTO Director-General stated that many members had contacted the WTO regarding the potential impact of the tariffs on their economies and global trade. She expressed concern over the decline in trade and the risk of a tariff war driven by retaliatory measures. Highlighting the potential for significant trade diversion, she urged members to handle the resulting pressures responsibly to prevent escalating tensions.

The Executive Order means, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that our exports of goods to the United States will now be subject to a tariff of 40%. This will be clearly highly detrimental to our economy. The US is the 4th largest buyer of Mauritian goods. Some 41 export-oriented enterprises, employing some 16,750 persons, depend on the US market. Being an AGOA eligible country, Mauritius has been benefiting from duty-free market access for some 6,400 product lines on the US market.

Other AGOA eligible countries like Lesotho, Botswana and Madagascar will also face a tariff varying between 50%, 37% and 47%, respectively.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had a meeting, which included high-level representatives from various Ministries, as well as public and private sector stakeholders, namely the MCCI, the Sugar Syndicate, Business Mauritius and MEXA, with a view to charting the way forward and mitigating the fallouts on our economy.

I have chaired two meetings with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, and the officers of the Ministry of Finance, with the Junior Minister.

The following course of action was agreed –

- 1) Discuss possible avenues with the United States at the bilateral and regional levels;
- 2) Work with like-minded group of countries, including AGOA eligible countries as well as the African Union mission in Washington D.C. with a view to devising a strategy to open up discussions with the United States; and
- 3) Negotiate a Bilateral Trade Agreement with the United States which would provide the necessary predictability to our trading relations.

A High-Level Committee has been set up by Government to monitor the situation and liaise with all public, private and foreign stakeholders, including the Corporate Council for Africa, that can work together to mitigate the fallouts from the US Executive Order and ensure continued trade between Mauritius and the United States.

Government will also engage with the US as the Executive Order provides that reciprocal tariff can be modified if the country takes –

“significant steps to remedy non-reciprocal trade arrangements and align sufficiently with the United States on economic and national security matters.”

I am also writing to President Trump with a view to discuss the concerns of Mauritius.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity, you have a statement?

Mr Subron: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(4.08 p.m.)

NPF/NSF INVESTMENT COMMITTEE – HOLD ATTITUDE LTD –SECURED BOND INVESTMENT

The Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity (Mr A. Subron): With your permission, I wish to make a Statement on the secured bond investment made by the National Pensions Fund (NPF) and the National Savings Fund (NSF) in Hold Attitude Ltd, a private company registered in Mauritius.

This bond investment was made for a total amount of Rs1.45 billion, on 01 March 2022 and was due to be repaid by 30 September 2024.

I wish to inform the House that the bond investment has now been fully repaid to the tune of Rs1,618,214,214, the last payment being made on 27 March 2025.

This amount comprises the following –

- Capital Amount Due Rs1,450,000,000
- Interest Due Rs142,048,357
- Interest Penalty (of 3% above applicable interest rate) Rs26,165,857

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House may wish to refer to my reply made to PQ B/23 of 10 December 2024, whereby I informed the House that the NPF/NSF Investment Committee had agreed to the extension of capital repayment of the bond issued by Hold Attitude Ltd for an amount of Rs1.45 billion, from 30 September 2024 to 31 March 2025, but interest due was to be paid by the end of December 2024.

Given that as at 31 December 2024, the interest due was not settled, the NPF/NSF Investment Committee, on 28 January 2025, took the decision to trigger the event of default in accordance with Clause 9.1 of the Share Pledge Agreement and in conformity with the Second Schedule of the Notes of Subscription Agreement, with the aim that by the end of March 2025, the process of triggering the default will be completed. The NPF and NSF had embarked in this process by requesting a noteholders meeting, which was held on 06 March 2025, and thereafter Hold Attitude Ltd was requested to repay the capital, interest and penalty on the interest for a total of Rs1,613,307,877 by 19 March 2025.

It is to be noted that Hold Attitude Ltd had pledged 40 % of shares it held in the Attitude Hospitality Ltd as collateral as part of the bond issue.

On 13 March 2025, a proposal was made by the Société Antisthene, the major shareholder of Attitude Hospitality Ltd, to buy the 40% of Hold Attitude stake in Attitude Hospitality Ltd, through a Share Purchase agreement and NPF and NSF would then be fully paid by the Société Antisthene, at latest by 31 March 2025

Consequently, upon advice from the Attorney General's Office, on 19 March 2025, the NPF/NSF Investment Committee agreed to the proposal made by Société Antisthene to buy the shares of Hold Attitude through a Share Purchase Agreement (SPA), following which, the NPF and NSF would receive all their dues that is capital, interest, plus penalty on the interest due for a total amount of Rs1,618,214,214 by 31 March 2025.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is to be pointed out that the proposal made by Société Antisthene to buy the shares of Hold Attitude was in accordance with the Constitution of Attitude Hospitality Ltd which provides for the shares to be offered for sale to the existing shareholders of Attitude Hospitality Ltd and only if they would refuse, then the shares would be sold to a third party.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to reiterate the commitment of this Government to ensure that it is the interest of the people, first and foremost, that guides the actions of Government.

In this particular matter, it is the safeguard of the contributions of workers of our Republic, under both the National Pensions Fund and the National Savings Fund, that has guided the actions taken by my Ministry.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has acted in a fair, transparent and decisive manner to bring forward a rapid resolution to the recovery of funds invested by the National Pensions Fund and the National Savings Fund in the bond issued by the Hold Attitude Ltd.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

On motion made and seconded, the following Bills were read a first time –

- (a) *The National Agency for Drug Control Bill (No. VI of 2025).*
- (b) *The Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation (Repeal) Bill (No. VII of 2025).*

The Deputy Speaker: Madam Speaker will now take the chair.

At this stage, Madam Speaker took the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Please be seated! Yes, hon. Dr. Boolell!

Second Reading

THE VALLÉE D'OSTERLOG ENDEMIC GARDEN FOUNDATION (REPEAL) BILL (No. VII of 2025)

Order for Second Reading read.

(4.18 p.m.)

The Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries (Dr. A. Boolell): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation (Repeal) Bill (No. VII of 2025) be read a second time.

The findings of the Office of Public Sector Governance are revealing. No responsible government can be indifferent to mismanagement. A technical committee was set up at the level of the Ministry to assess all the financial implications and logistical means. It reached the conclusion that the best course of action is to transfer all activities of the Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation to the National Parks Conservation Service. Consequently, the Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and National Parks Act will be amended.

Madam Speaker, I was Minister of Agro-Industry when I moved this Bill in 2007. It is a body corporate and covers an area of 275 hectares of pristine forest comprising endangered

and indigenous plant species. An amazing garden with its flora and fauna. The management and administration of the garden should have been paramount. The Vallée d'Osterlog is a site where pink pigeons are displayed and it will eventually become a release site for these birds. Beautiful parakeets fly over, the valley of beautiful birds indeed, the pink pigeon was brought from near extinction by Carl Jones, an ornithologist of world repute.

It is a heaven and gateway to birders paradise. It was the Prime Minister, hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam who was right to save another valley, that is, the Vallée de Ferney. A blessing indeed, otherwise a motorway would have cut across it. President Macron in his official visit will plant the traditional tree at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical Garden and will make the most of cultural heritage of the garden to consolidate the strong bond between our Small Island Developing State, Ocean State and the Republic of France. Some will call it garden diplomacy!

Madam Speaker, the newly appointed High Commissioner to London, a keen botanist and scientist will reestablish contact with Royal Botanic Gardens, likeminded research centres and the Vallée d'Osterlog endemic garden. Our best endeavour is to save endemic species, training of staff and the setting up of seed bank are vital. The valley is an attractive place not sought after by natural lovers. The garden was centre for research, development and innovation, of learning for school children and a *randonnée* for the wider public. A garden with a window to majestic valley of great and exclusive beauty, wetlands, rivers, canals, cascades, glens with amazing flora and fauna, making the young excited about something fundamental, primitive and contact with nature. This is the place where you put the damn phone down!

The foundation was financed initially by funding from the National Parks Conservation Fund. Self-financing will have been inevitable if it had been properly managed. Much hope was pinned on the board comprising ten members. All the hope and expectations were dashed as from 2015. Matters deteriorated at an incredible pace since 2016. The director wielded power with a ruthlessness, unfit of a manager! It is a curse, and management has been abysmal! Absolutely shocking! He is on a permanent and pensionable establishment of the foundation. Does he legitimately deserve any entitlement? Guilty of negligence and crimes against nature, unbelievable and unbeatable unscrupulousness! Sometimes what is legal is not always legitimate.

The then government acted irresponsibly and allowed descent into chaos. Management was topsy-turvy. Over the recent years, the foundation formulated three strategic plans: 2020-2022, 2021-2026, 2022-2027. Merely an eye wash! No action plan was prepared for implementation. The director ruled with an iron fist, full of himself and waged a psychological warfare to undermine management, instil fear and moral of staff silent. Vacant, unfunded post of key positions, such as Technical Manager, Scientific Manager, Administrative Manager and a Human Resource Manager; these posts were never filled.

The 33 workers of the foundation are protected under the Workers' Rights Act 2019. 28 out of the 33 are employed on a permanent and pensionable establishment of the foundation, including the director. Five persons are employed on temporary basis. They will all, except the director, be transferred to the National Parks and Conservation Service on a permanent and pensionable establishment. Section 4 (7) of the Savings and transitional provisions clause of the Bill makes provision for the termination of his appointment upon commencement of the Foundation Bill (Repeal) Act. He will be paid his pension benefits if any in accordance with such pension schemes as may be applicable to him. The guy must go!

As to procurement exercise, the Office of the Public Sector Governance had this to say

—

“During the last procurement exercise held in April 2023, the APSO had issued tender documents to a supplier who was debarred by the Public Procurement Office from participating in public procurement from August 2021 to August 2024 for misconduct relating to submission of a bid.”

A case of no return, but aided and abetted by the indifference of an irresponsible regime. The inertia of the regime of Pravind Jugnauth was a trademark, except when he had to put the hands in the tills and pockets of taxpayers. The decadent regime waited on the stroke of midnight to enlist the services of the Office of Public Sector Governance to conduct a thorough enquiry into the management of the Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation. The findings of the report were submitted on 16 October 2023, and the word 'poor' featured prominently in the report.

A cursory look of the report would send cold shivers down the spine over wastage, mismanagement and fraudulent practices. The repeal of the Act is a strong signal. A detailed study of the Office of Public Sector Governance gives us every reason to introduce a programme-based budgeting. The hon. Prime Minister is right, no substitute for transparency,

accountability and governance. There are lessons to be learned and drawn from the repeal of this Act.

Madam Speaker, if a regime is indifferent or insensitive and does not wage war aggressively on corruption. A responsible government is under the constant gaze of the watchful eyes of taxpayers. The audit report will no longer be a letter through the letter box to be perused at leisure. Game over! This Bill is a foretaste of the politics of programme-based budgeting. The foundation has to be a jewel in the crown of endemic garden. It will be entrusted to the Conservation and Park Management Department of the Ministry.

The Director of the Conservator has an obligation to restore this prized garden to its pristine environment. There is no retreat nor surrender on firm commitment. Section 10A on Management and administration of Garden is the main thrust of the Bill. The Director of the National Parks and Conservation Service has taken firm commitment. We all have to live up to expectations of a nation which believes in tight scrutiny of sustainable environment. I have impressed upon the Directors of the National Parks and Conservation Service, and Forestry not to look back but to draw lessons to level up and this is an opportunity which is knocking to revamp the centre, making it into a centre of repute. An endemic garden with a seed bank is as good as gold and a joy for all from scientific world to the mere mortals seeking solace from mother nature. It can be a potential for biodiversity carbon credit.

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

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Mr Bhagwan rose and seconded.

Madam Speaker: Mr Bhagwan!

(4.27 p.m.)

The Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change (Mr R. Bhagwan): Merci, Madame la présidente.

Madame la présidente, aujourd'hui, cet après-midi, nous débattons un texte de loi qu'on peut qualifier de fort symbolique, par rapport à notre responsabilité intergénérationnelle. Madame la présidente, un acte fort, concret et symbolique.

Madame la présidente, que lèguerons-nous à nos arrières petits-enfants ? Un grouillant centre financier et touristique ? D'importantes réserves dans une grande banque internationale ? Non, Madame la présidente, notre responsabilité envers...

Madam Speaker: Do not touch the mike!

Mr Bhagwan: ...les futures...

Madam Speaker: Do not touch the mike! Yes.

Mr Bhagwan: ...générations va bien au-delà de cela. Nous devons laisser à nos enfants une planète qui leur permettrait, tout au moins, de bénéficier des mêmes conditions de vie que nous avons connues. Le contraire serait injuste, égoïste, et à court-termiste.

Madame la présidente, nous voulons à travers ces amendements, préparer le terrain pour quelque chose de plus grand, de plus fondamental : la reconnaissance du droit de la nature dans notre Constitution. C'est un changement de cap. Il ne s'agit plus de nettoyer ce qu'on salit, ce qui est élémentaire. Il ne s'agit pas seulement de protéger l'environnement, mais d'apprendre à respecter toutes les formes de vies se trouvant sur notre planète, les droits de la nature.

Madame la présidente, une vision forte et courageuse d'un gouvernement qui agit, un gouvernement du changement. Située non loin d'Eau Bleue, la Vallée d'Osterlog est l'un des derniers sanctuaires de biodiversité encore préservé de notre île. La Vallée d'Osterlog abrite une flore et une faune endémique rare, avec au moins 67 espèces de plantes déjà identifiées. Parmi la grande diversité de plantes, certaines portent des noms créoles malgré imagés, tel que 'Bois Cassant', 'Takamaka', 'Bois Corail', 'Bois Bouquet Banané', 'Langue de Vache', 'Bois de Natte' ou encore de 'Bois Margoze'. La Vallée d'Osterlog est l'un des derniers refuges de la flore native de l'île.

On ne le répètera jamais assez, seulement 2 % du territoire est couvert de forêt native, principalement dans le sud-ouest, le sud-est et sur certaines îles satellites. Avec 39 % de plantes, 80 % des oiseaux non-marins, 80 % des reptiles et 40 % des chauves-souris considérées comme endémiques, Maurice, petit point perdu dans l'océan, a un niveau élevé d'endémisme, au point où le pays a été désigné par l'Union internationale pour la conservation de la nature, comme un centre de diversité végétale, et il fait même partie du hotspot de biodiversité de Madagascar, et des îles de l'Océan Indien.

Madame la présidente, une biodiversité unique, mais bien fragile, tellement fragile. Actuellement 89 %, oui 89 % de la flore endémique mauricienne est considérée comme menacée, et 61 espèces indigènes sont déjà classées comme éteintes ; le Perroquet à large bec et deux espèces de tortues géantes, sont comme on le dit dans le jargon '*as dead as a Dodo*'. Nonobstant bien sûr, le fait que la science travaille à faire renaître le dodo. Concernant les

espèces végétales endémiques, 141 sont en danger critique. De nombreux efforts sont en cours, mais les défis restent énormes. La stratégie nationale pour la biodiversité a défini cinq objectifs stratégiques, dont l'établissement d'un réseau représentatif et viable des zones protégées.

Parmi les huit zones classées *Protected Endemic Sanctuaries (PES)*, il y a justement la Vallée d'Osterlog. Tout comme l'île aux Aigrettes et les Gorges de Rivière Noire, ces sanctuaires endémiques sont des poches de vie, ils abritent ce qu'il nous reste de la biodiversité originelle. Ils sont les derniers bastions de forêt native, les refuges des plantes et animaux endémiques, les poumons verts de notre avenir.

Madame la présidente, tout comme la protection, la conservation et la gestion des zones environnementales sensibles sont d'importance capitale pour le fonctionnement naturel de ces lieux, et la viabilité du développement socio-économique du pays. Un comité que moi-même je préside avec le *Junior Minister* Joanna Bérenger, l'*Environmentally Sensitive Areas Committee*, qui se veut être une plateforme de coordination facilitant la collaboration entre ministères, organismes et ONG concernés, contribuera à la protection et la préservation des zones écologiquement sensibles, par le biais de politiques gouvernementales, de programmes ciblés, et des initiatives stratégiques et de normes spécifiques.

Le but, Madame la présidente, est de préserver leur intégrité et de maintenir leurs fonctions écologiques. Les disparités relevées dans les études précédentes portant sur trois zones écologiquement sensibles, à savoir les marais côtiers, les zones humides d'altitude, et les mangroves font actuellement l'objet d'un travail de révision confié à un cabinet de consultants pour une durée de six mois. De plus, reconnaissant l'importance des zones écologiquement sensibles en tant que rempart naturel protégeant à la fois la population et la biodiversité, le gouvernement s'engage à introduire une loi sur les zones écologiquement sensibles en cohérence avec son programme. Cette loi servira de socle à un développement véritablement durable. À ce sujet, des consultations pour la révision de l'ébauche de l'*ESA Bill* a déjà démarré.

Madame la présidente, en abrogeant la loi qui encadrait jusque-là la fondation de la Vallée d'Osterlog, et en transférant la gestion de la vallée au *National Parks and Conservation Service*, nous faisons un choix du bon sens. Le gouvernement n'a pas perdu de temps pour réagir et agir. Il a pris acte comme l'a bien dit mon collègue, du rapport de *The Office of the Public Sector Governance* qui a pointé du doigt un grave dysfonctionnement

dans la gouvernance de la Vallée d'Osterlog. Déficit de leadership et mauvaise gestion, comme c'était la pratique sous l'ancien gouvernement MSM. Un constat qui ne pouvait être ignoré.

Le NPCS est l'entité publique dédiée à la gestion de nos parcs nationaux. Son mandat par rapport à la biodiversité terrestre est clair : protéger, restaurer, et sensibiliser. Il est donc tout à fait logique que l'administration de la Vallée d'Osterlog passe sous la loupe du *National Parks and Conservation Service*.

Cependant, Madame la présidente, ne nous voilons pas la face. La protection de la biodiversité n'est pas l'affaire du NPCS et celle du ministère de l'Environnement. Elle est à la fois la responsabilité environnementale et un enjeu économique et social majeur pour le pays, signifiant que tous, autorités nationales comme régionale, et citoyens surtout doivent se sentir concernés.

Cinq facteurs majeurs influent sur la diversité biologique –

1. La conservation de milieux naturels en milieux artificiels est la cause principale de la destruction et du morcellement des écosystèmes.
2. Les pollutions de l'air, du sol, de l'eau, mais aussi lumineuse et sonore, affectent tous les aspects de l'environnement. Par exemple, le plastique pollue les milieux et touche tous les organismes qui les peuplent.
3. La surexploitation des ressources compromet gravement le fonctionnement des écosystèmes et leur renouvellement.
4. Le changement climatique influe sur les cycles de vie de l'ensemble des êtres vivants. Il impacte également la répartition géographique des espèces et donc, la chaîne alimentaire.
Les écosystèmes sont des excellents thermomètres des effets du changement climatique et leur gestion doit prendre en compte les évolutions constatées.
5. L'introduction volontaire ou involontaire par l'homme d'espèces exotiques envahissantes (EEE) impacte tous les milieux et les territoires.

Nos forêts, nos rivières, nos oiseaux, nos plantes endémiques auront droit à l'existence, à la régénération et à la protection. Et la Vallée d'Osterlog, avec ses 275 hectares de biodiversité, jouera un rôle essentiel dans cette transition.

Le nouveau cadre permettra –

- La valorisation de la recherche scientifique, tant disparue ;

- La formation des jeunes à l'écologie mauricienne ;
- L'accueil du public dans le respect du vivant ;
- La restauration des espèces menacées.

Ce sanctuaire – que j'invite beaucoup de mes collègues à aller visiter – deviendra un lieu de reconnexion, d'identité, où chacun pourra sentir qu'il fait partie de cette île, de cette nature, et de ce tout fragile mais magnifique. J'inviterai mon collègue à organiser une visite pour les membres du Parlement, avec vous, à la tête.

Madam Speaker: Exactly! *Très bonne idée !*

Mr Bhagwan: M. la présidente, protéger la nature, c'est penser l'avenir autrement. C'est défendre une autre idée de progrès, fondée sur la justice écologique, la solidarité intergénérationnelle, la responsabilité collective.

Vivre en harmonie avec la nature pour une meilleure santé et une meilleure qualité de vie. À travers les parcours de santé comme le Dauguet, que j'avais moi-même initié une vingtaine d'années de cela, avec le ministère de l'Environnement, nous sommes en train de le réhabiliter en ce moment. Et c'est sûr, mes deux amis de la circonscription numéro 2 seront partie prenante de cette réhabilitation. Nous voulons maintenir ce lien avec la nature et faire de la biophilie une passion de nos concitoyens.

Alors, aujourd'hui, Madame la présidente, je demande à mes collègues de voter ce texte de loi avec conviction parce qu'il porte en lui plus qu'une réforme. Il porte une vision, une cohérence et une espérance ; celle d'un pays qui prend soin de son vivant ; celle d'un gouvernement qui agit et celle d'une nation qui choisit la voie de la responsabilité, du respect et de l'avenir de la nature.

Je vous remercie.

Madam Speaker: Merci !

Yes, hon. Dr. Ms Thannoo!

(4.40 p.m.)

Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We, ecologists, welcome this Bill. We are very happy, which is a very rare phenomenon. While we await inclusion of the rights of nature in our Constitution and the

Environmentally Sensitive Area Bill, we applaud the Government's commitment to protect the Vallée of Osterlog, a prime sanctuary, indeed, for our endangered endemic species.

Madam Speaker, every conservation act is about protecting life, protecting nature, protecting our ecosystems that are currently under dire threat. We live now in the era of the Anthropocene. As we mention again and again, what is the Anthropocene? It is the era where man has crossed all planetary boundaries, heralding an era of uncertainty as to humanity's future. We have crossed all limits whereby the stratosphere could self-regulate. Man's industrial activities are now irreversibly altering the planet. The future is dark for future generations. We are currently experiencing the sixth mass extinction and human life itself is at stake. Thus, when this Government embraces its duty, its prime responsibility to protect nature during this era, we can but thank our decision-makers to be guardians of life by protecting nature.

With this Bill, the Government is laying the firm foundation for an eco-centric future. It is honouring its pledge to protect our fragile ecosystems as laid out in our Government Programme. It is the eco-centric future we want. It is the eco-centric future we need. It is the eco-centric future we will continue to fight for, with every fibre of our being. A responsible State, an ecologically conscious State, ready to invest in our ESAs, our Environmentally Sensitive Areas, will pave the way for a whole nation to become custodians of nature.

Let us be mindful of what being a custodian means. Among indigenous people across the world, the people who are foremost in the battle against the mass annihilation of our ecosystems, to be a custodian means to be a duty-bound benevolent guardian. It does not involve the concept of ownership which is a capitalist perversion of our relationship with nature. To be a guardian, to be a custodian means to recognise our prime and sacred duty towards protecting nature. We do not own it. We take care of it with benevolence, with humble knowledge that our survival depends on nature.

The Vallée of Osterlog can indeed exemplify how Mauritians can be custodians, that is, benevolent guardians of nature. Thus, the public management of our ESAs may follow the model of custodianship as practiced by indigenous people across the world.

May I remind the House of the rich eco-conscious cultures of the aborigine and Torres Strait Islander peoples from Australia; indigenous people to whom we are connected through a sacred rapport with nature. Our Indian Ocean history of cultural connections that precede European colonisation link us with indigeneity across the oceanic rim. We carry within us our

legacies of our ancestors, indigenous people, who were taken from their lands and whose connections with nature have always been sacred. To be a custodian means to protect the sanctity of nature and not to own it or use it for profiteering.

Thus, the Vallée of Osterlog can be the model of how our citizens may be involved in the act of conservation through the sharpening of a collective sense of sacred responsibility towards our natural environment. We are hereby engaging with alternative epistemologies – a complex term – to actually identify how we view the world from different perspectives other than European colonisation and natural intelligence whereby we recognise alternative modes of being embedded in nature and essential to indigeneity. We are hereby decolonising our minds. It is the only way for saving the planet. The indigenous epistemology and mode of being with nature that will allow to navigate the climate crisis and protect our ESAs, our homeland and our planet as a whole.

Madam Speaker, may I read from an indigenous poet, Tanaya Winder Sperm, on the indigenous sacred in nature –

“Stand with us as accomplices. Follow our lead for we have always been well versed in survival. We were shaped by fire, made from lightning and dirt-covered hands that know when to ignite healing. Now is the time. Let us not drown in Mother Earth’s tears. Mother Earth has a spirit and she’s asking us to listen.”

Indigenous people have always been custodians of planet Earth. This Government is hereby following suit by shouldering responsibility towards protecting the Vallée of Osterlog, our prime ESA. To manage the Vallée of Osterlog with the people’s participation will ensure that it is managed with sensitivity and understanding. It will be the model of how other ESAs across the island may be managed in an inclusive, participatory and democratic manner.

Additionally, through the provision made for scientific research, this Bill ascertains that conservationists may not only be based on local awareness, participation and knowledge, but on the scientific contributions of experts as it was accomplished under the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Too often, Madam Speaker, we have witnessed the distress of conservationists in Mauritius whose appeals have landed on deaf ears. May I refer to research accomplished by Professor Vincent Florence and his team on the ecological crisis we face in Mauritius. He has constantly drawn attention to how our indigenous forest are dying with proven scientific data. This Bill bespeaks change by precisely foregrounding the need for scientific expertise, such

as projects led by Professor Florence. Such scientific endeavours, we reaffirm can operate in collaborative, inclusive and democratic spheres with local people under the aegis of government led initiatives.

With this Bill, Madam Speaker, we can initiate alternative economic models that revere nature, protect it and protect life. The Vallée of Osterlog is a prime ecological jewel. It incorporates unparalleled natural beauty, thrives with biodiversity and has to be safeguarded with responsible and carefully managed eco-tourism. The Bill refers to recreational activity that may be organised within its midst. This Government bears the utmost responsibility with instigating a form of carefully managed tourism so that our endemic species and biodiversity continue to flourish. This Bill emphasises the State's duty towards protecting biodiversity while identifying responsible economic models that will in effect shield our biodiversity from ongoing threat.

To quote Vandana Shiva –

“Biodiversity is the interconnectedness through which all life flows: food and nutrition, water, oxygen and breath, endosomatic energy, the energy of living systems.

We are a strand in the web of life. Humans have been separated from nature through what I describe as eco-apartheid.”

Indeed, we have been disconnected from nature. In a world of hyper consumerism, the world of malls, shopping and constant buying that has entailed generations entrapped in the endless pursuit of short-term false gratification. This sense of false gratification has been scientifically linked with higher rates of depression among contemporary generations.

The Vallée of Osterlog, a jewel to be protected by the State, by the people, for the people, with the people, will be an example of how we can disconnect from the mindless realm of consumption to a sphere focused on human wellbeing, to reconnect with nature, to protect it and build alternative economic models centred on wellbeing of both humans and nature. Through the Vallée of Osterlog, this Government is breaking with the capitalist model that only identifies as consumers. A model that dehumanises us!

This Government recognises our inherent human need, that is, to reconnect with nature and retrieve our humanity. It centres on our rights to access our natural sites across Mauritius for our collective wellbeing. Our wellbeing, Madam Speaker, is dependent on biodiversity as the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated. This pandemic erupted from the disruption of natural ecosystems when a disease, common among bats, was transferred to human beings.

Protecting our biodiversity is about protecting life, protecting humanity and ensuring the planet has a future.

David Attenborough affirms that –

“For life to truly thrive on this planet, there must be immense biodiversity. Only when billions of different individual organisms make the most of every resource and opportunity they encounter, and millions of species lead lives that interlock so that they sustain each other, can the planet run efficiently. The greater the biodiversity, the more secure will be all life on Earth, including ourselves be. Yet, the way we humans are now living on Earth is sending biodiversity into a decline.”

To protect the Vallée of Osterlog is to protect biodiversity. It is to protect life. With this Bill, we are demonstrating to our children how an eco-conscious Government can work towards saving the future. This Government is precisely living up to its pledge: to uphold life.

With these words, I commend the Bill to the House. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister, you have to do your summing up!

(4.55 p.m.)

Dr. Boolell: Madam Speaker, since brevity is the soul of the wit, I shall be brief. We have had the pleasure to listen to two excellent speeches and these speeches come from the inner process of the heart.

As hon. Dr. Ms Thannoo has stated, “let us not drown in the tears of Mother Earth.” This Bill is an SOS – Saving Our Souls, and this is precisely what this responsible Government is doing. There has been no retreat, no surrender and we have acted without fear or prejudice to save the Vallée d’Osterlog, Madam Speaker.

I do not have to remind Members of the House as to the findings of the Office of Public Sector of Governance. We have wasted no time to take corrective measures. I have impressed upon the Director of the National Parks and Conservation Service. Now that the foundation has been entrusted to him – this is a garden, this is a jewel of our crown – he has to live up to the expectations and he has to deliver. So, responsibilities are there and they have to live up to the expectations because these are the expectations, not only of the House, but of the nation.

So, Madam Speaker, our vision is that the service, together with its numerous partners will be able to enhance the Vallée d’Osterlog Endemic Garden and bring it to standards to be

recognised by the local community and the international community. With these words, Madam Speaker, I thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: I take it you again commend the Bill to the House?

Dr. Boolell: My apologies, I commend the Bill to the House.

Madam Speaker: It is alright, we are all humans.

Dr. Boolell: I commend the Bill to the House.

Madam Speaker: Your friend will second the motion that it be commended to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

The Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation (Repeal) Bill (No. VII of 2025) was considered and agreed to.

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

Dr. Boolell: Madam Speaker, before I come to the third reading, let me first of all convey my apologies to you for trying to rush the Bill through.

Madam Speaker: Do not worry. We are all humans as I said.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: We want to be better humans if I understand well.

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation (Repeal) Bill (No. VII of 2025) was read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 15 April 2025 at 11.30 a.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned. I have someone who has an adjournment matter. Yes, go ahead.

MATTERS RAISED

(5.01 p.m.)

POTATO GROWERS – REPLANTATION OF POTATO – SUBSIDIES

Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle): Madam Speaker, allow me with your permission to raise a matter of urgent public importance addressed to the hon. Minister of Agro Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries with regard to the delay in disbursing subsidies for the replantation of potato to the potato growers. Can the hon. Minister do the needful to expedite matters to address these concerns?

The Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries (Dr. A. Boolell): I am not going to say: ‘apply today, yesterday reply’, but I thank my hon. friend for raising the matter. I have taken the matter with the Junior Minister and the Financial Secretary. Matters are going to be expedited to give satisfaction to planters. Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Yes!

(5.02 p.m.)

FLACQ MARKET – RENOVATION WORKS

Mr C. Ramkalawon (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil): Madam Speaker, my request is addressed to the hon. Minister of Local Government. Will the Minister kindly state the measures taken by his Ministry concerning the renovation works at the *Bazar de Flacq* and mention when is the work starting, please?

The Minister of Local Government (Mr R. Wochit): We will reply to it. I will reply to it.

Madam Speaker: *Je n'ai rien compris*, you will try to do the needful? Is that what you said?

Mr Wochit: Yes!

Madam Speaker: Okay. Thank you, everybody!

At 5.03 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 15 April 2025 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

FORMER SPEAKER & DEPUTY SPEAKER – OFFICIAL OVERSEAS MISSIONS – COST INCURRED

(No. B/279) 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 official overseas missions undertaken by Mr S.P., GCSK, GOSK, former Speaker and Mr M. Z. N., former Deputy Speaker since November 2019 to October 2024, he will state the number thereof, indicating in each case the amount spent in terms of air tickets, *per diem* and other allowances, respectively.

Reply: It should be recalled that the former Speaker, Mr Sooroojdev Phokeer, disallowed a similar question quoting wrongly section 22(1)(n) of the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly according to which a question cannot be asked on a matter within the jurisdiction of the Speaker.

It is obvious that this distorted interpretation of the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly was but a ploy not to provide information to the House.

In line with our principle of transparency and accountability, I am hereby providing the information requested by the hon. Member.

Mr Phokeer was elected as Speaker of the National Assembly on 21 November 2019 and he tendered his resignation on 16 July 2024 purportedly due to health issues. During his tenure of office, that is, from 21 November 2019 to 10 July 2024, i.e, a period of 56 months, the former Speaker undertook 21 official overseas missions.

As regards Mr Mohammad Zahid Nazurally, who was elected as Deputy Speaker on 21 November 2019, he did not proceed on any official overseas mission during his tenure of office from 21 November 2019 to 18 October 2024.

I am informed that an amount of Rs4,423,361.42 was paid in respect of air tickets for Mr Phokeer. Furthermore, an amount of Rs3,450,170.82 was disbursed as *per diem* and other allowances in favour of the latter. That is, a total of Rs7,873,582.24 was spent for the official overseas missions undertaken by Mr Phokeer over a period of 56 months.

The list indicating the amount spent in respect of each overseas mission undertaken by the former Speaker is being placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

POLICE FORCE – TRAFFIC BRANCH – RIDERS

(No. B/280) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Traffic Branch, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of police riders attached to each division, indicating if consideration will be given for same to be beefed up considering the number of traffic challenges faced by road users.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that currently one hundred and sixty-five police riders are posted to the Traffic Branch of the Mauritius Police Force. These police riders are deployed in seven Field Divisions as follows –

- (i) Traffic Enforcement Squad – 24;
- (ii) Northern Traffic Field Division – 23;
- (iii) Metro North and South Traffic Field Division – 35;
- (iv) Eastern Traffic Field Division – 21;
- (v) Western Traffic Field Division – 25;
- (vi) Central Traffic Field Division – 25, and
- (vii) Southern Traffic Field Division – 12.

The main duties of the police riders are *inter-alia* to –

- (i) regulate traffic at strategic locations throughout the island;
- (ii) escort heavy or oversized motor vehicles;
- (iii) attend to emergencies including road accidents and obstructions;
- (iv) facilitate the movement of foot and vehicular processions;
- (v) ensure the smooth passage of VVIP convoys, and
- (vi) perform crack down operations such as speed checks, alcohol, and drug test and checks on suspicious vehicles with the assistance of other units of the Mauritius Police Force.

With the increase in the number of vehicles on our roads and the expansion of the road network, there is a need for more police riders to ensure effective traffic management, road safety and security. In this regard, action is being taken by Police to increase the capacity of the Traffic Branch, not only in terms of additional police riders, but also through the acquisition of new motorcycles and training of the police riders.

RODRIGUES – LIVESTOCK THEFT– REPORTED CASES

(No. B/281) 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 the theft of livestock in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof since January 2024 to date, indicating

—

- (a) if police inquiries were carried out thereinto, and
- (b) the number of arrests, if any, effected in connection therewith.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that from January 2024 to 03 April 2025, eight cases of livestock larceny have been reported to the Police in Rodrigues.

With regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed that an enquiry has been initiated in each case. So far, in one case, two persons have been arrested and sentenced by the Court. One case has been filed following the recovery of the livestock. The remaining cases are under enquiry, and no arrests have been made so far.

I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that, based on an analysis of reported livestock larceny cases in Rodrigues, preventive patrols are regularly conducted by the local Police, CID and ADSU in larceny-prone areas. The Police is also monitoring habitual criminals and individuals under police supervision who are likely to be involved in such larcenies. Moreover, the Police is sensitising the community on securing animal sheds, and encouraging the establishment of neighbourhood watches to enhance vigilance over livestock.

I am also informed by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly that the Commission for Agriculture is sensitising farmers to tag their livestock to facilitate identification.

SAFE CITY CAMERAS – DATA PROTECTION ACT – PURVIEW

(No. B/282) 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 Safe City cameras, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether consideration will be given for the operation thereof to be placed under the purview of the Data Protection Act and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

**2% CORPORATE CLIMATE RESPONSIBILITY LEVY – MUR 50 MILLION
TURNOVER FIRMS – REVENUE GENERATED**

(No. B/283) 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 2 per cent Corporate Climate Responsibility levy charged on firms having a turnover of more than MUR 50 million in the global business sector, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to the revenue generated since its introduction to date, and
- (b) state its impact on the global business sector, indicating the purpose thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**POLICE FORCE – POLICE OFFICERS’ RECRUITMENT – PSYCHOMETRIC
TESTS**

(No. B/284) 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 Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether psychometric tests are carried out on Police officers to assess their aptitudes and mental health conditions prior to their recruitment, particularly in light of the number of reported suicide cases thereof and, if so, indicate if such tests are regularly carried out during their tenure of office.

Reply: The recruitment of Police Officers is carried out by the Disciplined Forces Service Commission. The selection exercise comprises the following aptitude tests/examinations –

- (i) Physical Measurement Test;
- (ii) Physical Aptitude/Operational Field Test, and
- (iii) Medical Examination.

No psychometric tests are carried out on candidates to assess their aptitudes and mental health conditions prior to recruitment of Police Officers.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that after their enlistment and also during their tenure of office, Police Officers are not subjected to any psychometric tests.

However, the four Police Psychologists at the Mauritius Police Force give lectures on stress management and provide psychological support to new recruits as well as serving officers, exhibiting signs of distress in the exercise of their duties.

Since 2010, a Stress Management and Intervention Strategy has been put in place in the Police Force for the purpose of assisting Police Officers to cope with stressful situations. The Strategy is in two folds comprising medical and organisational support. Divisional Commanders and Branch Officers are required to identify Police Officers showing suicidal tendencies or signs of mental disturbance, and to refer the distressed officer for psychological help or to the Chief Police Medical Officer for proper treatment. Upon the latter's advice, Police Officers having signs of depression, mental ill-health, trauma and suicidal tendencies are relieved from duties requiring handling of weapons or long hours of sentry duties, and to the extent possible, are not required to operate alone or work in isolation, whether at the Police Station or on patrol or any other location.

PIO – MAURITIUS CITIZENSHIP – FOREIGN BENEFICIARIES LIST

(No. B/285) 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 Mauritius Citizenship, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Passport

and Immigration Office, information as to the number thereof granted to foreigners for the periods November 2019 to November 2024 and November 2024 to date, indicating in each case the –

- (a) names of the beneficiaries thereof and their respective country of birth, and
- (b) specific section of the Mauritius Citizenship Act under which citizenship was granted.

(Withdrawn)

CONSTITUENCY NO. 08 – DRUG TRAFFICKING – LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

(No. B/287) Mr P. Venkatasami (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) 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 fight against drug trafficking, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of searches carried out in relation thereto in Constituency No. 8, Quartier Militaire and Moka since January 2023 to date, indicating the –

- (a) number of –
 - (i) arrests effected, and
 - (ii) convictions secured in connection therewith, and
- (b) actions taken for law enforcement in relation thereto within the said Constituency.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, from January 2023 to 03 April 2025, 646 searches have been effected by Police in Constituency No. 8 – Quartier Militaire and Moka, in relation to dangerous drugs and other illicit substances.

Out of these, 285 searches led to the seizure of dangerous drugs and other illicit substances. No drugs or any illicit substance were found in the remaining 361 searches.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that following the searches, 288 persons have been arrested.

I am further informed that as at 03 April 2025, all the cases were either still under enquiry or awaiting advice from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions or pending trial. As such, there has not been any conviction.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that a multi-pronged strategy has been put in place in regard to the fight against drug trafficking around the island, including Constituency No. 8, whereby the following actions are taken –

- (i) regular crackdown operations for the prevention and detection of drug cases;
- (ii) identification and tracking of drug peddlers as well as profiling of ‘Persons of Interest’ through intelligence gathering to identify their role and involvement in the drug nexus;
- (iii) drug mapping to locate ‘Areas of Concern’ where drug activities are being carried out and drug addicts tend to loiter;
- (iv) regular aerial patrols through helicopters and drones to detect cultivation of cannabis;
- (v) sensitization campaigns by the Crime Prevention Unit, *Brigade pour la Protection de la Famille* and ADSU Education Cells to raise awareness on the ill-effects of substance abuse, including synthetic drugs targeting mostly youngsters;
- (vi) tailor-made trainings to ADSU Officers to better fight against drug scourge, and
- (vii) collaboration with other concerned agencies such as the Ministry of Health and Wellness, the National Drug Secretariat and the Mauritius Revenue Authority for a concerted approach in the fight against drug trafficking.

PRE-OWNED VEHICLES – REGISTRATION DUTIES – WAIVE OFF

(No. B/294) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether in regard to registration duties payable on the acquisition of pre-owned vehicles already subject to a first registration in Mauritius, he will state if consideration will be given for the waiving thereof.

Reply (The Prime Minister): Currently, registration duty is payable by the purchaser of a motor vehicle, be it upon registration of the vehicle for the first time in Mauritius or on any subsequent registration.

The amount of registration duty applicable on a vehicle being registered for the first time in Mauritius depends on the vehicle type and its engine capacity, while registration duty for a pre-owned vehicle depends on the age of the vehicle at time of transfer in addition to the

vehicle type and engine capacity. The amount of registration duty applicable on transfer of a conventional pre-owned motorcar can vary between Rs3,300 and Rs156,000.

The proposal to make registration duty applicable only on the first time when a vehicle is being registered in Mauritius was mentioned in the electoral manifesto of the *Alliance du Changement*. The measure will be considered in the context of the forthcoming budget exercise.

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS SCHOOL – HEAD TEACHERS – SALARY REALIGNMENT

(No. B/322) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to Head Teachers of Special Education Needs School, he will state the measures being envisaged for the realignment of their salaries to that of their counterparts in other public schools.

Reply: There are presently seventy-four Special Education Needs (SEN) institutions registered with the Special Education Needs Authority (SENA) as follows –

- (i) 47 Non-Government Organisations (NGOs);
- (ii) 12 Special Educations Needs Integrated Units (SENIUs);
- (iii) 7 Special Educations Needs Resource and Development Centres (SENRDCs),
and
- (iv) 8 Special Education Needs Schools run by the *Société Diocésaine de l'Éducation Catholique* (SeDEC).

The post of Head Teacher does not exist on the establishment of these institutions. Public Primary Schools (SENIUs and SENRDCs) are managed by Head, Specialised Schools and Head, SEN Resource Centre, respectively. As regards the NGOs and SeDEC, Managers and Assistant Managers are responsible for the management of the schools.

It is the National Remuneration Board which determines the salaries of various positions, such as Teacher, Teachers Assistant/Clerk, Carer, Driver and Caretaker in the NGO-run institutions whereas the salaries and other conditions for SENIUs and SENRDCs are governed by the Pay Research Bureau.

My Ministry has been informed by the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations that in its final recommendations submitted on 27 January 2023, the National Remuneration Board was not agreeable to the proposals for the inclusion of additional categories of workers such as Managers and Assistant Managers on ground that these are high profile job positions.

PAVILLON FOOTBALL PLAYGROUND, QUATRE BORNES – MAINTENANCE

(No. B/324) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Pavillon Football playground in Quatre Bornes, he will state if consideration will be given to –

- (a) improve the lighting thereof;
- (b) replace the defective fencing, and
- (c) fix the rocky surface thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MORC. MONT PLAISIR, FOND DU SAC – FLASH FLOOD – COMPENSATION

(No. B/325) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the damages caused by the flash flood to the residences of Morcellement Mont Plaisir, in Fond du Sac prior to November 2024, he will state if consideration will be given for compensation to be paid to the victims thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MUGA, TYACK – FUNDS INVESTED & COLLECTED

(No. B/326) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the MUGA sports facility in Tyack, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the amount of funds –

- (a) invested for the acquisition of gym equipment and the setting up of the synthetic football pitch thereat, and
- (b) collected from the hourly fee claimed from the users thereof, indicating how the fees collected by the Mauritius Sports Council are spent.

Reply: As regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the Mauritius Telecom Foundation has invested around Rs2.4 million for the provision of gym equipment and synthetic grass for the football pitch.

As regard to part (b) of the question, I am further informed by the Mauritius Sports Council that the official handing over exercise of the MUGA Tyack from the Mauritius Telecom Foundation has not yet taken place to date, and thus, the question of fees collected by the Council does not arise.

RIVIÈRE DES ANGUILES TRAFFIC CENTRE – PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/327) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether in regard to the proposed construction of the Rivière des Anguilles Traffic Centre, he will state –

- (a) the scope of works and estimated cost thereof;
- (b) the expected date of coming into operation thereof; and
- (c) the bus routes that the Traffic Centre will serve, and
- (d) if a feasibility assessment was made prior to embarking on the project.

(Withdrawn)

EEZ – BILATERAL FISHERIES AGREEMENTS – FISH STOCKS

(No. B/328) 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 Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Mauritius, he will state –

- (a) the number of bilateral fisheries partnership agreements currently in force, indicating the –
 - (i) countries concerned therewith, and
 - (ii) conditions attached thereto, and
- (b) where matters stand as to fish stocks taking thereat.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS POST OFFICE – RECRUITMENT (2015-2025)

(No. B/329) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the Mauritius Post Office, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom information as to the number of officers recruited thereat over the past ten years.

(Withdrawn)

BEL AIR OLD MARKET FAIR – TRADERS – STALLS ALLOCATION

(No. B/330) Mr R. Saumtally (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & Grand River South East) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the traders presently operating at the privately-run Bel Air old market fair, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the District Council of Flacq, information as to where matters stand as to

second expression of interest launched on 01 October 2024 for the allocation of stalls to the traders at the newly constructed market fair, indicating the measures being taken to expedite this transition.

(Withdrawn)

NTC – SPARE PARTS – PROCUREMENT EXERCISE

(No. B/331) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the National Transport Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the bidding exercises launched by the Corporation for the procurement and award of contracts for spare parts since January 2023 to date, indicating –

- (a) the names of the suppliers thereof, further indicating in each case the –
 - (i) contractual value thereof, and
 - (ii) amount paid to the suppliers, and
- (b) if he has been aware of any irregularities and/or malpractices regarding the procurement thereof.

(Withdrawn)

NTC – RETIREMENT BENEFIT PLAN – FINANCIAL STATUS

(No. B/332) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the retirement benefit plan of the employees of the National Transport Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to the current financial situation of the fund set up therefor.

(Withdrawn)

BEL AIR – ROAD TRAFFIC CONGESTION – SURVEY & REMEDIAL ACTIONS

(No. B/333) Mr R. Saumtally (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & Grand River South East) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the

road traffic congestion issues being faced by road users in the village of Bel Air, he will state if a survey has been conducted thereon and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) findings thereof, and
- (b) remedial actions being proposed therefor.

(Withdrawn)

HARRY LATOUR STADIUM, MAHEBOURG – RENOVATION WORKS

(No. B/334) Mr C. Lukeeram (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the renovation works being carried out at the Harry Latour Stadium at Mahebourg, he will state where matters stand, indicating the terms and conditions of the contract awarded therefor.

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUES – CONTAINER PARK – DELIVERY PROBLEMS

(No. B/335) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the container park in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the measures being envisaged to address the problem of delivery of container due to lack of space thereat, indicating if he will use his good offices to request the Mauritius Ports Authority to put the site situated at the ex-slaughterhouse in the port area falling under its purview for the storage of containers.

Reply: The container yard at Port Mathurin is currently operated by the Associated Container Services Ltd which holds a lease with the Mauritius Ports Authority (MPA) for operating a container depot for the period ending 02 April 2030. The container yard is of 7000 m² and has a maximum storage capacity of 300 x 20 ft containers.

The average number of containers per voyage that are transported to Rodrigues is 214. However, with the increasing volume of container shipment to Rodrigues, storage constraint is being encountered at Port Mathurin. To this effect, an expansion of the storage capacity with an additional space of 7000 m² is required to cope with the actual volume of cargo arriving at Port Mathurin.

On 26 April 2024, the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd (MSCL) made a request to the MPA for allocation of two plots of land adjoining the container yard for container stuffing and unstuffing, container storage and an office for MSCL.

Accordingly, in August 2024, the MPA agreed to allocate the two plots of land covering a total area of 5500 m², comprising the ex-slaughter house and the cattle pen sites, for the setting up of a container depot including its operational office.

The MSCL has already launched a restrictive bidding exercise for the appointment of a consultant for the preparation of the project proposal for the container depot project in respect of the two sites identified at Port Mathurin. Same will be submitted to the MPA, for consideration, as soon as the exercise is completed.

MSC – CONSTITUENCY NO. 4 – SPORTS FACILITIES

(No. B/336) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to recreational sports, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Sports Council, information as to the number of sports facilities of the Council available in Constituency No. 4 Port Louis North and Montagne Longue, indicating –

- (a) their locations, and
- (b) the activities held thereat since November 2024 to date and the mode of communication therefor.

(Withdrawn)

RESIDENCE PERE LAVAL MUNICIPAL COMPLEX – OPERATION – OPENING HOURS

(No. B/337) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Résidence Père Laval Municipal Complex, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, information as to whether the complex is currently operational and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) different leisure activities being provided thereat, and
- (b) opening and closing hours thereof and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

**RODRIGUES – DANGEROUS CHEMICALS – USE, HANDLING MECHANISMS &
SENSITISATION CAMPAIGNS**

(No. B/338) Ms M. R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to pesticides, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Dangerous Chemicals Control Board, information as to the –

- (a) mechanisms put in place to monitor the use and handling thereof, indicating the statistics provided by licensed companies thereon;
- (b) sensitisation campaigns held and/or proposed to be held on the use thereof in Rodrigues, and
- (c) names of the representatives from Rodrigues on the Board.

Reply: The Dangerous Chemicals Control Board, operates under the purview of my Ministry and is responsible for the issue of licences for the import, export, manufacture, sale, storage, distribution or trade in dangerous chemical, in line with the Dangerous Chemicals Control Act 2004.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the use and handling of pesticides fall under the aegis of the Ministry of Agro-industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries. In fact, a Pesticides Regulatory Office has been set up thereat under the Use of Pesticides Act 2018.

As for part (b) of the question, the Pesticides Regulatory Office conducted visits in Rodrigues in 2018 and 2024 to engage with stakeholders, assess pesticide usage, and ensure compliance with the Use of Pesticides Act. Sensitisation campaigns and training sessions were also conducted on safe handling and mixing of pesticides, correct dosage to be used, adherence to labelling instructions, use of protective equipment, amongst others, during those visits.

With regard to part (c) of the question, there are no representatives from Rodrigues on the Dangerous Chemicals Control Board.

Nevertheless, officers from the Principal Public Health & Food Safety Inspectorate Cadre posted at the Public Health Office in Rodrigues are entrusted the responsibility to ensure compliance with the relevant provisions of the Dangerous Chemicals Control Act 2004.

**TAXI OPERATORS WELFARE FUND – FUNDS COLLECTED – MEDICAL
SCHEME**

(No. B/339) Mr C. Lukeeram (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the Taxi Operators Welfare Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) the amount of funds collected and expenses incurred therefrom since its implementation to date;
- (b) if consideration will be given to amending the relevant legislation to render contribution thereto optional, and
- (c) if a proper medical scheme has been designed for taxi operators registered thereunder.

(Withdrawn)

PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLE (TAXI) LICENCE – HOTEL-BASED – ALLOCATION PROCEDURES

(No. B/340) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the Public Service Vehicle (Taxi) Licence with hotels as base of operation issued over the past ten years, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to the number thereof, indicating –

- (a) the procedures followed for the allocation thereof, and
- (b) if all applicants complied with the required criteria in terms of –
 - (i) character certificate test;
 - (ii) age of applicant, and
 - (iii) number of taxis per hotels.

(Withdrawn)

PBAT – HEADMASTER & DEPUTY HEADMASTER – APPOINTMENT CASES

(No. B/341) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to cases referred to the Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal regarding the appointment of officers to the grades of Headmaster and Deputy Headmaster since 2019 to 2021 and after the final determination of the Tribunal confirming their substantive appointment, he will state if a High Powered Committee was set up to that effect and, if so, indicate the recommendations made by the

Committee regarding payment of gratuity and pension benefits for all those officers who retired before the final determination of the Tribunal.

(Withdrawn)

AMBASSADORS – OFFICIAL OVERSEAS MISSIONS – 2015-2024

(No. B/342) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the official overseas missions undertaken by Ambassadors appointed since 2015 to 2024, he will give a list thereof, indicating in each case the –

- (a) trips effected from –
 - (i) Mauritius to other countries;
 - (ii) their countries of posting to Mauritius or to other countries, and
- (b) amount of funds disbursed by Government in terms of airfares, per diem, entertainment allowance and chauffeur facilities, and
- (c) objectives and outcomes thereof.

(Vide reply to PQ B/289)

POUDRE D'OR – BARACHOIS ALLOCATION – ACTIVITIES

(No. B/343) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the Barachois found at Poudre d'Or Village, he will state the number thereof which are operational, indicating in each case the –

- (a) name and address of the leaseholders, and
- (b) duration of the lease, specifying the commencement and ending dates thereof.

Reply: In November 2023, a Barachois Policy was established to outline the criteria for the allocation of barachois which were vested in the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries. The Policy makes provision for the procedures for the allocation of unallocated barachois as well as barachois which were already occupied prior to the establishment of the policy. It also outlines the rent applicable for occupying the barachois, the monitoring plan of the activities carried out thereat and the modalities for Lease Agreement with promoters.

Currently, there are two barachois which are operational in Poudre d'Or, and have been allocated to promoters, and not leased to them. These are as follows –

- (i) Barachois Lagesse also known as Petit Barachois allocated on 09 January 2024 for oyster culture to Persand Royal Company Ltd having as director Mr Khemraj Persand and address Couacaud Road, Grand Gaube, and
- (ii) Grand Barachois also known as Bassin Humbert allocated to Mauricoast Ltd on 17 September 2015, having as director Mr Yashodhar Boygah and address Maurel Road, Rivière du Rempart.

The activities carried out by the abovementioned promoters are as follows –

- (i) Barachois Lagesse also known as Petit Barachois
Persand Royal Company Ltd has been allocated the Petit Barachois of an extent of 19 Arpents for the barachois and 3A 25 Perches for the adjoining state land for oyster culture for a period of three years which was to be carried out jointly with the Aquaculture Division of Albion Fisheries Research Centre of my Ministry.

Following a site visit in March 2025, it has been observed that the species that are currently farmed in plastic drums in the barachois are oysters, clams and crabs. Trials on sea urchins farming through the fattening method has also been undertaken. Future development in the barachois include the construction of a hatchery, a depuration station and a laboratory. A Lease Agreement which is currently at the level of the Attorney General's Office will soon be signed with the company.

- (ii) Grand Barachois also known as Bassin Humbert

Mauricoast Ltd has been allocated the Grand Barachois of an extent of 110 Arpents 02 Perches for the barachois and 11 A 85 Perches for the adjoining state land for mud crab, sea cucumber and oyster aquaculture project for an initial period of five years renewable on mutual consent.

Following a site visit in March 2025, it has been observed that the species that are currently farmed in the barachois are oysters and mud crabs. There was also seed production of sea cucumber and sea cucumber juveniles have been released in the barachois. Trials on production of saline tolerant Tilapia have been undertaken in

recent years. Future development plan includes production of high economic value nutraceuticals for the cosmetic and health industry. Following the submission of its project write up, the company has been favourably considered in an Assessment Committee in March 2025. A Lease Agreement will soon be signed with the promoter.

As regards part (b) of the question, no lease agreement has been signed with any company.

FOOTBALL PITCH, BEL AIR – UPGRADING WORKS

(No. B/344) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the football pitch situated behind the St Esprit Church in Bel Air, he will state if he has been made aware of the bad conditions thereof and of its surrounding walls and, if so, indicate –

- (a) when remedial works will be carried out, and
- (b) the expected completion date thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the District Council of Flacq that it has 36 football grounds under its jurisdiction. On 05 February 2025, a survey was carried out on all these grounds. It was found that the fencing of the football ground situated behind St Esprit Church in Bel Air, Rivière Sèche, is rusted and damaged, and needs to be replaced. The estimated cost of the required works stands at Rs2.5 million.

This project falls under the item “Construction and Upgrading of Amenities” programme. The Council has already submitted a request for funds under the 2025/26 Capital Projects. Once the required budget is approved and funds are made available, remedial works will begin.

The expected implementation timeframe for the project is as follows –

- 1 month for tender, evaluation, and award of contract;
- 3 months for execution of works.

In total, the project is expected to take approximately four months to complete once initiated.

LAND DRAINAGE MASTER PLAN – PUBLICATION PROPOSITION

(No. B/345) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the Land Drainage Master Plan, he will state where matters stand as to the proposition to making the document public.

(Withdrawn)

SOCIAL WELFARE CENTRES – OFFICE ATTENDANTS –EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS & TERMS

(No. B/346) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the Social Welfare Centres across the country, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of Office Attendants currently working thereat, indicating –

- (a) their terms and conditions of employment, including the salary scale thereof, and
- (b) the actions being envisaged to ensure that the terms and conditions of the contract of employment of these officers are in line with the provisions of the Workers' Rights Act 2024.

Reply: I am informed that at present, one Office Care Attendant (restyled Office Auxiliary/Senior Office Auxiliary) is working at the Head Office of the Social Welfare Division. There are no Office Attendants posted in Social Welfare Centres across the island.

The terms and conditions of employment are governed by the Scheme of Service for the post which has been approved by the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms.

I wish to inform the House that the Office Auxiliary/Senior Office Auxiliary who is posted at the Social Welfare Division has been recruited by the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms on temporary capacity for a period of one year in the first instance with effect from 18 June 2024.

During the temporary capacity, the Office Auxiliary/Senior Office Auxiliary is drawing salary at the flat rate of Rs14,725 a month, plus salary compensation at approved rates.

I am informed that on completion of the temporary period, the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms will initiate the process for employment of the officer on permanent and pensionable establishment subject to him being favourably reported upon.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am apprised that the terms and conditions of the Office Auxiliary/Senior Office Auxiliary are in line with the provisions made in the Scheme of Service of the said post specified under Regulation 15 of the Public Service Commission Regulations. The terms and conditions for this post are also governed by recommendations of the Pay Research Bureau Report 2021.

**MORCS. LES PLAINES DE L'HERMITAGE, HIGHLANDS ROSE & PINWOOD –
MAINTENANCE SERVICES**

(No. B/347) **Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Morcellements Les Plaines de l'Hermitage, Highlands Rose and Pinewood, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Vacoas Phoenix, information as to the actions taken on complaints made for the –

- (a) irregular garbage collection services;
- (b) improper maintenance of green spaces, walking and jogging tracks, and
- (c) poor street lightings thereat.

(Withdrawn)

KREOL MORISIEN – PRIMARY SCHOOLS – TEACHING STAFF & LIMITATIONS

(No. B/348) **Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to Kreol Morisien, he will state the number of primary schools where same –

- (a) is being taught, indicating –
 - (i) the number of teachers available therefor, and
 - (ii) if any shortage of these teachers has been reported at the Ministry, and
- (b) cannot be taught and the reasons therefor, indicating the measures being envisaged to address this issue.

(Withdrawn)

CONSTITUENCY NO. 13 – ASBESTOS HOUSES— MEASURES ENVISAGED

(No. B/349) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to housing units containing asbestos, he will state the number thereof identified in Constituency No. 13, Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac, indicating the –

- (a) expected time frame for the dismantling thereof, and
- (b) redeployment plan, if any, devised for the occupiers thereof.

(Withdrawn)

CHIKUNGUNYA – REPORTED CASES

(No. B/350) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to Chikungunya, he will state the number of suspected cases thereof as at date, reported –

- (a) at public hospitals, community health centres and mediclinics, and
- (b) by private medical practitioners, indicating the number of positive cases thereof identified.

(Withdrawn)

FSC/OECD REGIONAL CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE – MANDATE, EXPENDITURE & PERFORMANCE

(No. B/351) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning whether, in regard to the Financial Services Commission/Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (FSC/OECD) Regional Centre of Excellence, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) background, objectives and mandate thereof;
- (b) specific achievements made under each of its objectives to date;
- (c) annual expenditure of the Centre;
- (d) key performance indicators put in place to ensure that public funds are utilized efficiently, and
- (e) term/duration of the Memorandum of Understanding between the FSC/OECD.

(Withdrawn)

DRUG ADDICTS – REHABILITATION PROTOCOLS – FUNDS

(No. B/352) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the rehabilitation of drug addicts, he will state the –

- (a) protocols put in place therefor, indicating the treatments administered;
- (b) amount of funds spent by Government on such programs over the past three years, indicating if any survey has been carried out to assess the effectiveness thereof, and
- (c) number of drug addicts salvaged from this scourge over the past ten years, indicating the number of cases of overdose recorded due to drug abuse.

(Withdrawn)

ÎLE AUX BENITIERS – TRANSPARENCY IN MANAGEMENT – MEASURES

(No. B/353) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to Île aux Benitiers, he will state the measures being taken by his Ministry to ensure a transparent, participatory, and inclusive approach in the decision-making process regarding the management thereof.

Reply: An Inter-Ministerial Committee chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and comprising my colleague ministers from the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Local Government, relevant stakeholders including technical experts, representatives of the local authority and the Police Department, was set up to collaboratively examine the management of Ile aux Benitiers.

Several joint site visits were also carried out to assess the nature and extent of damage to Ile aux Benitiers. As a result of which, structures were pulled down by the Special Mobile Force, procedures were initiated by my Ministry for the cleaning of the islet, a comprehensive deratisation exercise was undertaken in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare assisted in capturing and bringing stray animals to main land.

Concurrently, a constant and inclusive dialogue was engaged with operators and traders active on the islet with a view to regularising their status. Consultations were also held with the ‘*collectif*’ and ‘*plaisanciers*’ of the region to best address their concerns.

In parallel, a dedicated Technical Committee under my Ministry is actively working out a Sustainable Master Plan aimed at balancing ecological preservation with socioeconomic needs. A follow-up site visit in this regard has been scheduled on 09 April 2025.

RING ROAD PROJECT – PHASES 2 & 3 – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/354) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to Phases 2 and 3 of the Ring Road Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to whether consideration will be given for the implementation thereof and, if so, when and if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)