



EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 17 MARCH 2026

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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, GCSK	Minister of Housing and Lands, Attorney General
Hon. Rajesh Anand Bhagwan, GCSK	Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, GOSK	Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries
Hon. Govindranath Gunness	Minister of National Infrastructure
Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo, GOSK	Minister of Health and Wellness
Hon. Christian Harold Richard Duval	Minister of Tourism
Hon. Ashok Kumar Subron	Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity
Hon. Gavin Patrick Cyril Glover, SC	Attorney-General
Dr. the Hon. Mrs Jyoti Jeetun	Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning
Hon. Patrick Gervais Assirvaden	Minister of Energy and Public Utilities

Hon. Dhananjay Ramful	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Hon. Darmarajen Nagalingum	Minister of Youth and Sports
Hon. Muhammad Reza Cassam Uteem	Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations
Hon. Mahomed Osman Cassam Mahomed	Minister of Land Transport
Hon. 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, GOSK
Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Hon. Mohamed Ehsan Juman
Clerk of the National Assembly	Lotun, Mrs Bibi Safeena, CSK
Deputy Clerk	Gopall, Mr Navin
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Acting Serjeant-at-Arms	Seegobin, Mr Somduth

MAURITIUS

Eighth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 01 of 2026

Sitting of Tuesday 17 March 2026

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

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OBITUARIES

MR SATHIAMOORTHY SUNASSEE

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister, obituaries!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, it is with deep sadness that we have learnt of the demise of Mr Sathiamoorthy Sunassee, also known as Moorthy Sunassee, former Member of Parliament, who passed away on 22 January 2026 at the age of 81.

Mr Sunassee was born in 1944 in Port Louis. He was the son of Mr Kistnasamy Sunassee, a loyal member of the Labour Party and a close ally of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam and he played a key role in the independence movement. He was also a member of the National Assembly.

Mr Moorthy Sunassee completed his secondary education at St Andrew's school. He pursued his tertiary studies at Lancaster University in the United Kingdom where he earned a Master's degree in International Marketing.

He had a distinguished professional career as Trade Secretary at the Ministry of Commerce, making significant contributions to Mauritius' international marketing and trade policy. He played a crucial role in the development of the Export Processing Zone and in the negotiation of key textile agreements under the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade and the Lomé Convention with the European Union.

Mr Moorthy Sunassee was a firm believer in regional integration and support in Mauritius engagement with the Organisation of African Unity, now the African Union.

He stood as a candidate at the 1991 election for the Legislative Assembly under the banner of the Alliance Parti Travailleiste/PMSD for the Constituency No. 8 but he was not elected.

He contested the 1995 National Assembly Elections under the banner of Alliance Parti Travailleiste/MMM for Constituency No. 13 and was returned as the second member.

In January 1996, Mr Moorthy Sunassee was appointed Deputy Chairman of Committees, a position he held until July 1997, when he was appointed Minister of Industry and Commerce.

In September 1999, he was appointed Minister of Housing and Lands, a portfolio he held until August 2000. In 2007, he was elevated to the rank of Grand Officer of the Order of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean (G.O.S.K.) in recognition of his distinguished services to the Trade Sector.

Madam Speaker, Mr Moorthy Sunassee belonged to a generation that bridged Mauritius' entrepreneurial community and its political institutions in the decades following independence. He leaves behind a legacy of serving both to the economic and public life in Mauritius.

With these words, Madam Speaker, may I request you to kindly direct the Clerk to convey the profound condolences of the Assembly to the bereaved family, particularly to his children. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Leader of the Opposition, please.

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Opposition, I fully associate myself to the tribute paid by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister to late Mr Sathiamoorthy Sunassee.

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

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Members, I associate myself with the tribute paid to the memory of the late Mr Sunassee Sathiamoorthy, former Member of Parliament, by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister, by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, and I direct the Clerk to convey the deep condolences of the Assembly to the bereaved family.

Yes, hon. Prime Minister.

MR THAKOORDATH PADARUTH

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, it is with deep sadness that we have learnt of the demise of Mr Thakoordath Padaruth, former Member of Parliament, who passed away on 24 February of this year at the age of 76.

Mr Padaruth was born on 03 July 1949 in Montagne Ory. He had his primary schooling at the Edith Cavel Government School and his secondary education at the Port Louis High School. He then pursued his tertiary studies at Punjab University in Chandigarh where he earned a Bachelor's degree in English Language, Economics and Political Science.

Mr Padaruth had a distinguished professional career, both in the public and private sector, holding numerous positions. He first stood as a candidate in the 1982 General Elections for the Legislative Assembly under the banner of the MMM/PSM for Constituency No. 2 and was returned as second member. In June 1982, he was appointed member of the Public Accounts Committee.

He contested the 1983 General Elections under the banner of the MSM/Parti Travailleiste/PMSD for Constituency No. 2, but he was not returned.

Mr Padaruth had a very active and rich social life, assisting in the organisation of socio-religious activities.

With these words, Madam Speaker, may I request you to kindly direct the Clerk to convey the profound condolences of the Assembly to the bereaved family, particularly his wife and children. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Prime Minister. Hon. Leader of the Opposition, please.

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Opposition, I once again associate myself to the tribute paid by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister to late Mr Thakoordath Padaruth.

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

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Members, once again, I associate myself with the tribute paid to the memory of late Mr Padaruth Thakoordath, former Member of Parliament, by the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Leader of the Opposition and I direct the Clerk to convey the deep condolences of the Assembly to the bereaved family.

Thank you.

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Prime Minister's Office

Ministry of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications

Ministry of Finance

Ministry for Rodrigues and Outer Islands

- (a) Certificate of Urgency in respect of the Optical Council (Amendment) Bill (No. 1 of 2026) (In Original).
- (b) The Certificate of the Director of Audit on the Annual Statements of the Government of the Republic of Mauritius for Financial Year 2024-25.
- (c) The Certificate of Audit and Report of the Director of Audit on the Accounts of the Government of the Republic of Mauritius for the Financial Year 2024-25.
- (d) The Certificate of the Director of Audit on the Annual Statements of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for Financial Year 2024-25.
- (e) The Certificate of Audit and Report of the Director of Audit on the Accounts of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the Financial Year 2024-25.
- (f) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Gambling Regulatory Authority for the year ended 30 June 2021.
- (g) The Public Service Commission (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 133 of 2025)
- (h) The Excise (Amendment of Schedule) (No.2) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 134 of 2025)
- (i) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Treasury Foreign Currency Management Fund for the year ended 30 June 2024.
- (j) The Public Procurement (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 1 of 2026)
- (k) The Revenue Tribunal Rules 2026. (Government Notice No. 3 of 2026)

- (l) The Annual Report of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the financial year 2024-2025.
- (m) The Civil Aviation (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 6 of 2026)
- (n) The Annual Report of the Economic Development Board (EDB) for the year ended 30 June 2024.
- (o) The Annual Report of the office of the Vice-President for the financial year 2024/2025.
- (p) The Civil Aviation (Unmanned Aircraft System) (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 12 of 2026)
- (q) The Annual Report of the Central Procurement Board for the financial year 2024/2025.
- (r) The Annual Report of the Procurement Policy Office for the financial year 2024/2025.
- (s) The Annual Report on Performance of the Prime Minister's Office (Rodrigues and Outer Islands Division) for the financial year 2024/2025.
- (t) The Income Tax (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 19 of 2026)
- (u) The Annual Report on Performance of the Department of the Civil Aviation for the financial year 2024/2025.
- (v) Virement Warrant – Quarter 2 (October – December 2025): Nos. 6 to 23 and Nos. 25 to 35. (In Original)
- (w) Virement (Contingencies) Warrant – Quarter 2 (October – December 2025): Nos. 4 to 9. (In Original)
- (x) Virement Certificate – Quarter 2 (October – December 2025): Programme/Sub-Programme (Certificates Nos.): 0108(1), 0112(1), 0209(1), 0250(2,4), 025302(2,4), 0255(1), 0403(1), 0505(1-2), 0604(3), 1003(1), 1101(1-2), 1202(1), 1305(1), 1405(1), 1502(2-7), 1604(1), 1703(1), 1901-1903(1-3), 2103(1), 2203 (2,4-5), 2204(3), 2301(3-4), 2302(5), 2401(1), 2403(1-2), 2502(2-3), 2602(1), 2701(1), 2702(3).

- (y) The Non-Citizens (Employment Restriction) Exemptions (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 26 of 2026)
- (z) The Financial Statements and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Lotto Fund for the year ended 30 June 2025.
- (aa) The Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (Jersey) (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 30 of 2026)

B. Ministry of Housing and Lands

The Town Planners' Council (Code of Practice) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 20 of 2026)

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

- (a) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Beach Authority for the year ended 30 June 2023.
- (b) The Annual Reports and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Environment and Climate Change Fund for the year ended 30 June 2024.

D. Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries

- (a) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Seafarers' Welfare Fund for the year ended 30 June 2024.
- (b) The Merchant Shipping (Manning of Tugs and Certification of Tug Personnel) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 16 of 2026)
- (c) The Annual Report on Performance of the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries (Blue Economy and Fisheries Division) for the financial year 2024/2025.
- (d) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Agricultural Marketing Board for the year ended 30 June 2024.

E. Ministry of National Infrastructure

- (a) The Construction Industry Authority (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 135 of 2025)
- (b) The Construction Industry Development Board (Registration of Consultants and Contractors) (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 136 of 2025)
- (c) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Construction Industry Development Board for the period 01 July 2023 to 31 March 2024.

F. Ministry of Health and Wellness

- (a) The Medical Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 15 of 2026)
- (b) The Allied Health Professionals Council (Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 21 of 2026)

G. Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity

- (a) The Social Integration and Empowerment (School Materials Scheme) (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 129 of 2025)
- (b) The Annual Report and the Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Solidarity Fund for the year ended 30 June 2024.
- (c) The National Pensions (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 29 of 2026)

H. Ministry of Financial Services and Economic Planning

- (a) The Financial Services (Consolidated Licensing and Fees) (Amendment No. 2) Rules 2025. (Government Notice No. 132 of 2025)
- (b) The Annual Report and Audited financial statements of the Financial Services Commission for the year ended 30 June 2025.
- (c) The Annual Report of the Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Insurance Industry Compensation Fund for the year ended 30 June 2024.

I. Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities

- (a) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Consolidated and separate Financial Statements of the Central Electricity Board for the year ended 30 June 2024.
- (b) The Central Water Authority (Water Supply for Domestic Purposes) (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 22 of 2026)
- (c) The Waste Water (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 23 of 2026)

J. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade

- (a) The Annual Report on Performance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade for the financial year 2024/2025.
- (b) The Agence Française de Développement (Privileges and Immunities) (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 2 of 2026)
- (c) The Indian Ocean Rim Association (Privileges and Immunities) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 11 of 2026)

K. Ministry of Youth and Sports

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

L. Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations

- (a) The Workers' Rights (Additional Remuneration) (2026) Regulations 2026 (Government Notice No. 7 of 2026)
- (b) The National Minimum Wage (Amendment) Regulations 2026 (Government Notice No. 8 of 2026)
- (c) The Export Enterprises (Remuneration) (Amendment) Regulations 2026 (Government Notice No. 9 of 2026)
- (d) The Annual Report on Performance for the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations for the financial year 2024/2025.

- (e) The Occupational Safety and Health (Control of Asbestos at Work) (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 31 of 2026)

M. Ministry of Land Transport

- (a) The Road Traffic (Crop Season) (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 4 of 2026)
- (b) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Taxi Operators Welfare Fund for the year ended 30 June 2022.

N. Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection

- (a) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the State Trading Corporation for the year ended 30 June 2024.
- (b) The Consumer Protection (Consumer Goods) (Maximum Mark-Up) (Amendment No. 5) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 130 of 2025)
- (c) The Consumer Protection (Pharmaceutical Products) (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 131 of 2025)
- (d) The Consumer Protection (Pharmaceutical Products) (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 5 of 2026)
- (a) The Consumer Protection (Pharmaceutical Products) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 137 of 2025)
- (b) The Consumer Protection (Pharmaceutical Products) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 10 of 2026)
- (c) The Consumer Protection (Trade in Bunker Fuels) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 17 of 2026)
- (d) The Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 18 of 2026)
- (e) The Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 24 of 2026)

- (f) The Consumer Protection (Consumer Goods) (Maximum Mark-Up) (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 25 of 2026)

O. Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the University of Mauritius for the year ended 30 June 2024.

P. Ministry of Industry, SMEs and Cooperatives

The Annual Report on Performance of the Ministry of Industry, SME and Cooperatives (Cooperatives Division) for the financial year 2024/2025.

Q. Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation

- (a) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Computer Board (*replaced by* the Mauritius Digital Promotion Agency) for the year ended 30 June 2024.
- (b) The Information and Communication Technologies (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 13 of 2026)
- (c) The Information and Communication Technologies (Licensing and Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 14 of 2026)
- (d) The Annual Report 2024 of the Data Protection Office.

R. Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms

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

S. Ministry of Local Government

- (a) The Local Government (Fees) (Temporary Provisions) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 128 of 2025)
- (b) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin – Rose Hill for the year ended 30 June 2024.

- (c) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Municipal Council of Curepipe for the year ended 30 June 2024.
- (d) The Amended Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes for the year ended 30 June 2024.
- (e) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the District Council of Flacq for the year ended 30 June 2024.
- (f) The District Council of Savanne (Market) (Amendment of Schedule) Regulation 2026. (Government Notice No. 27 of 2026)
- (g) The District Council of Savanne (Fair) (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 28 of 2026)
- (h) 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 2024.

T. Ministry of Arts and Culture

- (a) The Annual Report on Performance for the Ministry of Arts and Culture for the financial year 2024/2025.
- (b) The Annual Reports on the Financial Statements of the Mauritius Telugu Cultural Centre Trust for the periods:
 - (i) 01 July 2022 - 30 June 2023; and
 - (ii) 01 July 2023 – 30 June 2024.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT – MAURITIAN ECONOMY – IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr G. Lesjongard) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Middle East conflict, he will state whether Government has made any assessment of the impact thereof on the Mauritian economy, including on energy, food security and social stability, indicating if a committee has been set up at the level of his office to monitor the evolving situation, coordinate inter-ministerial responses and trigger contingency measures and, if so, indicate the composition thereof.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in view of the importance of this subject, I seek your indulgence and that of the House for what would necessarily be a lengthy reply.

Madam Speaker: Please!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the recent escalation of tensions and hostilities in the Middle East has raised serious concerns regarding the regional peace and stability. These developments have resulted in the tragic loss of lives, damage to infrastructure and disruptions to civil aviation air traffic in the region, affecting travellers and residents, including Mauritian nationals.

Madam Speaker, let me state that as soon as the war broke out in the Middle East, I have been personally monitoring the situation very closely. As I have just stated, it was obvious right from day one that this war would create a global turmoil that would have devastating economic repercussions, particularly for highly vulnerable countries like Mauritius.

I have been in constant contact not only with the Ministers concerned in Mauritius but also with important foreign dignitaries to try to see ways and means to mitigate the economic and social impact of this war on our country. All the Ministries concerned have put in place urgent contingency plans to address immediate concerns. Furthermore, they have prepared a medium- and long-term strategy to enable the country to cope with further repercussions.

Our immediate concern was the security and safety of our citizens stranded in the war zone. We needed to act promptly and we did.

I have personally contacted Sheikh Majid Al Mualla, responsible for Emirates Airline, requesting him – if it was possible – to put flights for the repatriation of our citizens. He indicated to me that it was going to be difficult because they had stopped all the flights, but, because of my request and my personal friendship with him, he agreed that he would try his best, and he did put airlines at our disposal. I have also requested Air Mauritius to facilitate the repatriation of our fellow citizens stranded in different countries in the region.

Once the war has started, it has caused major traffic disruptions with more than 20,000 flights which were cancelled just from Dubai.

In this context, Government has been closely monitoring the situation and has taken the necessary diplomatic and consular measures to ensure the security of Mauritian citizens, while also reiterating our support for dialogue, de-escalation and the peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Madam Speaker, since the outbreak of nationwide protests in December 2025 in the Islamic Republic of Iran, our Ambassador in Saudi Arabia, His Excellency Riad Hullemuth, has been very proactive to ensure the safe repatriation of our citizens.

As I have said, I have personally spoken to the person responsible for Emirates Airline about the flights that he could provide for the repatriation of our citizens.

On 19 January 2026, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a Communiqué establishing a hotline for Mauritian nationals in distress and reaffirming Government's commitment to assist those affected. Mauritian nationals were also strongly advised to avoid all non-essential travel to Iran.

Following the escalation of hostilities across the broader Middle East, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs immediately established contact with Mauritian citizens across the Gulf region through the coordination of our diplomatic Missions in Riyadh and Islamabad, as well as the Mauritius Consulate in Dubai.

On 28 February 2026, an Alert Notice was issued providing the emergency contact details of these Missions and of the crisis cell set up at the level of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Notice also advised Mauritian nationals to defer any travel to Iran and to countries in the region.

On 09 March 2026, a further Alert Notice was issued in view of the prevailing security situation in the Middle East, again, advising Mauritian nationals to avoid travelling to the countries of the region.

The Alert Notice further advised Mauritian nationals that, should they find themselves in distress, they may contact our Embassy in Riyadh or our Consulate in Dubai for assistance, and the personal contact numbers of our diplomatic staff, including that of the Ambassador in Riyadh and the Consulate in Dubai, were shared for this purpose.

A total of 228 Mauritian nationals contacted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs via the hotline that was established to provide assistance to all those stranded in the Middle East region.

Madam Speaker, with regard to the repatriation of Mauritian nationals, around 121 Mauritians who were in Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia established contact with our Mission in Riyadh with a view to returning to Mauritius. According to the Mission, most of them have been departing via commercial flights.

Through consultations and cooperation with Emirates and Saudi Airlines, rapid arrangements were made to facilitate their travel. As the airspace of Saudi Arabia remained open, 20 Mauritian nationals, mainly pilgrims, departed Jeddah for Mauritius on 02 March of this year. In addition, 39 Mauritian nationals returned safely to Mauritius on 03 March 2026 via Nairobi.

Upon my request, Emirates scheduled three flights on the Dubai-Mauritius route between 05 and 07 March 2026. Of the 72 Mauritian nationals registered in Dubai, approximately 80 percent departed on these flights by 07 March 2026.

Arrangements were further made for one Mauritian national who was in Iran to travel to Mauritius via Turkey.

The assistance of Indian authorities was also obtained to evacuate one Mauritian who was in Israel, via Jordan.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is fully engaged in monitoring the situation and continues to utilise all diplomatic and logistical channels to facilitate the safe return of any remaining Mauritian citizens.

Madam Speaker, reaffirming its diplomatic stance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a Press Statement on 03 March 2026 calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities and for the resumption of dialogue among the parties concerned.

The Press Statement also took note of the concerns expressed by the United Nations, the African Union, the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council, which have similarly called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and the resumption of dialogue in order to restore peace and stability in the region.

As a small, open and net energy and food-importing economy, Mauritius is exposed to the negative impact of the conflict primarily through –

- (a) an increase in our fuel and food import bill, which would increase the cost of imports and place upward pressure on inflation and the cost of living;
- (b) higher freight and insurance costs on our imports, increasing the cost of goods and adding further to domestic price pressures, and
- (c) possible effects on foreign direct investment and the tourism sector, particularly if global uncertainty weighs on investor sentiment and international travel demand.

Madam Speaker, the Macroeconomic Coordination Committee, which comprises representatives of the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Finance, the Bank of Mauritius, Statistics Mauritius and the Economic Development Board, has worked out different scenarios of the impact of the conflict on the economy.

Prior to the outbreak of the conflict, it was estimated that the GDP growth for 2026 would be around 3.4%. It is now expected that, if the conflict is resolved within a short period, the GDP growth rate could be lower at around 3.2%. However, under the scenario of a prolonged conflict, the GDP growth rate could be further reduced to below 3%.

One of the main sectors that will be directly affected by the conflict is the tourism sector. The number of tourist arrivals which was projected to be around 1,450,000 in 2026 will, in all likelihood, be lower and will depend on the severity and duration of the conflict. The transport, logistics and other trade related activities are also expected to be affected by the conflict.

Another important economic parameter that is expected to be affected by the conflict is the inflation rate. Prices were initially expected to increase by around 4% on average in 2026. It is now estimated that the inflation rate could go up to 6%, depending on the trend in global prices of oil and other commodities.

As regards the impact on the balance of payments, it is estimated that the current account deficit as a ratio to GDP could increase from the baseline scenario of 4.8% to around 6% in 2026, again, depending on the evolution of oil prices and the impact on the tourism sector.

Concerning public finances, it is expected that Government revenues would be lower in view of the expected subdued growth in consumption expenditure and lower tourist arrivals. On top of that, we will have to take into account the expected shortfall in revenue of Rs10 billion due to the delay in the ratification of the Chagos Treaty. Overall, it is expected that the budget deficit would be higher by up to 2% of GDP.

Against this backdrop and in order to ensure a coordinated and proactive response, the Ministry of Finance has intensified its engagement with the private sector. A High-Level Committee, chaired by the Financial Secretary and bringing together Business Mauritius and key public bodies, has been set up to take stock of the latest developments, assess the likely implications of the conflict on our economy and come up with appropriate policy measures.

Working sessions are being held on a regular basis between the Ministry of Finance, Business Mauritius and the Economic Development Board, particularly on programmes to support SMEs and the most vulnerable, on improving energy and supply chain resilience, on food security, on the tourism sector as well as on how to optimise on the economic opportunities that the conflict may offer.

Madam Speaker, the High-Level Committee is considering short-term actions, medium-term measures and longer-term strategies. It will focus not only on immediate responses, but also on measures designed to enhance the resilience of our economy and society in the face of external shocks.

We are already taking some measures to mitigate the impact of the conflict on our economy. For example, Air Mauritius will now operate one supplementary non-stop flight to

Paris in March of this year and three more in April 2026. These supplementary services will increase capacity by more than 2,300 seats.

Furthermore, the Bank of Mauritius is intervening on the local forex market in order to ease the pressure on the Mauritian rupee.

The High-Level Committee will also be having another meeting today itself to take stock of developments and reconsider remedial measures.

As part of our strategy to mitigate the impact of the conflict and prevent major disruptions in the economy, we are ensuring that we have adequate supply of petroleum products as well as essential food commodities at affordable prices.

Since the outbreak of hostilities, Brent crude oil prices have risen, as we all know markedly – climbing from a low of around USD 60 per barrel at the start of this year to around USD 100 per barrel currently. It went even up to USD 115 at one point. Despite the upward pressure on international petroleum prices, Government has been able to maintain stable retail prices locally.

Madam Speaker, I wish to reassure the House and the population at large that we are taking every step to ensure adequate supply of petroleum products.

In this regard, I am informed by the State Trading Corporation that, as at 16 March 2026, the stock position in the country was broadly as follows –

- (a) For Mogas (*l'essence*), stocks amount to approximately 8,503 metric tons, representing 13 days of sales approximately, with stocks expected to last until around 25 March 2026, based on the new trend of sales registered lately.
- (b) For Gas Oil (Diesel), stocks amount to approximately 12,327 metric tons, representing approximately 23 days of supply, with stocks expected to last around 02 April of this year.
- (c) For Jet A1, stocks approximately of 16,062 metric tons, which represents approximately 21 days of supply, and is expected to last until 04 April of this year.
- (d) As for Marine Gas Oil, stocks amount to approximately 6,018 metric tons, representing approximately 17 days of supply, and it is expected to last until 01 April of this year.

I am further informed, Madam Speaker, by the STC that the next consignment of petroleum products is expected to arrive in Port Louis around the 18 March 2026, carrying –

- (a) 11,300 metric tons of Mogas;
- (b) 13,690 metric tons of Gas Oil;
- (c) 11,010 metric tons of Jet A1, and
- (d) 3,000 metric tons of Marine Gas Oil.

A subsequent consignment is planned between the 02 and 04 April 2026, comprising approximately –

- (a) 13,000 metric tons of Mogas;
- (b) 12,200 metric tons of Gas Oil;
- (c) 12,700 metric tons of Jet A1, and
- (d) 2,000 metric tons of Marine Gas Oil.

Madam Speaker, with regard to Liquefied Petroleum Gas (i.e., cooking gas), the country currently holds approximately 6,772 metric tons, representing around 23 days of supply based on an average daily consumption of around 280 metric tons.

According to the STC, a vessel is expected to arrive around, in fact, 17 March 2026, that is, today, to discharge approximately 7,000 metric tons of LPG mix. Another vessel is expected to arrive around the 30 March 2026 with approximately 3,000 metric tons. A further shipment of about 9,000 metric tons is scheduled for mid-April 2026, followed by another shipment planned for late May 2026.

Madam Speaker, the STC has also carried out an assessment of the potential supply disruptions that could arise from the geopolitical situation in the Middle East or from disruptions to shipping routes.

In this regard, the current supplier OQ Trading Limited, which operates a refinery at Sohar in Oman, has confirmed to the STC that deliveries to Mauritius remain a priority and that their product supply levels will remain stable.

With regard to LPG, the supplier Geogas Trading SA sources LPG predominantly from the United States, with additional supply coming from Argentina, Chile, Australia, the

Caribbean, West Africa, the Mediterranean and Europe, thereby limiting its exposure to the Middle East. The supplier has also indicated that it has dedicated its fleet of around 75 vessels to serve its long-term customers in order to ensure reliability of supply. Among the long-term customers includes Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, the STC continues to monitor the national stock position of petroleum products on a daily basis and makes optimal use of available storage facilities, including the strategic reserves for Mogas and Gas Oil.

In addition, contingency measures have been put in place. The STC has contacted a number of alternative suppliers operating outside the Gulf region in order to secure possible spot cargoes, should disruptions occur.

Furthermore, the STC has the option to extend the present contract with OQ Trading Limited by a further two months.

Madam Speaker, with the objective of securitisation of supply chains for energy, even before the war broke out, I had personally discussed with the Indian Prime Minister, Mr Narendra Modi, during my State visit in September 2025, to assist us in the procurement of petroleum products under a Government-to-Government arrangement, that is, between the Government of India and the Government of Mauritius. I reiterated my demand on my recent visit in India last February and let me once again thank the Indian Government for responding positively to our request at this critical juncture.

The Government of India is making arrangements for us to procure our petroleum products directly through Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. This will eliminate additional costs due to unnecessary intermediaries and middlemen, as had been done in the past, in the procurement of our petroleum products unlike, as I said, the dubious and corrupt practices of the previous Government.

It should be noted, Madam Speaker, that Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd, with which we had this arrangement before 2006 I think, were contacted and they declined to supply petroleum products to Mauritius because they said – they have been blunt – in view of the unilateral and irresponsible action of the previous Government in 2014. You realise, Madam Speaker, if that contract had not been disrupted...

(Interruptions)

Yes, if that contract had not been completely...

Madam Speaker: Take time, Leader...

Mr Lesjongard: ... correct that, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Yes, I will give you time.

The Prime Minister: If we had the tanker that we had at the time, we would not be in that situation today.

As an additional contingency measure for LPG supply, the State Trading Corporation is also exploring the possibility of procuring spot cargoes, as I said, from other suppliers, which operates storage facilities in South Africa.

With regard to Fuel Oil, which is mainly used for electricity generation by the Central Electricity Board as well as by certain local industries, the STC has extended its current contract for the supply of Fuel Oil up to 31 May of this year in order to ensure continuity of supply.

As at 13 March 2026, the stock position was as follows –

- (a) about 17,119 metric tons of fuel oil used by the CEB, representing approximately 26 days of supply that is expected to last until around 08 April of this year;
- (b) about 17,190 metric tons of another type of fuel oil used by the CEB, representing approximately 37 days of supply and expected to last until around 19 April 2026, and
- (c) about 2,260 metric tons of fuel oil used for inland trade and industrial purposes, representing 22 days of supply and expected to last until 04 April of this year.

The next Fuel Oil consignment was scheduled for loading at Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates. However, due to temporary suspensions of operations at that port, there have been delays in the loading programme.

I am informed, Madam Speaker, that the STC has made necessary arrangements for a new tanker from its current supplier to load a shipment from Singapore. The said tanker is expected to reach Mauritius by early April 2026.

As for food security, Madam Speaker, Government is equally conscious that global tensions affect not only petroleum markets but also the prices of food commodities and other essential goods.

Since the start of the conflict, international prices of commodities have increased by approximately 1 to 3 per cent. On top of that, major currencies such as the US Dollar and the Euro have appreciated, thereby increasing import costs for Mauritius.

In order to protect consumers from excessive price increases, Government maintains a comprehensive price control framework.

At present, 30 commodities are regulated under the maximum mark-up regime, including products such as milk powder, breakfast cereals, infant foods, edible oil, basmati rice, frozen vegetables and margarine. In addition, 13 essential commodities, including scheduled bread, LPG, Mogas, Gas Oil and flour, are regulated under the maximum fixed price regime.

Retail prices of medicines are also controlled under a Regressive Maximum Mark-up system, whereby medicines with higher import costs are subject to lower margins.

The Ministry of Health has taken several measures to ensure that there is no disruption in medical supplies. The Ministry currently has a buffer stock of medicines for at least six months. A Committee of Needs has been set up at the level of the Ministry to assess the island-wide stock situation, including Rodrigues and the Outer Islands.

Government has also reinforced consumer protection measures through the Price Stabilisation Fund of Rs10 billion, which provides targeted subsidies on essential commodities such as milk powder, edible oil, infant milk powder, baby diapers, processed cheese, adult diapers, canned fish, and other certain essential medicines.

Madam Speaker, in light of the ongoing tensions in the Middle East, Government remains fully committed to safeguard the resilience of the Mauritian economy and protect the welfare of our population.

It is clear, Madam Speaker, if the current situation continues, it will impact on our budgetary estimates and outlook, thus further reducing our room for manoeuvre.

Close monitoring of global developments is being undertaken, particularly with regard to energy prices, supply chains and their potential impact on inflation and economic activity. Government will maintain prudent fiscal policies and ensure that targeted measures are

available to support vulnerable households and key economic sectors where necessary. Through coordinated action, Government stands ready to respond swiftly and adjust its policy stance so as to preserve macroeconomic stability, sustain growth and protect the purchasing power of all Mauritians.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, your first supplementary question.

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I hope you will give me enough time to put all my supplementary questions...

Madam Speaker: Yes, of course.

Mr Lesjongard: ... because this is a very important subject.

I will refer to what the hon. Prime Minister just said when he ended his reply. He said that if war continues and it will continue, it will impact on our economy. Can I ask him whether he shares the views of the hon. Deputy Prime Minister that the country needs a full time Minister of Finance to tackle the situation?

The Prime Minister: I think what the country needs at the moment is somebody with a firm hand who is not going to shy away from taking tough decisions. That is what the country needs.

Madam Speaker: You've had your reply. Next question!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, the hon. Prime Minister made reference to a High-Level Committee. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister who is chairing that committee and the frequency that the committee is meeting, please?

The Prime Minister: The committee is being chaired by the Financial Secretary and he calls in additional persons if he needs to, but he is chairing it. As to the frequency depending on how things are improving, I think I explained that they met a few times and they are meeting even today.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Three!

Mr Lesjongard: Doesn't the hon. Prime Minister think that for such a war happening in the Middle East and which is affecting us here, that committee should have been chaired

by the hon. Prime Minister himself or a high-ranking minister in government, Madam Speaker?

Now can I ...

Madam Speaker: No, was that a question?

Mr Lesjongard: No. I'll put my question now, Madam.

Madam Speaker: Do you want a reply?

Give him time to give a reply.

Mr Lesjongard: Okay.

Madam Speaker: Do you think that?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, what is important is that the committee is being chaired and we are getting all the information that we need.

Madam Speaker: Yes, alright!

Mr Etwareea: Three useless questions!

Madam Speaker: He doesn't agree with you.

Mr Lesjongard: Because he talked about the repatriation of Mauritian nationals working in those Gulf countries, can we have an indication of how many Mauritian nationals were working in the Gulf countries before the start of the war and do we have additional requests for repatriation and, if this is the case, what measures have and will be taken for the safe repatriation of those Mauritian nationals?

Madam Speaker: Okay. Two questions in one: new requests and what is going to be done.

The Prime Minister: I think I have answered the question. There are about 121 Mauritians in the countries of Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia.

Also, some of them were returned earlier through the action of our Ambassador in Saudi Arabia, others have come later on. The first batch came on 03 March via Nairobi. There were 39 Mauritian nationals.

Now, if you want the total number, I think I mentioned it somewhere. It was around... I can't remember the exact number but it was around 200 something.

Madam Speaker: I am sorry, we are talking of those who are settled there? Working?

Mr Lesjongard: My question is on those working in those Gulf countries.

Madam Speaker: I am sorry. Was that the answer, hon. Prime Minister?

You were talking of those who were working there, not...

The Prime Minister: Yes, my answer was about people who were working. Settled, we don't have...

Madam Speaker: Just to make sure.

Okay, next question.

Mr Lesjongard: My second question was whether there have been additional requests for repatriation for those working in those Gulf countries?

The Prime Minister: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has set up a hotline, as I explained. Mauritians have been contacting them. 228 Mauritian nationals have contacted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through this hotline and we are giving them assistance for them to return back.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Now, that's clear.

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether Government has looked into the impact of this conflict on the Chagos deal on the role of Diego Garcia in this war as the issue of Chagos has been put aside by the UK government? Has Government looked into that?

The Prime Minister: The Diego Garcia base does not come into play here at all. As far as I know, the British government has not allowed the use of Diego Garcia – up to now. Maybe, they will change their mind.

Madam Speaker: May I just remind everyone that supplementary questions must relate to the original question. That will apply to everybody.

Mr Lesjongard: In his reply, the hon. Prime Minister indicated to the House that there is possibility if the war goes on, that inflation rate might reach around 6%. If this is the case, will Government consider reintroducing the CSG allowances in full to those families who were benefiting, with a view to alleviate the rise in cost of living?

The Prime Minister: This will be a step backwards, Madam Speaker. We explained during the ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: I can't hear the hon. Prime Minister.

Yes, hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: We explained during the debates why this was a catastrophe. We are not going to go back to that.

Madam Speaker: Okay, next question.

Mr Lesjongard: If this is the case, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister....

Madam Speaker: Because I am giving you additional time, okay?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, may I ...

Madam Speaker: Yes, please.

Mr Lesjongard: You should not interrupt me, Madam Speaker. I am putting my question.

(Interruptions)

Ms Anquetil: Quelle arrogance !

Mr Lesjongard: Can I ...

Madam Speaker: Please, I did not mean to stop you. I was just...

Mr Lesjongard: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister to the reply he has given whether, Government then can consider introducing a temporary inflation top-up for workers earning less than Rs20,000 during the duration of the conflict?

The Prime Minister: Obviously, he does not realise that we are being watched by Moody's – that we have to look very carefully. We have inherited, as you know, a terrible situation as far as the economy was concerned. We are trying to put the country in shape. Some people do not understand; some people understand. We are not going to go back to that. We cannot!

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to Mogas and Gasoil, I understand, from what the hon. Prime Minister stated, that we are expecting a shipment on 18 March. That is the word he used – 'expecting.' Is it the case? And if this is the case, can we know what contingency plans are in place should shipments of white oil for the STC and black oil for the CEB be delayed, Madam Speaker?

Mr Jhummun: *Ti bizin pa reziliye contra Betamax!*

The Prime Minister: As the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I am sure, knows; we are in a region where there is war. So, we cannot predict exactly what will happen. But we are taking contingency plans. I thought I explained! We are looking at all the sources where we can to make sure that we are not short of anything.

Mr Etwareea: It is a dynamic situation.

Mr Lesjongard: From his reply, we understand discussions are ongoing with the Indian authorities for alternative petroleum supply and we are very grateful to India. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House of the volume and duration of supply tentatively secured, Madam Speaker?

The Prime Minister: No, we have not concluded the agreement yet. So, I cannot tell you what is the volume, but what I can say is that it will be a guaranteed supply.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes!

Mr Lesjongard: Can I then ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the procurement can be settled in Indian rupees to reduce USD exposure? And can the House also be provided, hon. Prime Minister, with information on the operational timeline for this alternative procurement?

The Prime Minister: I am glad that the hon. Leader of the Opposition has just reminded me. In fact, we have arranged for the payment to be done in Mauritian rupees so that we will not be subject to the fluctuation of the dollar on that.

An hon. Member: *Ena enn lakor lor la.*

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you.

With regard to the price of Mogas and Gasoil, Madam Speaker, will Government consider reviewing the tax mechanism, including excise duties and VAT? And is Government willing to consider some form of support to the transport sector, that is, taxis and buses, Madam Speaker?

The Prime Minister: As I explained, Madam Speaker,...

Madam Speaker: A very tall order!

The Prime Minister: It is a very tall order! We have inherited of a very difficult situation. Now, we have the war, plus the Rs10 billion rupees that we are not getting from Chagos. This puts additional pressure on us.

Mr Lesjongard: So, if this is the case, is Government then, Madam Speaker, considering an increase in transport fares in case the situation worsens?

The Prime Minister: Not for the moment. We are monitoring the situation. As I said, we have made provisions so that we do not get disruptions. As for the prices, we cannot, because if the dollar is going up, inflation rate is going up, the costs of insurance for the ships are going up, the costs of transport are going up, so, we have to take all this into account, but at the moment, we are not thinking of that.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to energy security, Madam Speaker, we know that 80% of our electricity in the country is being generated from imported fossil fuel. Will the hon. Prime Minister inform the House what measures are being taken if coal or oil shipments from the Middle East or other ports are disrupted by conflict related routing or shipping delays? Can we have a reply, hon. Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: I did address this. The next fuel oil consignment – is scheduled to be loaded from the United Arab Emirates. There has been a temporary suspension of operations at that port. So, there are slight delays. But I am told that the loading programme will start soon.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr Lesjongard: In the case of energy and electricity, is Government also considering an increase in electricity tariffs if the situation worsens?

Mr Jhummun: *Enn profet maler sa matlo!*

Madam Speaker: Let us keep fingers crossed.

Mr Jhummun: Yes! Exactly!

Mr Lesjongard: I have to put my questions, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Of course! Of course!

The Prime Minister: I think I should add...

Madam Speaker: And I like listening to you.

The Prime Minister: I think I should add – I did say it, but I should add again – that we are also looking at a shipment for oil from Singapore. This has already been done by the STC. As for prices, already, we are under a lot of pressure from Moody's, on different prices. We have to reduce the debt burden of this country.

I have some very good news. Later on, I will make a statement, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr Lesjongard: No, I know, Madam Speaker. Let me correct something. I refer to what the hon. Prime Minister said earlier; the contract between Mangalore Refinery and STC was never cancelled. It expired on 31 July 2019.

Madam Speaker: That is not a question!

Mr Lesjongard: Now, with regard to food security...

Madam Speaker: That was not a question. That was a statement! Please!

Mr Lesjongard: Does the hon. Prime Minister...

Madam Speaker: Question!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes.

Does the hon. Prime Minister recognise that it would be most appropriate, in view of the current rise in commodity prices, to provide subsidies – he mentioned that in his reply – to a larger selection of essential products and increase the amount of subsidy altogether?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, we are not going to do what the previous Government did. We are not going to print money. We have to use what we can do. We have a difficult situation. We will have to cope with the situation.

Madam Speaker: I will give you one more minute.

Mr Lesjongard: Two more minutes! I have more questions, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: *Allez*, two more minutes!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members!

Mr Lesjongard: The hon. Prime Minister said that for fuel, we will be paying India in Indian rupees. Can I ask the...

(Interruptions)

Mauritian rupee?

An hon. Member: Mauritian rupee!

Madam Speaker: *Chut!*

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether import of foodstuffs at a more affordable price from India, that is, in Indian currency, for example, has been considered?

The Prime Minister: We are looking at all the options, Madam Speaker. This also is an option that we will have to look at. But we are hoping that we learn from all this and we become self-sufficient ourselves.

Madam Speaker: Okay, I have one minute.

Mr Lesjongard: Two more questions!

Madam Speaker: Your friend is asking for a question. You do not want to let him put a question?

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Prime Minister state to the House whether Government has any plan to boost up food crop locally in view of the risk to food availability and food security arising from the conflict?

Whether we have plans for that?

The Prime Minister: Not because of the conflict. The hon. Minister for Agro-Industry had mentioned in the past what we are doing to try to become self-sufficient. It is not going to happen overnight, but we are taking measures.

Madam Speaker: Okay, let us stop here for PNQ, please, because in any case...

(Interruptions)

May I? I am on my feet.

Mr Lesjongard: Yes.

Madam Speaker: In any case, I think, hon. Prime Minister, we can agree that during PMQT, you will be replying to the other questions on the same issue. So, I will give you more time to put questions. You can put your...

Mr A. Duval: Mine is related to something which is not in the PMQT.

Madam Speaker: No, but I will give you, because *c'est un package toutes ces questions-là. Ça se ressemble beaucoup*. Okay?

Let me, let me do the...

(Interruptions)

Please! I have done my best, hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Let us... No, afterwards.

(Interruptions)

She tried! She tried!

Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: So, PQs B/1, B/2, and B/21, Madam Speaker? Because they relate to the same matter.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Etwareea, please!

CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO TREATY – DELAYED RATIFICATION – FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

(No. B/1) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the delayed ratification of the Chagos Archipelago treaty signed in May 2025, he will state the expected consequences thereof in terms of budget deficit and balance of payment following the non-disbursement of the Rs 10 billion provided in the Budget 2025-26.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I will reply to Parliamentary Questions B/1, B/2 and B/21 together, as they all relate to the same subject matter.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

The Prime Minister: As the House is aware, on 22 May 2025, Mauritius and the United Kingdom signed an Agreement concerning the Chagos Archipelago. Under the Agreement, the United Kingdom recognises the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia.

The Agreement also stipulates that as sovereign, Mauritius has authorised the United Kingdom to exercise, with respect to Diego Garcia, the rights and authorities of Mauritius which are required for the long-term, secure and effective operation of the military base on that island.

The Agreement has to be ratified for it to enter into force. The United Kingdom has not yet ratified. As you know, there have been some difficulties.

Since the Bill entitled “Diego Garcia Military Base and British Indian Ocean Territory Bill” has not yet been adopted by the UK Parliament, the Agreement is therefore not yet ratified in full.

On the assumption that the Chagos Treaty would be ratified, an amount of Rs10 billion was included in the revenue of the 2025-2026 Budget.

However, due to the delay in the ratification of the Chagos Treaty, there will, of course, be a shortfall in revenue of Rs10 billion in this fiscal year. Other things being equal, the budget deficit will increase by the same amount, that is, 1.3% of GDP. This will in turn lead to an increase in public sector debt by the same percentage.

Similarly, the delay in the ratification of the Treaty will result in the lower balance of payments inflows of a corresponding amount, putting additional pressure on the foreign exchange market.

Madam Speaker, in order to mitigate the impact of this shortfall, the Ministry of Finance is already taking a number of actions namely –

- (a) enforcing stricter control over recurrent expenditure and reducing wastage;
- (b) reprioritising capital projects by implementing high-impact, growth-enhancing projects and deferring lower-priority ones;
- (c) exercising tighter financial control over public bodies to improve efficiency and contain budgetary transfers to them, and
- (d) optimising the existing cash balances across the public sector so as to limit new borrowings.

It is our hope, Madam Speaker, that the Chagos Treaty will be ratified at the earliest possible opportunity so that the Agreement can enter into force and the provisions can be fully implemented.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Etwareea!

Mr Etwareea: Thank you, hon. Prime Minister. I would like to know whether the Government is talking about all these probable problems in the international organisations like the IMF, World Bank, of the outcomes of these difficulties?

The Prime Minister: I am sorry, I did not catch the last bit.

Mr Etwareea: I am talking about these problems in the international organisations like the IMF and also to Moody's.

The Prime Minister: Yes, yes, they are well aware of it. We are constantly in touch with them. I can tell you both the FS and Economic Adviser from the PMO are talking to them.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Seeburn wants a question? Your question was replied.

Mr Seeburn: Yes, Madam Speaker. It has been replied.

Madam Speaker: Do you want a supplementary? You are all right?

Okay, hon. Dr. Ms Daureeawo? No? Very good!

Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the hon. Prime Minister now agree that including that Rs10 billion compensation for the Chagos deal in our national budget was presumptuous first of all and badly advised?

The Prime Minister: No, I do not agree. It was already agreed. We have signed the treaty. It was only going through the ratification process when President Trump did not agree with certain things.

We have been talking to them. We have agreed, for example, that they wanted to have an additional member on the Commission. We have agreed. Then they wanted two members, we have agreed. Then, they wanted to be able to vote on that Commission; that also we have agreed. We are trying to make sure that the treaty is actually ratified.

Mr A. Duval: Yes, Madam Speaker, I have a question.

Madam Speaker: Yes, on that issue? Alright, hon. A. Duval.

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Speaker. There have been talks of possibility of going to lodge a case by Mauritius should the United States continue to veto, well, to block the signature. Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm whether this has been discussed at the level of the Mauritian government and what would be the implications?

The Prime Minister: Once while I was speaking to the press, I think somebody from the press asked me that question, and I did say we are looking at all the options and don't think that we do not have options.

What we have done apart from our lawyers at the State Law Office with the hon. Attorney General, we also have an international team of lawyers who are actually looking at all the aspects, all the options, and from then on, we will do what has to be done.

I think it was in the press in England that we are going to sue – that is not true.

CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO TREATY – RATIFICATION DELAY – FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES & IMPACT

(No. B/2) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the delay in the ratification of the Chagos Archipelago treaty signed in May 2025, he will state whether Government has assessed the financial consequences and impact thereof on our economy and, if so, indicate the mitigating measures being envisaged or taken in relation thereto.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/1)

Madam Speaker: Yes, all right. Hon. Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue. Yes, your time now!

MAURITIUS POLICE FORCE – BODY-WORN & VEHICLE CAMERAS – STATUS

(No. B/3) 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 Mauritius Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) where matters stand regarding the proposal to equipping Police Officers with tasers and body-worn cameras, indicating in each case, the –
 - (i) number thereof to be procured and timeframe therefor, and
 - (ii) police units to be equipped therewith, and
- (b) whether consideration is being given to equipping police vehicles with on-board cameras and recording equipment.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I wish to refer the Hon. Member to my reply to Parliamentary Question B/1127 at the Sitting of 02 December 2025 wherein I had indicated that a Technical Committee had been set up by the Commissioner of Police to work on the modalities for the implementation of both tasers and body-worn cameras.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the Technical Committee has recommended the introduction of tasers for use by frontline Police Officers as a less-lethal alternative to firearms and is now working on operational guidelines and legal framework.

As regards body-worn cameras, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the Police will use multimedia radios which are equipped with camera features. The Technical Committee has almost completed the drafting of the Standard Operating Procedures for the use of these cameras. Trial tests have already been conducted successfully.

I am also informed by the Commissioner of Police that the Police multimedia radios are being used as body-worn cameras on a pilot basis. Under the Training of Trainers Programme, a total, I think, of 250 Police Officers from different units have been trained on the proper use of the radio as body-worn cameras and they will subsequently be able to train other Police Officers on the proper use thereof.

By the end of this month, the cameras can be used as a protective tool by Police Officers who are more exposed to risk of aggressions and other incidents which may result in frivolous complaints.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that the radio communication system on-board Police vehicles will be upgraded and will include cameras having video recording capabilities and the project is being finalised.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr A. Duval: Yes, Madam Speaker, I was aware, in fact, that the Police is using this radio, which we see on the belt of Police Officers around Port Louis. The issue is, Madam

Speaker, it was not meant to be a body-worn camera. It has a very different usage than a body-worn camera. The first issue is that it is strangled around...

Madam Speaker: Question! Question!

Mr A. Duval: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that it is tied around their neck and therefore does not have a clear image compared to body cameras which are securely fastened on the body vest of Police Officers?

Secondly, is the hon. Prime Minister able to say what is the recording capacity of footage of these multi radio camera equipment and whether it does record sound adequately so that tomorrow it may be used as evidence?

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: I have been told by the Commissioner of Police that there have been trial tests and that they were successful. So, I will have to further investigate whether you think, from what I understand, that these multi radio cameras are not adequate.

Madam Speaker: You will look into it.

The Prime Minister: From what I understand, the fact that they will be able to actually film whatever is happening should suit its purpose, but maybe we will have to look into it further.

Madam Speaker: It can be improved, I am sure.

Mr A. Duval: I have a second question.

Madam Speaker: Okay!

Mr A. Duval: Yes, it is, in fact, the point because Police Officers around the world ...

Madam Speaker: Do not make statement!

Mr A. Duval: It is a question. Is the Hon. Prime Minister aware that Police Officers around the world in modern countries have dedicated body-worn cameras which are sold and used for that purpose? Therefore, it would be a missed opportunity to recycle these radios when we are trying in fact to render the system much more efficient and to protect citizens and Police Officers alike, especially with the degrading...

Madam Speaker: Social unrest or whatever.

Mr A. Duval: ... security, in fact.

Madam Speaker: Okay, I am sure the hon. Prime Minister will do that. You will look into it.

The Prime Minister: I understand the point that the hon. Member is making because if it is there on the site, whether it will actually be able to film it properly. I will look into the matter.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Prime Minister!

**SYNTHETIC DRUGS – CONSUMERS & DEALERS ARRESTED – REGIONS
AFFECTED – RAIDED LABORATORIES**

(No. B/4) 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 synthetic drugs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to, over the past eighteen months, the number of –

- (a) consumers thereof arrested, indicating the –
 - (i) regions with high prevalence rates of consumption thereof, and
 - (ii) number of dealers thereof arrested, and
- (b) illegal synthetic drug laboratories known, raided and destroyed.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with regard to parts (a) and (a) (i) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that from 01 September 2024 to 12 March 2026, 822 synthetic drug consumers have been arrested, most of whom were from the regions of Upper Plaine Wilhems, Grand Port and Port Louis North.

In regard to part (a) (ii) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the quantity and street value of dangerous drugs secured are taken into consideration to determine whether an accused is a dealer or whether he is a trafficker. If a large quantity of drugs is secured and its street value is less than Rs1 million, the suspect is treated as a dealer. If the street value exceeds Rs1 million, the suspect is considered to be a trafficker. During the same period, 879 dealers and 31 traffickers were arrested for dealing and trafficking in synthetic drugs.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the Police have raided several premises where utensils used for the mixture of derivatives to make synthetic drugs and the consumption thereof were secured.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister, in regard to the solvents that are being used in the manufacturing and production of synthetic drugs, as has been found by the forensic lab, will the Government consider having strict regulation as

to its sale at retail level or even consider a ban so that we will see a decrease in the number of drug addicts on the streets? Thank you.

The Prime Minister: I should add that there is going to be a new forensic lab – you should probably know, it is nearly ready – but also, since February of this year, we have a new director, Dr. Seetohul, who has assumed leadership of that lab. He is a distinguished toxicologist with over 20 years of experience in the UK. He is in another diaspora, he has left the UK, and come to Mauritius to look at the lab. We have lots and lots of shortcomings, he has already seen them; lots of shortcomings in the lab. He is trying to correct this.

Madam Speaker: Are you happy? Yes, last one!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, it is a very short question. Will the hon. Prime Minister see with the Commissioner of Police whether, the tracking of zombies, who line up the streets of many of our regions in Mauritius, can be tracked down to the dealers or traffickers and arrest them on spot; whether the law should be amended or so, but I think that would help to bring down the number of synthetic users on our roads?

The Prime Minister: I will certainly pass that information to the Commissioner of Police. I should add that there is a new person at the head of ADSU at the moment who is very effective. He has already given lots of results. He is an ASP, Mr Seebaluck.

Madam Speaker: Okay, thank you. So, next question will be for Mr Edouard from Rodrigues!

RODRIGUES – WATER PROJECTS – FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

(No. B/5) 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 water projects in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the quantum of the financial assistance sought by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly from the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd., indicating the quantum thereof approved and disbursed as at to date and when the remaining balance thereof will be disbursed.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, Government remains firmly committed to ensuring inclusive and a balanced development across the Republic of Mauritius, including Rodrigues. As stated at Paragraph 64 of the Government Programme of 2025–2029, we are

giving special attention to the water situation in Rodrigues. Accordingly, financial resources are being directed towards key projects in Rodrigues, namely the installation of new desalination plants, the construction of new reservoirs, the improvement of the distribution network, and also the expansion of the storage capacity in the island.

Madam Speaker, the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd had agreed – that was with the previous Government – to allocate an amount of Rs1 billion to develop the water sector in Rodrigues, although this, I must say, was not in its core mandate. Its core mandate was to generate return on investment in strategic enterprises, but the previous Government decided that they would move away from the core mandate and allocate Rs1 billion for the water sector.

Since the agreement was signed in 2021 between the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd and the Rodrigues Public Utilities Corporation, which is a company set up by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, Government has continued the implementation of the water projects in Rodrigues, and an amount of Rs540 million was earmarked for the first phase of the project. I am informed that, as at to date, the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd has disbursed Rs310 million to the Rodrigues Public Utilities Corporation and that the remaining Rs230 million will be disbursed by the end of this financial year.

I am further informed that with a view to speeding up the disbursement of funds, the Rodrigues Public Utilities Corporation Ltd has been requested to submit all the necessary documents required by the MIC for the processing of claims in a timely manner.

In the second phase, the remaining amount, that is, Rs460 million would be considered for land-based water projects on the island. The projects to be financed in the second stage have been worked out by the Rodrigues Public Utilities Corporation Ltd, and a fresh agreement will have to be signed for the disbursement of these funds. These investments will significantly enhance water production, water storage, and distribution capacity in Rodrigues and contribute to improving water security on the island.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Mr Edouard? One moment, one question.

Mr Edouard: I thank the hon. Prime Minister for his reply. Will the hon. Prime Minister address the problem of delays in the release of money which impact on project completion and also has a great incidence on the spending capacity of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly? Thank you.

The Prime Minister: Certainly, Madam Speaker. This is why they have been informed to speed up the disbursement of funds; the Rodrigues Public Utilities Corporation Ltd has been requested. They have not submitted all the necessary documents; they will need to give all the necessary documents which are required by the MIC for the processing of the claims.

ANNOUNCEMENT

SITTING OF 17.03.26 – PNQ – RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Before Mr Jhummun puts his question, I have to advise the House – and the hon. Prime Minister knows – that the hon. Prime Minister was to reply to PQs B/26, B/29, B/34, B/43, B/44, B/47, B/51, and B/61 on the issue that he just replied to at PNQ time. So, what I will do is after Mr Jhummun has put his question or supplementary, whichever, I will allow all these Members to put their supplementary, but try and watch the time nonetheless. Okay?

MIDDLE EAST TENSIONS – ECONOMIC REPERCUSSIONS – CONTINGENCY PLANS

(No. B/6) 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 ongoing war in the Middle East and the probable repercussions thereof on our economy, he will state the contingency plans being envisaged in relation thereto.

(Vide Reply to PNQ)

Madam Speaker: Mr Jhummun!

Mr Jhummun: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think the hon. Prime Minister has already answered that question.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr Jhummun: But I want to put my supplementary. May I?

Madam Speaker: Yes, but related!

Mr Jhummun: So, in order to ensure a better supply of oil...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No, he has...

(Interruptions)

Let me...

(Interruptions)

May I?

(Interruptions)

May I? I am the one who is going to decide!

(Interruptions)

He just...

(Interruptions)

We are wasting time! B/6 and now you put your supplementary because you said... he has already replied! He has already replied. So, please put your supplementary. And do not do my job!

(Interruptions)

Chut!

Mr Jhummun: Okay, so in order to ensure a better supply of oil and petroleum products, can we envisage to come again with our own tanker, special ships bearing Mauritian flags, as we had in previous days like Betamax, which was terminated by the previous Government?

Madam Speaker: Okay.

The Prime Minister: Very good question! In fact, I am told, again, just like Mangalore, the Betamax company is not interested. They are actually serving Singapore and the far East and their tankers are completely booked. This is our loss because of the irresponsible actions they took; there we are.

Madam Speaker: Okay, Mr François.

(Interruptions)

You do not ... *Chut!*

Mr François had a question. He has no supplementary.

Mr Juman? Yes? For B/34.

**STC – GAS OIL, MOGAS, JET FUEL & LIQUEFIED PETROLEUM – SUPPLY
DISRUPTION ASSESSMENT – MEASURES**

(No. B/34) Mr E. Juman (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to Gas Oil, Mogas, Jet Fuel and Liquefied Petroleum Gas, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to –

- (a) the current national stock levels thereof in Mauritius, indicating the respective quantities thereof expected to arrive in the next consignments and expected arrival dates;
- (b) whether an assessment of potential supply disruptions has been carried out, and
- (c) measures being envisaged to ensure no shortage thereof locally in case of prolonged disruption of the shipping routes.

(Vide Reply to PNQ)

Mr Juman: Thank you, Madam Speaker. While we fully acknowledge the challenges the hon. Prime Minister outlined arising from the current situation in the Middle East, would the hon. Prime Minister also agree that this context presents various opportunities for Mauritius? In that regard, would the Government consider the setting up of a dedicated strategic committee to assess and come up with recommendations from the opportunities, the situation?

The Prime Minister: As Winston Churchill used to say –

“We do not lose the opportunity of a crisis.”

We are doing this, actually, at the moment. We are dealing with friendly countries. We are on very good terms with them. But there are people who are now interested in investing in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker: You are alright, hon. Jhummun?

Hon. Seeburn, you do not have a question? You had one question and another one. So, maybe one supplementary?

Mr Seeburn: It has already been replied, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: You are alright?

Mr Seeburn: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Alright. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

MIDDLE EAST TENSIONS – MAURITIANS ABROAD – CONSULAR SUPPORT, EVACUATION & REPATRIATION PLAN

(No. B/44) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the prevailing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, he will state –

- (a) whether Government has conducted an assessment of the number of Mauritian nationals currently residing in the Middle East affected by the conflict;
- (b) the urgent measures and consular support put in place to ensure their safety and well-being, and
- (c) whether a concrete evacuation and repatriation plan has been prepared, including timelines and coordination with relevant authorities, for Mauritian citizens wishing to return home.

(Vide Reply to PNQ)

MIDDLE EAST TENSIONS – FUEL & FOOD SUPPLY – PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

(No. B/51) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the prevailing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to the measures taken by the Corporation to secure the country's supply of fuel, notably petrol and diesel, as well as essential food commodities.

(Vide Reply to PNQ)

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. En passant, j'ai deux questions.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Ms Anquetil: J'avais deux questions.

Will the hon. Prime Minister provide the House with some details of the terms of the Government-to-Government Agreement with India on the supply of petroleum products which was signed in 2006 by the former Labour Government, and subsequently, *résilié* under the former MSM Government? Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Can you provide it?

The Prime Minister: You are right to point out. I did point out it was a guaranteed supply. We had cut out the middleman. Madam Speaker, you know why we have a middleman?

Madam Speaker: We all know.

The Prime Minister: We all know they do not work for free. They take commissions. What do they do? They share the commission. That is what was happening. That is why the contract was resiliated.

An hon. Member: *Pa konn pran komision, konn pran brayb!*

The Prime Minister: Yes, bribe! Unfortunately, that has happened.

Madam Speaker: Do you have the documents she was saying?

The Prime Minister: No, we have not finalised the agreement yet, but it would be practically under the same terms. I do not know what Indian Oil will want additionally, but this is what is being worked out.

Madam Speaker: Okay, second question!

Ms Anquetil: I thank you very, very much.

Madam Speaker: Parce que c'est vous !

Ms Anquetil: Thank you.

Will the Prime Minister confirm that Mauritius was amongst the first few countries to have successfully repatriated our nationals safely back to Mauritius?

The Prime Minister: Yes, this is absolutely right. I saw on the news that France and UK are having difficulties. We had repatriated our nationals who wanted to be repatriated.

Madam Speaker: Including our hon. Member!

(Interruptions)

Ms Anquetil: Including Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: I would tell a different story!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, I have a question.

Madam Speaker: Yes, of course. But we are happy to see him here!

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, I would tell a different story, but today is not the time.

Madam Speaker, may I ask the Prime Minister on...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: *Chut!*

Mr A. Duval: In fact, it is on air connectivity, and he partly answered earlier during the PNQ. He has stated that Air Mauritius is to operate one additional flight – he did not specify the frequency – for this month and three additional flights for the month after.

My question is: Given the shortfall of up to 1,500 passengers per day coming through Emirates, mainly from European markets, has the Prime Minister discussed with British Airways, Air France and Air Seychelles to temporarily increase their flight connectivity to Mauritius to cater for that shortfall? Because 18 days since the conflict, it does not look like Emirates will be in a position to operate the daily three flights anytime soon. So, has the Prime Minister spoken to them? What is the plan on this score?

The Prime Minister: I know that Air Mauritius was looking at all the possible, but they, themselves, decided they will add additional flights. Also, as you rightly said, Emirates is not going to add additional flights now, but they did give us the additional flights which we requested. I was told they were speaking to British Airways and to other airlines, but nothing concrete has come out of that.

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, may I ask a second question?

Madam Speaker: Quickly!

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, the second issue with that is that prices of air tickets, especially for Air Mauritius, have gone through the roof. So, allowing others to cater for the shortfall would help, at the end of the day, people who are flying. So, does the Prime Minister have any plan to control the rising prices of air tickets, which have tremendously increased in the last three weeks?

The Prime Minister: We are not in a position to control these prices because fuel prices are going up. And there is the appreciation of the dollar and the euro. Both of them are going up. So, it is beyond our control to try to control that price.

Madam Speaker: One moment! Hon. Etwareea, you had question B/61. Do you have a supplementary? You are okay.

MIDDLE EAST TENSIONS – FOOD SECURITY – ALTERNATIVE IMPORT SOURCES & LOCAL PRODUCTION

(No. B/43) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the escalating geopolitical tensions and the potential impact thereof on global trade routes and supply chains, he will state if any assessment of the potential impact thereof on food security in Mauritius has been carried out, indicating the measures being envisaged to ensure continuous and adequate supply of essential food commodities, including diversification of import sources or strengthening local agricultural production.

(Vide Reply to PNQ)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Beehook!

Mr Beehook: Madam Speaker, in view of the uncertainty related to the duration of the war, will the hon. Prime Minister consider setting up a standalone high-level committee to cater for food security in order to reduce the dependency on imports?

The Prime Minister: This is already being done and it is chaired by the Minister of Agro-Industry.

Madam Speaker: Okay, I have a few minutes left. PQ B/7 has been withdrawn.

DIRECTOR OF AUDIT – OVERSEAS MISSIONS – COST, OUTCOME & BENEFITS

(No. B/7) Ms A. Savabaddy (First 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 Director of Audit, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of overseas missions he has undertaken over the past two years, indicating in each case, the –

- (a) total cost thereof, and
- (b) outcome or benefits derived therefrom.

(Withdrawn)

Madam Speaker: B/8! Your second question, hon. Jhummun!

INDEPENDENT POWER PRODUCERS – MIC INVESTMENTS

(No. B/8) 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 Independent Power Producers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd., information as to the quantum of funds it has invested in or advanced thereto through their sister companies or their group holding.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I will reply to Parliamentary Questions B/8 and B/15 together, as they relate to the same subject matter.

With regard to Parliamentary Question B/8, I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd (MIC) has not made any direct investments or provided funding to Independent Power Producers (IPPs).

However, it has purchased land from some companies associated with certain IPPs. Moreover, it has also invested in equity and debt instruments of some associated companies.

Over the period 2020 to 2024, the MIC has purchased land and invested a total amount of Rs12.8 billion as follows –

- (a) Rs7.8 billion for the acquisition of land (Omnican Limited – Rs4.4 billion, Medine Limited – Rs3.4 billion);

- (b) Rs3.2 billion as bond subscription (Riveo Hospitality Ltd – Rs1.1 billion, Long Beach Resort Ltd – Rs2 billion and Casela Limited – Rs140 million), and
- (c) Rs1.8 billion as equity investments (EastCoast Hotel Investment Ltd).

I am also informed, Madam Speaker, that out of the Rs3.2 billion bond subscription, Rs1.24 billion have been fully redeemed.

As regards Parliamentary Question B/15, I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that the MIC had invested Rs57.8 billion in various investment instruments. These include Rs27.7 billion in equity investments, Rs22 billion in bond subscription, Rs7.8 billion in the acquisition of land and Rs300 million in private equity funds.

Following the decision taken by the new Management of the Bank of Mauritius to cease new funding commitments and review MIC's strategic orientation, the MIC has initiated a disinvestment strategy.

As part of this strategy, the MIC has engaged with bond issuers to explore the possibility of early redemption of outstanding bonds, with a view to recouping and safeguarding its investments. The House may also note that a number of companies have voluntarily approached the MIC to proceed with early redemption of their bonds.

According to the Bank of Mauritius, as at date, 19 companies have already redeemed their bonds for a total amount of Rs6.7 billion. There is thus an outstanding balance of Rs15.2 billion, out of which, Rs135 million will be redeemed by two companies during this year.

I am further informed that the MIC has already communicated to the companies that no extension will be granted upon maturity and that the bonds will be redeemed as scheduled.

I am tabling the list of entities that have benefited from investment from the MIC.

Madam Speaker, from the list of companies that still owes the MIC, the total sum owed by BSP School of Accountancy & Management Ltd, Kuros Construction Solutions Ltd, Dhyanavartam Ltd and Star Knitwear Group Ltd amounts to around Rs2.36 billion. We still do not know when these funds will be refunded. The more so that some companies like Star Knitwear Group Ltd and BSP School of Accountancy & Management Ltd have already gone into receiverships.

This speaks volumes of the management of public funds of the previous government.

Madam Speaker: Is that okay? Hon. Dr. Ms Daureeawo, do you have a supplementary? No. The Prime Minister's answer was alright? Okay.

MIDDLE EAST TENSIONS – MAURITIAN ECONOMY – IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(No. B/9) 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 Mauritian economy, he will state the assessed impact thereon of the ongoing international conflict in the Middle East, indicating –

- (a) the measures contemplated by Government to address the rising cost of living, particularly, the increase in food prices and basic commodities, and
- (b) whether targeted relief mechanisms are being considered for the benefit of low-income households.

(Vide Reply to PNQ)

Madam Speaker: Let me try a last question. B/10, Mr Beejan!

MR N.K. – ALLEGED DRUG-RELATED CASE – INQUIRY

(No. B/10) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre D'or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the alleged drug-related case against one Mr. N.K., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand in relation to the inquiry initiated thereinto.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, based on intelligence obtained on 09 March 2017, a joint operation was carried out at the Mauritius Container Terminal by the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU) and Anti-Narcotics Section of the Mauritius Revenue Authority. Following a search, 118 packets of drugs suspected to be heroin weighing around 119.6 kgs worth approximately Rs1.8 billion were found inside six sand blasting metal cylinders. The drug consignment had arrived onboard the vessel MSC IVANA from South Africa on 04 March 2017.

I am also informed that Police had carried out an enquiry and eight suspects were arrested from March to May 2017, and one of them was Mr N.K. They were provisionally

charged with the offence of Drug Dealing with Aggravating Circumstances to wit: Causing heroin to be imported with an averment of trafficking and/or Money Laundering.

I am further informed that the investigation into the particular case is complex as it involves international ramifications. Police had sought mutual legal assistance from South Africa and the United Kingdom to obtain documentary evidence. The evidence was obtained from South Africa and the United Kingdom in August of 2021 and February 2022, respectively.

I am also informed that, upon completion of the investigation into the case involving Mr N.K. and four other persons, on 25 August 2023, the then Commissioner of Police had submitted the case file to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice. On 11 April 2024, the case was lodged before the Court of Assizes and Mr N.K. is being prosecuted for the following offences –

- (i) Drug Dealing with Aggravating Circumstances Organising the importation of dangerous drug (heroin) with an averment of trafficking, and
- (ii) conspiracy to do an act which is unlawful to wit: to procure the importation of heroin.

On 26 June 2024, the case was called for Mention for the first time and was postponed to 24 November 2025, in other words, postponed for more than one year. The case has now been fixed for trial, believe it or not, on 17 May 2027 before the Court of Assizes.

Since 15 April, Mr N.K. is detained in police custody.

Madam Speaker, two accused, namely Mr F.T.R. and Mrs C.B., had been prosecuted before the Intermediate Court and had been convicted to 3 years' penal servitude for money laundering on 29 November 2018 and 17 January 2020.

One accused, namely Mr O.R. is being prosecuted for Money Laundering before the Intermediate Court.

As regards the remaining accused persons, I am informed that advice has been sought from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions on 25 August 2023 and 02 December 2025, and the advice has not been tendered yet.

I am also informed that police is still looking for one suspect, Mr H.K.R., involved in that case. That person was brought in for inquiry purposes prior to the arrest of Mr N.K.

However, Mr H.K.R. was allowed to go back for lack of evidence. He was subsequently reported missing.

The case of Mr N.K. has been dragging on for far too long, Madam Speaker. Irrespective of their complexity, cases have to be determined in a timely manner. Therefore, we will be introducing appropriate piece of legislation for trials to be determined within a reasonable time. This has been criticised by Lord Mackay in the past. But still, we have the same situation.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Mr Beejan! One question!

Mr Beejan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Prime Minister kindly find out with MRA Customs on whether, key members of the MRA Narcotics Department, who made the seizure of the drug in the gas cylinders, were transferred to other units within one month of seizure? Thank you.

The Prime Minister: In fact, I can answer, because I did press conference on that. They were transferred. It was the famous guy who brought the packets: Dewdane. And Mr Jagai was then transferred immediately. We did a press conference on that.

Madam Speaker: Okay! Mr Quirin, please, your question! That's the last question.

(Interruptions)

INTERNATIONAL CASINO EXHIBITION 2026 – MAURITIAN DELEGATION – COST & *PER DIEM* ALLOWANCES

(No. B/11) 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 International Casino Exhibition in Barcelona held in January 2026, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to the –

- (a) names of the officers who attended same, indicating in each case, the cost incurred in terms of air tickets and *per diem* allowances, and
- (b) benefit for Mauritius of the said participation.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Gambling Regulatory Authority that the 2026 International Casino Exhibition, widely known as ICE, was held from 19 to 21 January 2026, in Barcelona, Spain.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Gambling Regulatory Authority that its Board, at its 4th meeting held on 13 November 2025, approved the participation of a delegation of four persons to attend the Exhibition.

The participants were –

- (i) Mrs Ringadoo;
- (ii) Mrs Maudarbaccus;
- (iii) Mr Arjoon Niranjana, and
- (iv) Mrs Choytah Darshinee.

The cost of air tickets for Mrs Darshinee amounted to Rs60,400, while for the other three participants, the cost was Rs53,800 for each. The *per diem* of Rs78,003.95 was paid to each participant. The total expenditure for the mission therefore amounted to Rs533,916.

Concerning part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Gambling Regulatory Authority that the 2026 ICE provided a unique opportunity for Mauritius to learn from its peers, the best practices pertaining to the following, amongst others –

- (i) combatting money laundering, illegal betting, fraud and cyber security threats;
- (ii) responsible gambling and consumer protection;
- (iii) regulatory technologies, and
- (iv) adoption of artificial intelligence in relation to monitoring of remote sports betting and gambling operators.

As regards the outcome of the participation, ICE is helping the GRA to –

- (i) review its regulatory and operational framework to align same with international best practices;
- (ii) adopt new regulatory technologies for the regulation of online gambling, and

- (iii) enhance investigative capacities to better detect fraudulent activities and conduct investigations.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, alright? One question.

Mr Quirin: Une question supplémentaire ! L'honorable Premier ministre peut-il dire à la Chambre, vu le contexte actuel d'austérité, ne pense-t-il pas que le déplacement d'une telle délégation est totalement injustifié à un moment où, nous le savons tous, les difficultés économiques et financières dont fait face le pays ?

The Prime Minister: This did not come out of the government fund as such. It was from the fund of the GRA itself. They have provided their own funds.

Madam Speaker: Okay! Time is up!

I am suspending the Sitting for one and a half hour.

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

On resuming at 2.36 p.m., with Madam Speaker on the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Please be seated.

The Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/12, B/13, B/17, B/18, B/19, and B/23.

I should have said that earlier. I am sorry.

Now, we have questions to hon. Ministers.

MIDDLE-EAST CONFLICT – MAURITIANS' SAFETY – DIPLOMATIC MEASURES BY GOVERNMENT

(No. B/26) Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, he will state the –

- (a) diplomatic measures being taken by Government to ensure the safety of Mauritian citizens and of the Mauritian diaspora thereat, and
- (b) efforts being made by Government towards de-escalation or cessation of hostilities and for the promotion of dialogue and diplomacy for peace and democracy thereat.

(Vide Reply to PNQ)

Mr A. Duval: It would be mine, Madam Speaker. B/27.

**MAURITIUS TOURISM AUTHORITY – MR J.A, PART-TIME CHAIRMAN –
DISMISSAL, REINTERGRATION & SUSPENSION**

(No. B/27) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to Mr. J.A., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Tourism Authority (MTA), information as to the reasons/grounds of his dismissal and subsequent re-integration and suspension as chairperson of the MTA, indicating whether any enquiry has been initiated into his conduct during his tenure of office thereat and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

Mr R. Duval: Madam Speaker, Mr J.A. was appointment as part-time Chairman of the Tourism Authority Board on 08 January 2025 under Section 4(2) (a) of the Tourism Authority Act.

Since his appointment, Mr J.A. has been subject to various complaints, both in writing and verbal from the staff of the tourism authority. These complaints relate essentially to his excessive behaviour, use of foul and derogatory language, lack of respect, giving them instructions when he is not authorised to do as a part-time Chairperson, compelling them to do things against their will, shouting at them and persecuting them.

It is worth noting, Madam Speaker, that as per section 14(2) of the Tourism Authority Act, all employees of the authority fall under the administrative control of the Director, and the part-time Chairman. Mr J.A. therefore, had no authority to give employees any directives.

The House may also wish to note that Mr J.A. has been reported by the former Director of the Tourism Authority and even the current one who has been in office for less than one month. Both complained that they were not able to work properly in view of the attitude of the part-time Chairperson.

In short, Madam Speaker, Mr J.A. was acting beyond his power of part-time Chairperson. He was behaving like a brute, exactly like the *bitort* which the hon. Deputy Prime Minister mentioned in his press conference. He even abused his position to have access to CCTV cameras and vehicle GPS tracking system on his laptop.

Madam Speaker, in November last, Mr J.A. picked a serious fight with the former Director; a matter which he himself reported to the ministry. The ministry initiated an enquiry

thereon. However, when called at the ministry for his version, Mr J.A. refused to come on ground that he was travelling. The enquiry could therefore not be finalised.

Following the resignation of the former Director in early January this year, Mr J.A took total control of the Tourism Authority and I am informed that he carried out major reshuffle at the Tourism Authority without consulting the board.

On 12 February 2026, one lady officer of the Tourism Authority reported the part-time Chairperson, in a precautionary measure, to the Line Barracks police station, OB number 1278/226. I wish to point out, Madam Speaker, that this is not the only complaint of misbehaviour, harassment at the Tourism Authority reported to my Ministry and the labour office.

I wish to mention the case of another lady who reported having been verbally abused by the part-time Chairperson using unacceptable language which I don't want to quote. She reported the case to the labour office and her union. Mr J.A. was fully aware of all these complaints as his explanation has also been sought by the Ministry.

In addition, Madam Speaker, Mr J.A. had forced his way to chair the Licensing Committee which examines and grants licenses to pleasure crafts, tourism activities, guest houses, restaurants and hotels. Although this is not in line with the code of good governance, he held that key committee *pratiqement en otage*. Meetings were being scheduled as per his convenience after long intervals despite the applications accumulating. Many members present here, in the House, have called my Ministry to complain of the excessive delay in determination of applications.

Since the situation the Tourism Authority was deteriorating, I had no choice than to end the appointment of the part-time Chairperson of the Tourism Authority in line with the section 4(3) of the Tourism Authority Act and section 28(1)(c) of the Interpretation and General Clauses Act. Same was communicated to him by way of a letter on 27 February 2026.

However, I understand that following intense lobbying from his part, instruction was received at my Ministry on Thursday 05 March 2026 for his letter of termination to be recalled. I wish to point out that I was out of the country at the time and came back only on Saturday 07 March 2026.

Madam Speaker, I later took cognizance of this matter, and it was further discussed at the Cabinet meeting held on 06 March 2026. It was decided that Mr J.A. be suspended with

immediate effect, and that an enquiry be carried out to look into the various allegations of malpractices made against him.

My Ministry is in consultation with the Attorney General's Office for the setting up of an enquiry. The House will agree that it will be not in order for me to delve into the matter further given an inquiry is being contemplated.

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, may I? If you will allow me three supplementaries.

Madam Speaker: I will try.

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Very brief ones. The first one, Madam Speaker, being this non-executive director, according to law, does not have the protection as an employee, the question is: why was it decided to suspend him after having dismissed him, and to conduct an inquiry?

In fact, as early as October 2025, there had been at least two previous complaints against this person for verbal abuse, but also for acting in abuse of his authority as a non-executive director; giving directive and orders to staff; having a day-to-day office; having a secretary, and all sorts of other privileges which he was not entitled to.

Mr R. Duval: Madame la présidente, je pense que j'étais très explicite dans ma réponse initiale.

Néanmoins, Madam Speaker, there are not only some complaints. There are several. As at date, there are several employees who had already lodged a complaint either at the Ministry of Labour, at the police, or at my Ministry. I confirm that he was abusing his authority and even had access to CCTV footage. Yes, he did act like a *bitor*, Madam Speaker. As a responsible Minister, I acted in the interests, I must say, of the employees and revoked Mr J.A. as Chairperson.

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker!

Madam Speaker: Yes, you asked for two.

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, is the hon. Minister aware that on the 5th, he was recalled – and this is a very serious matter –; on Friday 06, this non-executive chairman calls at the office at seven, had his own key, and in his office, a shredder.

Madam Speaker: Do not! You are always making statements!

Mr A. Duval: Is he aware? It is a question that he had...

Madam Speaker: Is he aware of that?

Mr A. Duval: That he had his own key and a shredder and that on Friday 06, he was given unsupervised access to the Tourism Authority, and he has done God knows what, for I do not know how long! On the eve, he had been revoked, and there was an inquiry that would be instituted a few hours later. Is he aware that he had his key and access to a shredder in his office and was left unsupervised on 06 March?

Mr R. Duval: Of course, Madam Speaker, I am aware! I was fully aware. Yes, I confirm that Mr J.A. refused to hand over his keys and other Tourism Authority property.

Needful is being done to recover the property of the Tourism Authority. But I must say on the other side, Madam Speaker, that my Ministry in consultation with the Attorney General's Office in setting up an enquiry. The enquiry will be done.

Madam Speaker: Yes, we have to wait.

Mr R. Duval: We will have to wait.

Madam Speaker: Yes, wait for the enquiry. Yes!

Ms Savabaddy: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Minister inform the House why he was maintained at his position despite all those numerous accusations? Thank you.

Mr R. Duval: We knew about it, but he never came to the office when we called him. I talked to him several times on the phone and he was always outside the country. He was not even listening to the Minister. So, for my part, I do not want to sub judice the matter, given that an enquiry is being contemplated. Let us wait for the enquiry and then we see.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr A. Duval: One last question.

Madam Speaker: Yes, there is a question there. It was asked before.

Mr Ramkalawon: Can I ask the hon. Minister if the day Mr J.A. came back to office, after his reintegration, was he involved in an incident? If yes, what was the nature of that incident? Thank you.

Madam Speaker: On the day that he came back.

Mr R. Duval: Yes, indeed, Madam Speaker, I am informed that there was an incident on Friday 06 March 2026. Mr J.A. came on the premises of the Tourism Authority and yelled

at the director and other employees. The part-time Chairperson even aliterated some unpleasant words. The issue was on his insistence to his access to images of CCTV camera of the organisation, which I have in my possession. And this is the key to everything!

Madam Speaker: Which you are not giving us for the moment.

An hon. Member: Not yet, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Maybe you will give it to those who will enquire, I suppose.

Mr R. Duval: Exactly.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Mr A. Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, given the influence of the super non-executive chairman he has wielded in the past, in view of the numerous complaints that had been made against him and the fact that no action had been taken prior, is he satisfied with how senior members of Government have come to whitewash those complaints in the news even before an investigation provides its findings, and even commenting on what he believed to be the accusations and its seriousness?

Is the hon. Minister satisfied given that these are employees falling under an authority, under his responsibility, that due process has been followed in this matter?

Mr R. Duval: I already took decisions that had to be taken, *Madame la présidente*. But what I want to say is I cannot be judge and party even before having the findings of the enquiry.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr R. Duval: I cannot be.

Madam Speaker: I think we have gone quite thoroughly in this issue. May I ask the next question, please!

MV WAKASHIO SHIPWRECK – VICTIMS COMPENSATION

(No. B/28) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the MV Wakashio shipwreck, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand regarding the payment of compensation to all the victims thereof, indicating the next step in case Government did not accept the compensation proposed by the International court.

Dr. Boolell: Madam Speaker, the House will recall the previous government was never in favour of making public the report of the Court of Investigation into the grounding of MV Wakashio. The MSM-led regime was indifferent and insensitive to the appeal from the public and hon. Members of the Opposition. I place on record that this Government took a bold decision, and on 02 October 2025, the report was made public.

Indeed, a major milestone in our bid to making freedom of information a reality and upholding transparency in Government endeavours. Since the grounding of the MV Wakashio on 25 July 2020 and to date, Madam Speaker, there has been a total of 6,309 claims amounting to approximately Rs2.3 billion, which have been transmitted to Japan P&I Club, the insurer of MV Wakashio for reimbursement.

However, as I had previously mentioned in my reply to PQ B/989 at the Sitting of 11 November 2025, whereby I tabled the total amount of compensation which is around Rs200 million that was paid to the victims over the period 2021-2022 by the insurer of MV Wakashio. It was indeed a huge letdown as only Rs200 million out of the Rs2.3 billion was paid to the victims.

On 25 October 2021, the ship owner Okiyo Maritime Corporation entered a case before the Supreme Court applying for limitation fund to be set up limiting the value of compensation to be paid to the tune of approximately Rs720 million.

I am also informed that since this case was lodged, the insurer had seized payment of compensation to the victims.

The last payment of compensation made by the insurer was in April 2022. On 23 February 2026, the Supreme Court delivered a judgement authorising Okiyo Maritime Corporation to set up a limitation fund for the payment of claims not related to oil pollution damaged by way of bank guaranteed.

I have been informed by the hon. Attorney General's Office that Okiyo Maritime Corporation has now lodged an appeal against the judgement of the Supreme Court before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The case will probably be heard before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council by the middle of next year.

I am made to understand that my good friend, hon. Member, in his question, that I am sure that he was referring to the Supreme Court Judgement and not as an international court as there has been no compensation proposed by the international court regarding this case.

I am further informed by the Attorney General's Office, Madam Speaker that following the Supreme Court Judgement, the State of Mauritius will now enter a case against the owner and related parties to seek damages for the oil pollution damage following the grounding of the MV Wakashio and the ensuing oil spill.

It is in this very perspective but my Ministry, in consultation with the Attorney General's Office, is working on a *mise en demeure* against Okiyo Maritime Corporation for oil pollution damage.

This Government believes in the principles of the rule of law and it is committed to ensure that justice is done to the people of Mauritius especially those who have directly suffered due to the impact of the shipwreck and oil spill.

As a responsible government, we will stand guided by the decision of the court but I wish to reiterate that Government will ensure that compensation due are paid to victims.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Seeburn: Yes, Madam Speaker, being given that a figure has been earmarked for compensation, is the hon. Minister in a position to see whether there is a possibility to negotiate for an interim payment in the meantime so as to reduce the amount of prejudice being caused to the victims of the MV Wakashio?

Dr. Boolell: My hon. Friend can rest assured that in regard to the legal issue, the matter is being dealt with by our friends from Attorney General's Office.

Madam Speaker: Okay, your next question has already been replied. Right?

MIDDLE EAST TENSIONS – GLOBAL PETROLEUM MARKETS – IMPACTS & RISK MITIGATION

(No. B/29) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the impact of rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East on global petroleum markets, he will state, whether an assessment of the potential repercussions thereof on the local market has been carried out, indicating the measures being envisaged to ensure adequate supply of petroleum products, and whether consideration is being given to entering into supply arrangements at fixed or preferential prices with suppliers to mitigate the risks associated with further increases in global petroleum prices.

(Vide Reply to PNQ)

Madam Speaker: Now, we have the hon. Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière.

**KREOL MORISIEN – NCE & SC EXAMINATION – REGISTERED &
RECRUITED TEACHERS**

(No. B/30) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the Kreol Morisien, he will state –

- (a) the number of secondary schools currently offering same as a subject from Grade 7 onwards, indicating the number of teachers thereof currently registered;
- (b) whether there are institutions where students sat for the Grade 9 National Certificate of Education Examinations or the Cambridge School Certificate Examination without having a designated educator therefor, and
- (c) whether the Ministry has recently recruited educators to teach same in secondary schools and, if not, whether it intends to do so.

Dr. Gungapersad: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that currently 75 secondary schools are offering Kreol Morisien (KM) as a subject from Grade 7 onwards.

Out of the 75 colleges, 26 are State Secondary Schools while 49 Private Secondary Schools. Presently, 28 KM educators are posted in in the State Secondary Schools, while 101 KM educators operating in the Private Secondary Schools are registered with the Private Secondary Education Authority.

Madam Speaker, as regard part (b) of the question, I am informed that KM educators are posted in every state college wherein KM is offered as a subject.

Private Secondary Schools offering KM also provide KM educators to students opting for the subject.

Notwithstanding the above, I am informed that two students from one SSS, a college not offering KM as a subject sat for KM examinations for National Certificate of Education examinations. There is no report of any case whereby students have sat for School Certificate Examinations in KM without having a designated educator thereof.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that an exercise was recently carried out for the recruitment of supply teachers including KM supply teachers during this financial year for State Colleges.

Seven KM educators have also been recently recruited in Private Secondary Schools. In view of the upcoming budgetary exercise, my Ministry will submit its proposal to the Ministry of Finance for the recruitment of secondary educators which will include additional KM educators in view of the increasing number of students opting for the subject.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes!

Mr Quirin: Merci, Madame la présidente. L'honorable ministre peut-il dire à la Chambre si son ministère dispose d'un département dédié au Créole mauricien afin de traiter toutes les questions relatives à l'enseignement et au développement du Créole mauricien dans les écoles primaires et secondaires et si ce n'est pas le cas, peut-il nous donner les raisons ?

Dr. Gungapersad: Madam Speaker, for the time being there is no dedicated department handling this and because it is rather new. This Government in 2025, introduced KM as a subsidiary subject in HSC and as from this year it is a main subject in HSC.

Definitely, if need arises this department will be created as suggested by the hon. Member.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, rapidement. Étant donné qu'aucune démarche, comme vient de le confirmer l'honorable Ministre lui-même, de ce type n'a été entreprise depuis l'introduction du Créole mauricien en 2012. Il faut bien le préciser, l'honorable ministre, malgré qu'il l'a dit, je lui demande à nouveau, est-ce qu'il peut donner l'assurance à la Chambre que son ministère accordera l'attention nécessaire au Créole mauricien, la langue des mauriciens, en mettant en place un département spécifiquement dédié à cette matière ?

Dr. Gungapersad: Madam Speaker, again I will answer the hon. Member, if need arises within Ministry in order to create such a department, it would be done by affirmative.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Hon. Beechook!

Mr Beechook: Yes, *Madame la présidente*. Will the hon. Minister confirm whether students are made to choose either KM or Oriental languages, currently?

Dr. Gungapersad: It is an optional subject, all right! It is an optional subject; they are proposed a series of subjects and out of these subjects, they have to choose. Yes, it is an optional subject.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Beechook: Therefore, will the hon. Minister consider the possibility to make it possible for Mauritian students to do both KM and Oriental languages, so that we do not have to choose one language either KM or an Oriental language?

Dr. Gungapersad: Madam Speaker, in practical terms, this has to be studied whether, as suggested by the hon. Member, this can be proposed or not because it has technicalities involved in it because we are talking about timetabling, we are talking about teacher availability. It has a lot of implications. So, this has to be studied before a direct answer can be provided to the hon. Member.

Madam Speaker: Very interesting, very interesting! Next question please! Yes, hon. Rookny!

GLOBAL BUSINESS COMPANIES – APPLICATIONS FOR LICENCES – DELAYS & PROGRESS REPORT

(No. B/31) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning whether, in regard to measures undertaken to address the issue of delays in the processing of applications for the issue of licences for Global Business Companies, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Services Commission, information as to the progress achieved in relation thereto as at to date.

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for the question. Madam Speaker, in my reply to the PQ B/1146 in December 2025, I informed the House that there were 120 outstanding applications in respect of Global Business Companies as at 15 November 2025 with the oldest application dating back to April 2023, that is, some two and a half years pending.

I am informed that out of these cases, 76 applications had been completed, 10 were withdrawn and one was returned to the applicant as at 28 February 2026 while 33 applications were still pending with oldest application dating back to 25 November 2024.

Madam Speaker, since 15 November 2025 till 28 February 2026, I am informed that the Commission has received 713 new GBC applications and as at the end of February,

there were still 102 pending applications which include the 33 applications mentioned earlier.

Madam Speaker, I am tabling a breakdown of the status of the applications for the Global Business companies received by the Commission as at 28 February 2026.

Madam Speaker, the House was also informed that due consideration would be given to the setting up of a complaints desk at the Commission and to this regard, I am informed that an online complaints platform, namely the FSC Mauritius Online Complaints Portal which also caters for complaints regarding a regulated entity holding a GBC licence from the FSC, was launched yesterday.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to add that the Financial Services Consultative Council which meets regularly under my chairmanship since October 2025, monitors the implementation of the recommendations of the Financial Services Strategy Report, rethinking the future of the Financial Services Sector 2025-2030. The FSCC has a dedicated sub-committee to look into the ease of doing business of the financial services sector. This sub-committee meets under the chairmanship of the Chief Executive of the FSC and is closely monitoring the time taken to process applications at the FSC and look into ways and means to activate matters, so that applications are processed in a reasonable time period.

Madam Speaker, I would further like to highlight that as part of the Budget 2025-2026, my Ministry has set very clear performance indicators for the Commission through a performance agreement. These performance indicators are as follows –

- (i) a maximum turnaround time for application of 10 days;
- (ii) that 85% of applications shall be processed within a maximum of 15 calendar days, and
- (iii) that applications exceeding 30 calendar days shall represent only 5% of total applications.

And in order to meet these objectives, Madam Speaker, I am informed that the Commission has initiated several actions to reduce the turnaround time for the processing of licences, including GBCs –

- (a) The Known to Commission system which was gazetted on 17 December 2025 and is effective as from 5 January 2026. This system enables the FSC to

streamline the process for those companies which already hold a licence from the FSC.

- (b) The application for Change in Directorship and Shareholders of a Licensee of the FSC will become fully digital by the end of March 2026.
- (c) The Investment Dealer application has been restructured with improved templates which are more user-friendly.

Furthermore, I am also informed that the Commission is integrating the use of Artificial Intelligence Agents across all applications to streamline the process for all licencing categories.

These new initiatives, Madam Speaker, are meant to ensure quicker turnaround time for processing of licences. And in conclusion, let me add that the improvements have been noted in processing time, targets have not yet been met but I am informed that the Commission is continuing to work on improving the ease of doing business. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Yes, Mr Rookny?

Mr Rookny: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Could the Minister please advise if there is any mechanism that exists to collect feedback from management companies and other licensees with regard to their experience in delays and time taken for considering their applications?

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Madam Speaker, I have been urging the CEO of FSC and also through the FSCC to make sure that there is a feedback loop with GBC companies and management companies in general, to make sure that the voice of the industry is heard with regard to those complaints. The complaints portal is one of them but I have also asked them to make sure that they are continuously listening to the voice of the industry. In fact, they have set up a forum called ‘Industry Meet’, which is meeting regularly where all the stakeholders meet with CEO and the management of FSC to listen to the industry.

Madam Speaker: Alright, hon. Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes!

CLUB MED ALBION – PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLE (TAXI) LICENSE

(No. B/32) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to Club Med Albion, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to whether

Public Service Vehicle (Taxi) License will be issued for operation thereat and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Madam Speaker, Club Méditerranée, also known as Club Med, is a five-star rated hotel located at Albion and comprises 295 rooms and 40 villas. The hotel operates at an average occupancy rate of around 100% during peak seasons and approximately 50% off-peak periods. I am informed by the National Land Transport Authority that presently, no taxi is licensed to operate from the hotel. However, 24 taxis from the surrounding localities have been operating from the hotel premises since 01 July 2007 to cater for the transport needs of guests.

Now, Madam Speaker, I am also informed by the NLTA that on 26 September 2007, the then National Transport Authority (NTA) – it was then called NTA – decided to grant 20 taxi licences on transfer to operate from Club Méditerranée Albion and the communiqué was issued on 06 October 2007 to invite applications. However, licencing exercise was not brought to conclusion due to representations from the General Taxi Owners Union and a case lodged at the Supreme Court by six taxi owners.

Madam Speaker, following a survey carried out in year 2022 and based on the policy criterion of one taxi for every ten rooms, 33 taxis may be licenced to operate from the hotel. It is my understanding that on 07 April 2023, new applications were invited through the press to grant taxi licences to operate from the hotel and 55 applications were received. However, this exercise was not concluded in view of the serious flaws identified in the exercise. After the general election of 2024, the new management of the NLTA promptly cancelled the exercise.

Madam Speaker, the NLTA has advised by the end of April 2026 – in one and a half months' time or so – applications will be invited on transfer from holders of taxi licences within a radius of 6 kilometres to provide taxi services at Club Med, Albion. Taxi operators who have been providing services at the hotel during the last three years will also be eligible to apply. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes, of course.

Ms Anquetil: *Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. Je remercie le ministre pour sa réponse.* Can the Minister inform the House of the expected timeframe for the allocation of these taxi licenses? Thank you.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Well, by the end of April 2026 like I mentioned, the Expression of Interest will be floated. Now, I hope there is no *macadam*, because sometimes if people protest again it, it can be complicated like the case was in 2007. So, I think within this year it should be resolved.

Ms Anquetil: Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Oui, M. Beehook ?

Mr Beehook: *Oui, Madame.* My question is not directly related to Club Med but to hotels and public service licenses. Will the hon. Minister request the NLTA to please enquire into those hotels which are no more requesting taxi licenses and instead, are outsourcing the business of transport to contractors, which to my knowledge, is illegal?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for this question. I am aware of such practice and mind you, my officers have been going down for crackdown operation and some well-known hotels, *des noms ronflants* have been taken to task.

Dr. Aumeer: Give us the names of the *noms ronflants* please!

Madam Speaker: *Ils ne sont pas des gentils organisateurs !* Okay, Ms Anquetil, you are okay? Okay, Mr Beehook, yes?

SALAZIE, PONT BON DIEU & LA NICOLIERE – TELECOMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT – INSTALLATION MEASURES

(No. B/33) Mr R. Beehook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to internet connection, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the mobile network operators in Mauritius, information as to whether measures have been taken for the installation of telecommunication equipment to ensure coverage in Salazie, Pont Bon Dieu, and La Nicolière.

Dr. Ramtohul: I thank the hon. Member for this question, Madam Speaker.

The House will recall that on 28 February 2025, I made a statement regarding the mobile network problem at Pont Bon Dieu along Salazie route.

I informed on three points –

- (i) that Mauritius Telecom had identified three locations for new mobile sites, namely Crimson Hall near Salazie Farm, and near Eau Bouillie Bus Terminal;

- (ii) that Mauritius Telecom was in consultation with the owner of Crimson Hall and a feasibility study is underway. The works at this site were expected to be completed by end of May 2025, and
- (iii) that Mauritius Telecom was looking for a plot of land for the setting up of a new tower at the sites near Salazie Farm and Eau Bouillie. Subject to the obtention of an appropriate plot of land and a Building and Land Use Permit, the new towers would be installed by December 2025 and May 2026, respectively.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that the antenna support to be installed at Crimson Hall is already operational since October 2025. With regard to the sites identified at Salazie Farm and Eau Bouillie Bus Terminal, I am further informed that Mauritius Telecom is still liaising with the Ministry of Agro-Industry for release of the land. This is in process.

As for Emtel Ltd, it has indicated that once Mauritius Telecom secures a site and becomes operational, it would make a request for co-location at that site.

The third operator, MTML (Mahanagar Telephone Mauritius Limited) informed that tests were conducted at the Salazie-Pont Bon Dieu region, but anticipated coverage improvement was not achieved primarily due to dense vegetation. Further testing is being carried, and if road coverage target would still not be achieved, the option of co-locating will also be considered by this operator. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes!

Mr Seeburn: Madam Speaker, being given that it is also a matter of concern for the people of the eastern region of the country having the same issue, will the hon. Minister be able to confirm as to whether the same facilities have been identified in those areas as well?

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister!

Dr. Ramtohul: This is a problem that is persistent in several regions of the country. I can also name the south-east coast where at one point in time, there is no connection at all. Now, the ICTA has taken note of this issue. This is why the ICTA is releasing, in a few weeks' time, an app called nPerf, which will be used to officially send out, by members of the public, information on the network level. This will be taken by the authority to the operators for them to ensure that they provide adequate coverage.

Madam Speaker: Great! Okay, hon. Beehook!

Mr Beehook: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. Minister for the antenna at Crimson Hall. However, as a matter of policy, will the hon. Minister consider the possibility of urging those telecom providers to provide service because there are too many dead zones? Many of them, like Mare aux Vacoas, Mare Longue, Grand Bassin, Gorges, are regions which are high tourists' regions. Unfortunately, it is a shame for Mauritius that there is no network coverage done by companies who earn millions of profits in a service which, to my standards, is to be considered as an essential service.

Madam Speaker: Nowadays! Yes!

Dr. Ramtohol: Thank you, hon. Beehook. There is an economic reality that the companies are also facing. However, there is a minimum coverage that should be provided for tourists, I agree, but also for Mauritians as well. There are some areas where, should a car breakdown and the driver be alone at night, it could cause danger to their life.

Therefore, the ICTA has the responsibility to ensure with the operators that there is a minimum coverage. I will convey that message to the Board of the ICTA. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Juman, your question has been replied already. So, we have finished with that.

GAS OIL, MOGAS, JET FUEL & LPG – STOCK LEVELS, SUPPLY DISRUPTIONS & PREVENTIVE MEASURES

(No. B/34) Mr E. Juman (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to Gas Oil, Mogas, Jet Fuel and Liquefied Petroleum Gas, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to –

- (a) the current national stock levels thereof in Mauritius, indicating the respective quantities thereof expected to arrive in the next consignments and expected arrival dates;
- (b) whether an assessment of potential supply disruptions has been carried out, and
- (c) measures being envisaged to ensure no shortage thereof locally in case of prolonged disruption of the shipping routes.

(Vide Reply to PNQ)

Madam Speaker: Now, I call hon. Second Member for Savanne and Black River!

**LE MORNE-CASE NOYALE MAIN ROAD – ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE
FACILITIES**

(No. B/35) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the main road from Le Morne to Case Noyale, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, information as to whether –

- (a) consideration will be given for –
 - (i) the provision of cat's eyes along same, and
 - (ii) a complete evaluation of the lighting and for the provision of markings along same and other roads thereat and in the vicinity thereof, and
- (b) it is in presence of requests from local inhabitants for the installation of speed breakers thereat.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Madam Speaker, I informed by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of my Ministry that the main from Le Morne to Case Noyale goes through stretches of inhabited areas, like the villages of Case Noyale, La Gaulette, Coteau Raffin and Le Morne Village, and several long stretches of uninhabited areas.

In the inhabited areas, facilities such as street lighting, pedestrian crossings, footpaths and bus stops are provided. However, along the uninhabited stretches, which mainly consist of forested areas, such facilities are limited because of resources.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) (i) of the question, I am informed that cat's eyes are available in areas where there are limited or no street lights. In sections of the road that are properly lit, cat's eyes are not installed. Nevertheless, consideration will be given to the installation of additional cat's eyes, where required, so as to improve the conspicuity of the road, particularly at night.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) (ii) of the question, street lights fall under the responsibility of the highway authority, that is, the Road Development Authority for classified roads and the local authorities for unclassified roads. It has been observed that

street lights are available along the inhabited areas of the roads. However, in these areas, solar street lights have been installed only at localised stretches at Le Morne junction. Road markings are present along the entire stretch of the road.

However, at several locations, the road markings have faded and will need to be repainted. The maintenance of road markings along Black River-Savanne Coastal Road B9 falls under the responsibility of the Road Development Authority, that is, under my colleague, hon. Ajay Gunness.

Madam Speaker, in reply to part (b) of the question, I am informed that requests have been received from residents regarding the provision of road humps in the villages of Coteau Raffin and Case Noyale, and actions have already been taken in this regard.

Lastly, at Coteau Raffin, a raised pedestrian crossing has been implemented near the Cashmere Polo Club. In the village of Case Noyale, a road hump already exists along the Black River-Savanne Coastal Road B9, near the church. Additionally, with a view to deter speeding and enhance road safety in the region, two raised pedestrian crossings have recently been placed along the Chamarel-Case Noyale Road B104. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Now, we have the hon. Third Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central!

UMRAH PILGRIMAGE – LICENSED & REGISTERED OPERATORS

(No. B/36) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Umrah Pilgrimage, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Islamic Cultural Centre, the list of the duly licensed and registered operators therewith therefor.

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I shall answer this question in my capacity as Minister responsible for Hajj.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr Mohamed: So, as it stands, the Islamic Cultural Centre does not issue licences or keep a register of operators for Umrah Pilgrimage. However, there have been several meetings that have been organised ever since last year, which is an inter-ministerial meeting,

and it has for objective of revamping the law that governs the ICC as well as two other pieces of legislation which would concern the *Waqf* and the Muslim Family Council. *En passant*, I can mention it. But there is a whole revamp of the statute pertaining to the Islamic Cultural Centre. This is one of the issues that will be taken on board amongst other issues.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Yes, hon. Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Minister whether is it not high time, considering the number of organisers who organise religious pilgrimage across the country – amongst, we have Umrah – and who have been taking people abroad, who have no regulations and are not answerable to any authority. I, myself, was recently along with a group of 200 Mauritians stranded abroad. We were taken on a “ride”! They were not answerable to all the consequences of the war, the delayed travelling and flights cancellation. Is it not high time to consider the Tourism Authority? Are they taking people on a ‘touristic’ – if I can put it like that – or for pilgrimage/religious? At the end of the day, these people have to be answerable to the people that have placed confidence in them.

Madam Speaker: So, what was your question?

Dr. Aumeer: My question is: whether it is not high time to get the Tourism Authority involved as well to register these people?

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr Mohamed: I have taken note of the observations made by the hon. Member, Madam Speaker. It is true that some people do not like it that you refer to such a pilgrimage as tourism but then some would say it is indeed religious tourism. Now, there is the aspect of hospitality in there since it concerns travel, it concerns hotels, it concerns a trip.

However, those issues deserve our attention and it is precisely the reason why the laws are being revamped and I totally agree with him that there are many people who organise this mini-pilgrimage, the Umrah. Then they organise it in such a way where there is no need for an insurance, there is no need for any payment; there is no need for any insurance cover for any trip that goes bad. There is no need for an insurance for someone who may fall ill at a destination and then have to get medical assistance. So, all those issues are really, *clairement d’actualité*.

In other jurisdictions, there are only organisers who are properly registered and who conform with the need to have a proper insurance for the protection of those who travel that are given the right to organise. So, all this, I can assure the hon. Member and all those listening to me inside here and outside, that all those matters will be taken into consideration in the new law that is being prepared as we speak.

Madam Speaker: I just noted that it does not only concern the Muslim pilgrimage but all sorts of pilgrimage. I understand, so maybe the Attorney-General is listening.

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, this question is specifically with regard to Umrah, so, obviously I am not here pronouncing myself in any way whatsoever with regards to any other voyage of religious nature apart from Umrah. So, I am limiting it to that. Okay?

Madam Speaker: Okay! But you will follow up Dr., I am sure.

Okay, so now we have hon. Lobine, First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix!

CAMP FOUQUEREAUX FOOTBALL GROUND – RIVER PLAINES WILHEMS – STATE – CLEANING & DESILTING EXERCISES

(No. B/37) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the river running adjacent to the Camp Fouquereaux Football Ground, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix, information as to –

- (a) whether an assessment of the state thereof has recently been carried out and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof, and
- (b) when was the cleaning and desilting exercises thereof last carried out to prevent flooding and ensure proper water flow thereof.

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix that the river running adjacent to the Camp Fouquereaux Football Ground is River Plaines Wilhems.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that a site inspection was carried out on 03 December 2025 in the presence of the Local Disaster Management Coordinator, officers of the Public Health and Public Infrastructure Department and Municipal Councillor. During that inspection, the part of the river extending from the Shri Shambhounath Temple to the M2 Motorway covering approximately 600 metres and

including the stretch adjacent to the Camp Fouquereaux Football Ground was thoroughly examined. The river was found to be clean and free flowing and no desilting works were deemed necessary at that time.

Furthermore, the Land Drainage Authority (LDA) has confirmed on 13 March 2026 following the review of the site observation and photographic evidence submitted by the Council that the specific stretch of the river does not require additional desilting works at present and that routine cleaning operations are sufficient to maintain proper water flow.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, the most recent cleaning exercise at that location was carried out by the Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix from 26 to 30 January 2026. This exercise included the removal of vegetation, cutting of grass and shrubs and the clearing of fallen trees and waste, in order to ensure the unobstructed flow of water and prevent any risk of flooding.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed that rivers within the Municipal jurisdiction are maintained on a regular cycle of six to eight weeks and the next cleaning exercise was that stretched in schedule for 16 March 2026 in line with the Council's Maintenance Programme.

As regard desilting works, the last desilting operation for River Plaines Wilhems covering approximately 3.26 kms, including the stretch adjacent to the Camp Fouquereaux Football Ground was carried out between 03 March 2025 and 14 April 2025 in accordance with the technical specification and guidelines of the LDA.

An assessment of rivers within the municipal area was also conducted in December 2025 and January 2026 in preparation for further maintenance work. Financial clearance has already been conveyed to the Municipal Council for desilting operation for the Financial Year 2025-2026 and bids received following the tender exercise which closed on 06 March 2026 are currently under evaluation.

Madam Speaker, I am also informed that the Council has sought the technical advice of the Geotechnical Unit of the Ministry of National Infrastructure as excessive desilting in certain location may potentially lead to erosion or instability of river banks.

The technical site visit is scheduled on 20 March 2026 to determine whether any further engineering intervention may be required. In the meantime, the Municipal Council will continue regular monitoring and routine cleaning of the rivers to ensure free and safe water flow at all times in line with the recommendations of the LDA.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Mr Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Madam Speaker, one supplementary! May I ask the hon. Minister, whether he would consider a site visit, a *constat de visu* with all stakeholders, especially with regards to the river banks? The last time that those river banks were revamped, was when hon. Bhagwan was Minister of Environment in 2000 and the river banks in almost all the rivers within this locality, even at Quinze Cantons is in a very deplorable state. Yes, they do cleaning but the river banks are in a very deplorable state.

If you could arrange for a site visit with all stakeholders, with the Junior Minister, with Minister Assirvaden, you will see *de visu* that this is not the case with regard to the river banks, whether you would consider same?

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, in this regard, I am agreeable to carry out a site visit with all the stakeholders including with the representatives of the Municipal Council, even the Land Drainage Authority, Ministry of Environment, Forestry Division and other concerned stakeholders to assess and in the safety of the communities. So, for the time being, I have a picture which was sent by the Council that the river is clean. So, never mind, we can make a site visit with all the others and ministers also.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: You have a picture but it's only for you. Never mind.

Hon. Third Member for Pamplémousses and Triolet!

FISHERMEN CARDS – APPLICATIONS & ISSUANCE – SWIMMING TESTS

(No. B/38) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplémousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to applications for Fishermen Cards, he will state the number thereof received over the past one year, indicating –

- (a) the number thereof awaiting determination, and
- (b) when the applicants will be called to undertake the required swimming tests.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much. Madam Speaker, I wish to refer the hon. Member to my reply made to PQ B/987 at the Sitting of 11 November 2025 where I had informed the

House that our lagoons have been overexploited and depleted over the years. The previous government had gone against sustainable fisheries by issuing a substantial number of new Fishermen Cards.

Furthermore, at the Sitting of 09 December 2025, I had informed the House that with a view to ascertaining the genuineness of registered fishermen, my Ministry had submitted the list of 2,546 fishermen to the Mauritius Revenue Authority and the Central Business Registration Department. The information submitted by these institutions is being examined by my Ministry.

Furthermore, I am informed that from January to December 2025, a total of 62 applications for fishermen cards have been received at the 14 Fisheries Posts across the island. Another 2 applications have been received between January 2026 to date.

As regards parts (a) and (b) of the question, these 64 applications are not being processed for the time being. A decision will be taken after the verification exercise. Madam Speaker, I reiterate that as a committed and responsible government, we have a duty to protect the traditional fishermen.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Mr Apollon.

Mr Apollon: Thank you, Madam Speaker, just to make an appeal to the hon. Minister not to make the same mistake like the previous government giving cards at the eve of the election.

Can the hon. Minister inform the house if there are any new criteria to maintain better control while delivering these cards?

Dr. Boolell: I am not going to circulate the list of criteria for eligibility but as you know, we are seeing to it that there is full compliance to existing criteria.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Mr Beehook.

Mr Beehook: Madam Speaker, will the hon. Minister conduct a thorough enquiry on the number of fisherman cards that were distributed to undeserving political agents who don't even know how to tie a *l'hameçon* on the eve of the last elections and following that, give due consideration to deserving people who are waiting since long for a fisherman card?

Dr. Boolell: I am not going to say that we are long way to Tipperary but if he had heard me well, I have said that the matter has been referred to MRA and the Central Business

Registration specifically to look into those who should not have been given these fisherman cards.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Mr Rookny.

Mr Rookny: Madam Speaker, it is one thing that the fishermen having fisherman cards are eligible to weather allocations and quite another for genuine fishermen wanting to earn a living going out to fish.

Will it be the case that those people will be precluded from fishing if they don't have fisherman cards?

Dr. Boolell: Are you referring to the appeal which you made to me and the Junior Minister?

Mr Rookny: No.

Dr. Boolell: What are you saying? in relation to...?

Madam Speaker: The question is simple. If people don't have fisherman cards, can they still fish?

Like if I want to go and fish, can I?

Dr. Boolell: Of course not!

Madam Speaker: We are good.

Dr. Boolell: The law is an ass but we have to comply to the provisions of the law.

Madam Speaker: Exactly.

Okay, we don't all go fishing every day.

Ms Savabaddy, First Member for Port-Louis North and Montagne Longue.

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS AUTHORITY – PRIMARY SCHOOLS – AUTISTS – ADMISSION DELAY

(No. B/39) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the Special Needs Education Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of primary schools falling under the purview thereof, indicating the reasons for the delay in respect of some children with autism not starting the school year 2026 on time and whether the issues have now been resolved.

Dr. Gungapersad: Madam Speaker, at the outset, let me thank the hon. Member for this question which is her third one related to autistic children after those she asked on 18 March and 17 June 2025.

Madam Speaker, allow me to apprise the House that in accordance to section 5 of the Special Education Needs Authority Act, the main functions of the SENA are *inter-alia* to –

- (a) register special education needs institutions, their teaching and non-teaching staff and any other resource person, and
- (b) take appropriate action to ensure that special education needs institutions are managed in accordance with relevant laws, rules, guidelines, directives and standards.

Madam Speaker, the Special Education Needs institutions falling under the purview of SENA are as follows –

- 12 SEN integrated units which are classrooms in public primary schools dedicated to SEN learners;
- 7 SEN resource development centres which cater for children with severe disabilities;
- 47 NGOs providing services to SEN learners, and
- 8 RCA SEN schools.

I would like to add that admission of SEN learners is not limited only to SEN institutions. In certain cases, SEN learners are also enrolled in mainstream primary schools which do not fall under the purview of SENA.

Madam Speaker, I am informed by SENA that a communiqué was issued on 09 May 2025, inviting applications for admission of SEN learners in Grade 1 for the year 2026. Each application had to be supported *inter-alia* by a medical certificate.

521 applications were received as from that date of issue of the communiqué until February 2026. Out of these applications, 438 children turned up for screening exercises by allied health professionals in the SEN resource development centres. The mandatory comprehensive screening is carried out to determine the educational placement and accommodation required. Out of the 438 children who were screened, 143 children were

identified to suffer from mild autism spectrum disorder. 32 of them were admitted in mainstream public and aided-primary schools as at 13 February 2026.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that there have been delays in the admission of these 32 children because of lack of teacher assistants and carers. With a view to coping with the situation, arrangements had been made by my Ministry for the reallocation of teacher assistants and carers in certain cases. In other cases, internal arrangements were made by school management to accommodate the children with the assistance of teachers and support teachers in certain schools.

As regards the remaining children who suffer from higher forms of autism, they have been admitted in NGO SEN schools, SEN resource development centres and SEN integrated units. Madam Speaker, I am also informed that there is currently an acute shortage of teacher assistants and carer on the local market.

My Ministry is envisaging the following measures on the short and medium terms in order to palliate for the shortage –

- (1) Review the existing norms and standards to ease recruitment of assistant teachers, carers, and medical specialists in some cases;
- (2) Contacting parents of children with disabilities who are willing to accompany their wards in the mainstream school on a voluntary and short-term basis;
- (3) Creation of post of teacher assistants and carers on the establishment of my Ministry in the forthcoming budget;
- (4) Accelerated training courses by the MIE to new recruits, and
- (5) Working in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Wellness to have the support of medical professionals.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, Ms Savabaddy.

Ms Savabaddy: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Pourquoi ce sont les enfants autistes qui doivent faire les frais des carences administratives alors qu'on doit leur donner le meilleur encadrement possible pour étudier ?

Le ministre vient tout juste de faire mention à ma question parlementaire datant du 17 juin 2025 – alors vous avez fait mention d’unité intégrée, renforcée pour les enfants autistes. Où en sommes-nous ?

Dr. Gungapersad: Madam Speaker, as I said, one of the major problems that we are facing is about staffing in that sector. Unfortunately, the number of our kids who need special education needs is increasing and on the other side, we do not have trained professionals to cater for that sector. We are short of that; we are conscious. That is why I gave the five measures which are palliative in order to address that issue in the short and medium term.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Mr Beehook and then Mr Juman.

Mr Beehook: Madam Speaker, this is the paradox. On one hand, we are saying we don’t have staff and on the other hand, I am aware of lots of cases where people who have been hired to work in SEN schools, are still awaiting registration. May I request the hon. Minister to look into all those pending cases of registration which might perhaps fill in those posts that are required to run these special schools for our special kids?

Madam Speaker: Are you aware, hon. Minister?

Dr. Gungapersad: Yes, Madam Speaker, let me inform the hon. Member that there was a communiqué whereby we wanted to recruit and many of those persons – perhaps the hon. Member may give me the list later on – they do not have the official and administrative requirements in order to be recruited.

At times, we even ask parents of these children to come and help as carers.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Mr Juman.

Mr Juman: Madam Speaker, in the same vein, with regard to teachers, carers and assistant teachers, can the hon. Minister inform the House the number of pending applications at the level of SENA?

Madam Speaker: Is it not the same question?

Mr Juman: Yes, the same question.

Madam Speaker: It is the same question?

Mr Juman: Yes, but the number of applications pending.

Madam Speaker: So, you want to know the number?

Mr Juman: Yes.

Madam Speaker: It looks like it is a serious topic.

Dr. Gungapersad: It is indeed, Madam Speaker. It is indeed a serious issue and I have taken good note. I thank him and hon. Ms Savabaddy for their personal involvement in caring for those autistic children. I will ask SENA to do the needful.

Madam Speaker: Okay, we are done more or less. Hon. Ms Savabaddy, you are happy?

Ms Savabaddy: Yes.

Madam Speaker: So, B/40!

DUCRAY HEALTH CENTRE – UPGRADING & MAINTENANCE

(No. B/40) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the Ducray (Abercrombie) Health Centre, he will state whether consideration will be given for the infrastructural upgrading and maintenance of the premises thereof and, if so, when.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, I presume that the health centre to which the hon. Member is referring to is, in fact, Sainte-Croix Community Health Centre (CHC) which is located in Ducray Street, Sainte-Croix. The Sainte-Croix Community Health Centre comprises several services. Previously, all the facilities were dispensed from a small building. However, the facility had been upgraded with the provision of an additional building to palliate the lack of space.

It is worth noting that Sainte-Croix Community Health Centre is the only CHC which provides dental services and has also extended opening hours up to 6 pm during weekdays similar to that of an area health centre to cater for the large catchment area. Nevertheless, I understand that the space of the CHC is insufficient and the facility cannot be further expanded. The relocation of the CHC could be considered in the event funds and lands are available in the vicinity.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that maintenance work such as cleaning of the premises and minor repairs were carried out at the level of Dr. Jeetoo Hospital. Moreover, I am informed that external and internal painting had been carried out in October 2025 to address leakages reported in the Pharmacy Unit. Materials are being procured for waterproofing works. I am also informed that several thefts have been reported over the years.

On 09 January 2026, four air conditioning compressors have been stolen and the matter was reported to the police of Abercrombie on 13 January 2026.

Specifications for the replacement of air conditioning are awaited from the Energy Services Division of the Ministry of National Infrastructure to enable my Ministry to launch the bids. These will be done on a fast-track basis.

Furthermore, the Commissioner of Police is being requested to carry out frequent patrols in the area to deter any illicit activities.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Ms Savabaddy: Thank you, Madam Speaker. *Puis-je demander à l'honorable ministre s'il existe au niveau de son ministère un département pour inspecter régulièrement les infrastructures comme les centres de santé et si des rapports sont rédigés, car le centre de santé de Ducray à Sainte-Croix est dans un état déplorable et ceci depuis l'année dernière, monsieur le ministre ?*

Mr Bachoo: I have already mentioned some reparation works have already been conducted. But the best solution would have been to move to another building. That will not be possible because of financial constraints.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Ms Savabaddy: Thank you. *Le ministre est-il au courant de la chaleur étouffante au dispensaire de ce même centre de santé, également d'un stock de médicaments périmés, et qu'est-ce qui peut être fait à ce sujet ? Depuis l'année dernière, la situation est comme telle.*

Mr Bachoo: I have mentioned that there have been thefts. The air conditioning compressors were stolen and that explains the reason. Secondly, I will not be in a position to launch bids unless and until I receive the specifications from the ESD of MNI. Once I get it, I will move for it. I am aware of the problem. That is why I can assure you, once the air conditioning is carried out, then other problems would be taken care of.

Madam Speaker: I think we have gone around that question.

Hon. Seeburn!

ST HUBERT REGION – PUBLIC BUS TRANSPORT – AVAILABILITY

(No. B/41) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to St Hubert, St Hilaire and

neighbouring villages, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to the measures implemented/being envisaged to increase the availability and regularity of public bus transport thereat, and increasing the number of bus services or reviewing existing routes and schedules for enhanced service thereat.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Madam Speaker, in my replies to PQs B/84 and B/22 at the Sittings of 17 December 2024 and 04 February 2025, the House was apprised of the operational situation on buses from St Hubert to Curepipe and Mahebourg, as well as the measures being implemented by the NLTA to address irregularities and to improve service delivery thereto.

My Ministry is cognisant of the persistent transport problems faced by inhabitants of the region for their daily commuting needs.

Following representations made to me by elected Members of Constituency No. 11, yourself, hon. Ms Babooram and hon. Ramdass, and other complaints received on malpractices occurring along Route no. 87, an enquiry was carried out at the level of my Ministry. That enquiry disclosed that the operations record filled by bus operators for compensation payments and subsidies with the NLTA had been falsified. The matter was consequently referred to CCID for investigation during the course of 2025. I am not too sure whether this has been done very often, but we did it.

Madam Speaker, I am informed by the NLTA that there are currently seven buses which are licensed to operate along Route 87.

Of these buses, three buses are operated by the individual bus operators and three buses by the NTC while one bus owned by an individual operator is presently off road due to major repairs. I am further informed that the passenger demand is relatively low along that corridor particularly along the segment from St Hubert to Riche-en-Eau via St Hilaire up to the junction of Deux Bras Road, New Grove. I am made to understand that as buses proceed beyond New Grove and overlap with other routes, passenger accommodation becomes normal and some vacant seats are generally observed.

However, in the light of ongoing representations from the inhabitants, several meetings have also been held by the NLTA with the NTC and individual bus operators to ensure that services are operated in accordance with the approved timetable. Verification by the NLTA confirmed that the bus services, including school services from Curepipe, were generally being provided at an interval of 30 minutes. The NLTA is also closely monitoring bus

operation along that route since mid of February 2026. In cases where a bus is temporarily off road, buses from nearby routes are redirected along Route 87 by the NLTA as an interim measure to serve the commuters.

Madam Speaker, I have to point out that, most importantly, I have directed the NLTA to carry out an assessment of bus services along the island and to identify all routes along which additional buses may be required. The exercise is ongoing and there have been notices in the press recently. Based on the outcome of this survey, the NLTA will review the current bus allocation to ensure adequacy of public bus transport along routes, including St Hubert, St Hilaire and neighbouring villages.

Madam Speaker, very importantly, I have also been made aware that bus operators may not be providing services to the satisfaction of commuters along several routes despite that they benefit from government subsidies.

In this respect, I wish to inform the House and the public who travels by bus that after much effort at my Ministry, the tender exercise for the design, supply, installation, testing and commissioning of a fleet management system for public buses which will comprise an automatic location system, a bus information system, a *chef de gare* application and a central control system, amongst others, was floated internationally on the government's e-procurement website on 21 January 2026. The closing date is scheduled for 24 March 2026, that is, next Tuesday, in a week's time.

Madam Speaker, I am confident that with this paradigm shift, with the use of technology, this system which uses GPS will go a long way to improve service essentially in the following ways –

- (i) To ensure that the bus companies provide the required number of trips for which they are paid for, and
- (ii) To allow the travelling public to know the Expected Time of Arrival (ETA) of their buses either on their mobile phones or on display panels.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, you are alright?

Third Member for Port Louis South and Port-Louis Central, Dr. F. Aumeer!

PUBLIC HOSPITALS – MORTUARY FACILITIES – CAPACITY MANAGEMENT

(No. B/42) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to mortuary facilities in the public hospitals, he will, in each case, state the maximum capacity thereof, indicating –

- (a) in the case of the said facility at the Dr A.G. Jeetoo hospital, the reasons why the contractor has not started works thereat;
- (b) options considered when same are full, and
- (c) whether consideration will be given for the installation of a separate mortuary facility in respect of Police cases within the Police Headquarters.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, I am informed that the maximum number of chambers in different mortuaries is as follows –

- SSR Hospital – 12;
- Victoria Hospital – 9;
- SAJ Hospital – 18;
- Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital – 12;
- Brown Sequard – 6;
- Dr. Bruno Cheong Medical Centre – 9;
- New Souillac Hospital – 6.

Mortuary facilities comprise space for performing autopsies as and when required and cold room for storage of corpses in chambers. These facilities existed at Dr. AG Jeetoo Hospital since inception, but over time, the cold room became defective and beyond repairs.

My Ministry has already initiated actions for the installation of a new cold room for storage of corpses at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that on 11 December 2023, a contractor was awarded the contract for supply installation, testing and commissioning of a cold chambre for the mortuary of Dr. Jeetoo Hospital with a capacity to accommodate 12 bodies. It was due to be delivered within 8 to 12 weeks as from the letter of acceptance; works should have been completed by 04 March 2024. The supplier supplied the cold room on 01 July 2024 and installation was ongoing.

In January 2025, an inspection was carried out during which several shortcomings were noted such as workmanship, traces of rust on interior frames, defective lighting features, excessive condensation amongst others.

Despite that the contractor was informed on several occasions to remedy the situation; an inspection carried out by the electrical engineer of the Ministry of National Infrastructure in August 2025 revealed that several issues had remained unsolved.

Madam Speaker, meetings were held at the level of my Ministry. The contractor and the advice of Attorney General's Office was sought. The latter advised that although the Ministry is entitled to terminate the contract for non-performance, such action may result in a higher cost and delays.

I am informed that my Ministry accepted the proposal of the contractor for the provision of new equipment for the cold chambre at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital with expected delivery date of 29 January 2026 at no additional cost to the Ministry.

Dismantling and carting away of existing equipment had been completed and the consignment would be shipped by air instead of sea expediate delivery. I have been informed that the request of the supplier to supply, install and commission the equipment within two months had exceptionally been acceded to and the supplier has been requested to submit the delivery date.

Madam Speaker, in respect of part (b) of the question, I have been informed that as an interim measure, my Ministry is procuring two refrigerated beds at hospital level. Tenders have already been launched with closing date on 18 March 2026. In addition, corpses are being transferred to the mortuary of other public hospitals.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (c) of the question pertaining to the installation of a separate mortuary facility, the matter has been referred to the Commissioner of Police for consideration.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker, I have listened very attentively to the answer given by the hon. Minister with regard to the delay in the implementation of a proper mortuary room at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he thinks it is advisable once again to give a further contractual agreement to a company that failed *in toto* to respect the specifications which it was given in the first place for mortuary namely, as he

said: electrical defects, humidity but above all – sizes. I have been there; he has given mortuary that were fitted only for young adolescents and children.

I think, in my honest opinion, hon. Minister, we should seek somebody else. We have waited a lot.

Mr Bachoo: I totally agree with the hon. Member but advice was sought from the State Law Office. The advice that I have received is that if you are going to terminate the contract for non-performance, such action may result in higher cost and delays. And, secondly, well, the hon. Member is aware that for such type of works, we have got hardly a few contractors and they do not even want to tender for such type of works. That is the reason why we have given him the last chance and at the same time at no additional cost from us. So, we are awaiting – this is the last chance we are giving, I do hope that they are going to accede to requests and the work will be completed because I am aware of the problems that inhabitants of region are facing. I can assure the hon. Member that I am looking into the case personally.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: A quick question. Thank you, hon. Minister. May I ask the hon. Minister, in these circumstances as have happened at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital and which may happen in other regional hospitals in regard to keeping corpses for mortuary facilities or even autopsy, whether we should have readily available, as he just said recently, what we call refrigerated beds and cooling rooms that are readily available for those particular hospitals in the event that we have a shortage of places to keep the bodies of loved ones and prevent the psychological trauma that people of Port Louis particularly have had with regard to Dr. Jeetoo Hospital? Thank you.

Mr Bachoo: As far as other hospitals are concerned, we never had any such problem, we have ample facilities. It is only exceptionally in Dr. Jeetoo Hospital that we had the problem and that is the reason why we have ordered for the acquisition of two refrigerated beds. But at the same time, I will have a look at other mortuaries where we have got corpses which are lying since long – even these have to be dispensed to ... There is a question on this, I am going to answer.

Madam Speaker: Okay! Hon. Dr. Aumeer, are you okay now?

Dr. Aumeer: I am fine.

Madam Speaker: Okay! PQs B/43 and B/44 have already been replied by the hon. Prime Minister.

**MIDDLE EAST GEOPOLITICAL TENSIONS – IMPACT ON FOOD SECURITY –
MEASURES & DIVERSIFICATION STRATEGIES**

(No. B/43) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the escalating geopolitical tensions and the potential impact thereof on global trade routes and supply chains, he will state if any assessment of the potential impact thereof on food security in Mauritius has been carried out, indicating the measures being envisaged to ensure continuous and adequate supply of essential food commodities, including diversification of import sources or strengthening local agricultural production.

(Vide Reply to PNQ)

Madam Speaker: So, now we have hon. Etwareea!

FOND DU SAC – OPEN STREET MARKET – ACCIDENTS RISKS

(No. B/45) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the potential risks of accidents during the Sunday open street market in Fond du Sac, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand regarding the plan for the construction of a sheltered market in Fond du Sac.

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, with regard to the potential risks of accident during the Sunday open market held at Fond du Sac, I wish to inform the House that based on information obtained from the Mauritius Police Force Northern Division, no road accidents, snatching or pickpocketing or any harassment, public nuisance, assault cases have been reported to the immediate vicinity of the market for the period January 2023 to 13 March 2026.

Madam Speaker, as regard to the plan for the construction of the sheltered market at Fond du Sac, the project was initially identified as a project under preparation in 2021. At that time an initial request was made to Compagnie de Mont Choisy Limitée (CDMC) for the allocation of approximately 19,500 m² of land forming part of Mont Choisy Smart City phase 2 for the purpose of implementing this project.

The proposed acquisition of the land was to be considered under the provision of the Sugar Industry Efficiency Act 2001 while matters relating to land conversion were to be examined by the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries.

Subsequently, on 23 September 2024, CDMC informed the authority that it was agreeable in principle to transfer a plot of land of about 4 arpents 61 perches at the nominal price of Rs1 for the implementation of a project.

Madam Speaker, following a site visit effected on 10 April 2025 which I attended together with the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resource and the two hon. Members of the National Assembly of the Constituency No.6, representatives of the District Council of Pamplémousses and officers of my Ministry, it was considered that the initial proposed extent of land would not be sufficient to accommodate the market and the necessary supporting infrastructure.

Subsequently, it was decided that a request be made for approximately 6 acres of land in order to cater for the construction of the sheltered market as well as parking facilities and other associated amenities required for proper operation of the market.

The District Council of Pamplémousses has accordingly made the request to Compagnie de Mont Choisy Limitée. By letter dated 25 November 2025, the company informed that the request for 6 arpents of land was under consideration and that a reply would be communicated upon completion of their evaluation.

A further follow-up request was sent on 03 March 2026 and I am informed that a layout plan for the proposed development is currently being submitted to facilitate company's consideration of the request.

Madam Speaker, my Ministry remain committed to the implementation of this project with a view to providing a properly structured organised and safer market environment for both vendors and members of the public.

In this regard, the District Council of Pamplémousses intend to resubmit the project under the performance-based budget 2026/2027 as a project under preparation, so that once the issue of land allocation is finalised, the design and implementation of the sheltered market at Fond du Sac may proceed.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes! Okay! Hon. Etwareea!

Mr Etwareea: I would like to know what are the obstacles that are stopping the signing of the Memorandum of Association with the Mont Choisy Group so far?

Mr Wochit: As I said, Madam Speaker, the request from 4.61 acres has become 6 Arpents. So, the request has been changed which has to be considered by the CDMC.

So, we have already sent two requests. So, we are waiting for the final reply from them.

Madam Speaker: Okay, alright. Mr Beejan!

NEW GOODLANDS MARKET FAIR – PROJECT COSTS – STALLS

(No. B/46) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the New Goodlands Market Fair, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the District Council of Rivière du Rempart, information as to the –

- (a) initial and final project costs thereof;
- (b) number of stalls –
 - (i) allocated, and
 - (ii) available category-wise, and
- (c) number of stall holders residing within the jurisdiction of the Rivière du Rempart District Council.

Mr Wochit: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the New Goodlands Market Fair currently comprises three blocks, namely Block A, B and E. Prior to the pre-tender exercise carried out in 2018, the project initially consisted of five blocks.

However, the financial clearance obtained at that time proved insufficient to implement the project entirely. Consequently, the District Council of Rivière du Rempart, in consultation with the then Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development, decided to downscale the project and proceed with the construction of three blocks only, together with supporting facilities such as parking areas, sanitary amenities, office and technical facilities and other associated site works.

Following the tender exercise conducted through the Central Procurement Board, the contract was awarded on 02 October 2019 to RBRB Construction Ltd. The works were implemented thereafter and the project was completed on 15 December 2023, following

extension of time granted mainly due to COVID-19 pandemic, adverse weather conditions, delays in shipment of materials and additional works required during this implementation. The initial cost, final project cost and detailed breakdown of variation works, compensation costs and consultancy fees are provided in the document which I am tabling before the House.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the District Council of Rivière du Rempart that the New Goodlands Market Fair comprises a total of 536 stalls distributed across several sections, including –

- vegetables;
- haberdashery or general merchandise;
- SME;
- food;
- meat;
- fish, and
- poultry section on alternative days.

With regard to part (b)(i) and (b)(ii) of the question, out of the 536 stalls, 434 stalls have been allocated and are currently occupied, while 102 stalls remain vacant. As regards the haberdashery or general merchandise section, I am informed that the traders' concerned have not yet relocated to the new market as a case has been lodged before the Supreme Court, with the matter scheduled for hearing on 16 June 2026. Nevertheless, approximately 190 traders out of the 354 concerned, have already signed their occupational contract.

With regard to part (c) of question, I am informed that traders have been operating at the old Goodlands Market since 1992. Following the separation of the District Council of Rivière du Rempart and Pamplemousses in 2012, traders who were already established in the market were allowed to continue operating in the market where they were already trading, irrespective of their place of residence. The detailed list of stallholders and their respective places of residence is provided in the document which I am tabling before the House.

Madam Speaker, with your permission, I am tabling the documents containing the detailed breakdown of the project cost, the list of stakeholders and the distribution of stalls by category in the new market fair.

Madam Speaker: Yes?

Mr Beejan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Given the information that the New Goodlands Market Fair operates on the mentioned days, I would like to ask the hon. Minister, whether a feasibility has been done of opening the market fair on other additional days? If not, can it be done? And what are the future plans to arrange for new allocation of stalls for new applicants, including SMEs to operate on those days? Thank you.

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, as I told you, I am tabling all the documents. So, for the possibility of opening the market fair on other alternative days, as the market is under the management of the District Council of Rivière du Rempart, I will submit the request to them to consider.

Madam Speaker: Okay, fair enough. Okay, now B/47 has already been replied. Now, we have the Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue, Mr Caserne!

STC – HEAVY FUEL OIL, MOGAS, DIESEL & KEROSENE – RESERVES – CONTINGENCY PLANS

(No. B/47) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to Heavy Fuel Oil, Mogas, Diesel and Kerosene, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to –

- (a) the current quantity of each of these products held in strategic reserves in Mauritius and the number of days of national consumption same represent, and
- (b) whether contingency plans have been put in place to ensure continuity of supply in case of any disruption to imports arising from the prevailing conflict in the Middle East and, if so, indicate the alternative sources of supply and logistical arrangements identified to secure the continued availability thereof.

(Vide Reply to PNQ)

ABERCROMBIE – METHADONE DISTRIBUTION – PROPOSED RELOCATION

(No. B/48) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to methadone distribution at Abercrombie, he will state where matters stand as regard the proposed relocation thereof, including when same will be relocated and the new location.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, with the setting of MUGA project in the vicinity of Sainte Croix, a request was made to my Ministry to relocate the existing methadone dispensing site at Sainte Croix Methadone Day Care Centre, catering for some 230 beneficiaries to ex-police divisional headquarters of Abercrombie, which was already dispensing methadone to some 376 beneficiaries. The relocation was effected at the beginning of 2023.

The House may wish to note that in March 2025, methadone was being dispensed to some 635 beneficiaries at Abercrombie, leading to a large crowd, which posed safety and security concerns for the beneficiaries, the general public and the officers involved in the daily dispensing process. A request for the relocation of the site was made by the Divisional Commander from Abercrombie police station.

Madam Speaker, in order to alleviate these pressures and to ensure a safer environment for all stakeholders, a strategic decision was taken by my Ministry in April 2025 to relocate approximately 170 beneficiaries from Abercrombie site to Vallée des Prêtres police station. As at 10 February 2026, some 448 beneficiaries are still registered to receive their daily methadone doses at the Abercrombie site.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that at the meeting held with the Divisional Commander of Abercrombie police in November 2025, it was highlighted that recipients of methadone had the habit of displaying antisocial behaviours and loiter around the place where the dispensing is made. It was stressed that inter-agency cooperation should be strengthened to find sustainable solutions to such issues.

I am further informed that the National Agency for Drug Control, which is now the apex body looking at the drug scourge is addressing this matter. My Ministry has also received a proposal by NADC for the setting up of one-stop shop addiction treatment services and integrated harm reduction clinic at Nicolay Road, Port Louis. The methadone clients currently at Abercrombie site will also be able to benefit from the services at the proposed site at Nicolay Road. The possibility of gradual relocation of the clients at Abercrombie site to the proposed one stop shop addiction treatment services and the integrated harm reduction clinic at Nicolay will also be looked into by NADC and my Ministry once the one-stop shop has been formally set up.

Madam Speaker: Yes?

Mr Caserne: Thank you, hon. Minister. Once they are dispensed with methadone, we can see a crowd of these people still remaining in the surroundings. May I know in the short term, what are the solutions that the Minister can propose together with all those framing, including police officers, members from the Ministry of Health who can assist to alleviate the current situation at Abercrombie?

Mr Bachoo: This is a situation which is there throughout the country. Wherever methadone is dispensed, this is the same problem everyone is facing. We keep on getting requests from Members of Parliament that from X particular site, it had to be removed to Y but when are changing the site, you are transferring the problem from one place to the other. Well, it is a human problem, you have to bear with it. The police are doing their level best and once that set up will be in the new place, I do hope we will be able to get rid of those people's antisocial elements from all the regions to one particular place where the police will be in a much better position to control them. Unfortunately, the problem is same everywhere.

Madam Speaker: Okay, now we have the Second Member for Grand Baie and Poudre d'Or, Mr Beejan!

CONSTITUENCY NO. 6 – BUSINESS LICENSING FEES – AMOUNT COLLECTED

(No. B/49) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to licensing fees collected from businesses in Constituency No. 6, since 2015 to 2024, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Tourism Authority, information as to the quantum thereof, category-wise.

Mr R. Duval: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Tourism Authority that it does not keep the figures in respect of licensing fee collected from businesses constituency-wise. However, the hon. Member is interested in having the total licensing fees collected by the Tourism Authority island-wide for the period of 2015 to 2024.

I may ask the Tourism Authority to compile same for circulation to the hon. Member.

Madam Speaker: Yes, okay. The Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac!

INVALIDITY PENSIONS – MAJOR REFORMS – IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

(No. B/50) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the Invalidity Pensions, he will state where matters stand as to the

proposed major reforms thereof, indicating the proposed timeline for the implementation thereof.

Mr Subron: Madam Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. Member for her renewed interest in this particular reform.

Madam Speaker, the present system has caused much suffering and indignity for our people. Thus, the disability pension reform represents an important and much awaited step towards ensuring that the disability support system in Mauritius becomes more inclusive, equitable and responsive to the real needs of persons with disabilities in their daily lives.

As I previously informed the House in my statement made to the Sitting of the National Assembly of 08 July 2025, and in my replies to the Parliamentary Questions B/501 at the Sitting of 13 May 2025 and B/842 at the Sitting of 07 October 2025, my Ministry is currently working on a reform initiative for disability-related pensions. The major reforms that were identified include, *inter alia* –

- (a) the introduction of a hybrid assessment model to replace the 100% medical-based model;
- (b) the introduction of a graduated support model to replace the all or nothing model, and
- (c) the introduction of multi-disciplinary assessment panels to replace the medical boards.

Madam Speaker, Government, at its meeting of 28 November 2025, took note of the status of the proposed reform, which would be implemented over two phases, namely –

- Phase 1 which will include the updating of medical guidelines for disability assessment and the introduction of a graduated support model whereby those deemed not eligible for the Basic Invalidity Pension (BIP) could qualify for an Inclusive Living Allowance (ILA). The ILA will replace the Disability Allowance and its quantum will be revised higher. The Disability Allowance is currently Rs2,500 per month, and there are only around 750 beneficiaries as compared to 28,000 beneficiaries for BIP.

- Phase 2 which would include the introduction of a hybrid assessment model based on both medical and functional criteria as well as the replacement of the current medical boards with multi-disciplinary assessment panels. Thus, also conforming to the human rights-based approach recommended by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in its concluding observations of September 2024 on Mauritius' compliance.

Madam Speaker, currently, my Ministry is completing Phase 1 of the proposed disability reform, particularly an enhanced medical guideline for disability assessment, as the existing one dates back to 2016. Many shortcomings and gaps have been identified in same.

This Phase 1 reform initiative has involved significant technical works so far. I am proud to say that it was all an in-house and local expertise inputs. Back in October 2025, inputs and insights have been gathered by way of survey questionnaire from the medical practitioners of the Medical Unit of my Ministry, who serve the medical boards, which operate under the aegis of the aforementioned unit, to identify the gaps and challenges regarding the effective implementation of the medical guidelines.

Subsequently, in November 2025, a series of consultative meetings have been held with medical specialists from both the public and the private sectors, who serve on the Medical Appeal Tribunal, which operates under the aegis of the Medical Unit of my Ministry. A draft revised medical guideline has already been worked out by my Ministry and submitted to the Ministry of Health and Wellness for validation early this year.

The revised guideline will place greater emphasis on functional disability and limitations in activities of daily living, introduce more comprehensive criteria for assessing long-term health conditions, and improve the consistency and transparency of disability assessment as well as reviewing the re-assessment period for the renewal of benefits. Thus, the core of the technical work for the implementation of Phase 1 has been completed by my Ministry. We are now expecting validation by the end of this month from the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

Madam Speaker, in parallel, we have also worked out the financial implications and the number of new beneficiaries of the proposed reform. The estimate of Phase 1 of the reform is some Rs5 million per year. Consequently, financial clearance would be sought from the

Ministry of Finance, including for the proposed introduction of the new Inclusive Living Allowance.

Cabinet's approval would be sought accordingly for the implementation of Phase 1 of the reform in this financial year. It would amount to around Rs125 million, while Phase 2, subject to all clearances being obtained, is projected to be implemented within 12 months of the implementation of Phase 1. For now, let us keep our fingers crossed. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Beechook: May I request the Minister, in light of the reform that has been announced, to please make sure that people who have one of their legs chopped, lower limb chopped or are half blind in one eye, do not have to go to medical boards every year in order to secure their pension? It is common sense that their leg is not going to grow or perhaps they will never recover their eyes. So, I do not understand why these people are requested to go and appear in front of a medical board every year.

Mr Subron: I thank the hon. Member. This issue is being taken onboard by Phase 1 of the reform.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Yes, hon. Dr. Ms Daureeawo!

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the hon. Minister consider amendments with a view to strengthening the appeals mechanism, more particularly, reducing delays for such appeals?

Mr Subron: Yes, we are making quite substantial and significant efforts to reduce the time for people to go to the medical boards. We hope that Phase 1 of the reform will ease the re-assessments and appeals to the Medical Tribunal.

Madam Speaker: Okay, one more! Then, hon. Juman.

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: Can I add to what hon. Beechook stated earlier on? Will the hon. Minister consider introducing or implementing regular reviews in the law to ensure decisions to discontinue pension claims are fair and consistent?

Mr Subron: We will take this into consideration, hon. Member.

Madam Speaker: Of course! Yes, hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Hon. Minister, can I know whether the proposed reform will also consider to review the Carer's Allowance?

Madam Speaker: The current allowance?

Mr Juman: Carer's Allowance.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr Subron: This is not part of Phase 1 of the reform, but the redefinition of the criteria of the Carer's Allowance is being reviewed. It was in our manifesto to upgrade the Carer's Allowance, and all will depend on the financial situation of the country and the budget. But we will make the proposal. Last year, we made a proposal for the gradual increase of the Carer's Allowance, but the economic situation was not good enough to cater for this.

Madam Speaker: Yes! You are very popular, hon. Minister!

Mr Seeburn: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Being given that the draft guidelines have already been forwarded to the Ministry of Health and is now awaiting approval, is the hon. Minister in a position to confirm to the House whether he is willing to accept those families who are suffering prejudice, whether it can be dealt with a fast-track system?

Madam Speaker: In the meantime, you mean?

Mr Seeburn: In the meantime!

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Subron: We will consider it and see but... My friend is working very hard on the validation of the Phase 1 of the report.

Madam Speaker: Okay!

An hon. Member: ...

Madam Speaker: Oh my God! I know it is a very sensitive issue.

Mr Subron: Yes, please go on!

Madam Speaker: Dr. Ms Daureeawo first; it was her question!

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: Okay, thank you, Madam Speaker. Are there plans to digitalise the whole monitoring and application process?

Mr Subron: Yes, there was. I answered a question last year in Parliament. The ESS system is being implemented and we hope that in two years' time the whole system of social security will be digitalised.

Madam Speaker: Okay, Dr. Prayag, then Dr. Aumeer, then Mr Lobine!

Dr. Prayag: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Given that the carer's allowance causes prejudice to the female population of beneficiaries, given that it depends on the household income for the beneficiary, can we even consider to phase it out, if not, then, consider to take an action concerning it quicker than waiting for the Phase 2?

Mr Subron: The proposal will be made by the Ministry in the context of the coming budget, then it won't be my decision, it will be a governmental decision.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In the event of the major disability reform being implemented, may I request the hon. Minister to see with the Members of the Medical Board that they have a more compassionate approach to the chronically ill and those who are bed-ridden, so that they are not to be asked to come on stretchers and in ambulances at the Medical Board to be assessed but rather send a doctor at home for assessment? Thank you.

Mr Subron: I thank the hon. Member for this observation. We are aware of the difficulties of many people to attend medical boards and we have taken a decision that all the people above 90, the medical assessment is being done at domicile.

Madam Speaker: Above 90?

Mr Subron: Above 90! Now, we are trying to reduce it to 85 and then 80. This is the objective.

Madam Speaker: I think we are going to be in trouble. I have Mr Lobine, I have Mr A. Duval and it seems it's a question which is of great interest.

Mr Subron: Yes, I love it!

Madam Speaker: I don't want to do...

Mr Subron: This means that the reform is an important one!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, since on 09 December, I got carried away and I am sorry, my dear Chief Whip. I don't want to get carried away today although I also feel very strongly about it.

Mr Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Minister, is he in a position to inform the House how many pending appeal cases do we have? Because it seems that a lot of people are waiting for their appeal to be heard. Do you have such a list or figures so that you can provide to the House, please?

Mr Subron: I don't have the list but I can table it if you want. But I can say that out of 100 cases, examined by the Board, 70% are granted and the 30% is going to the Medical Tribunal. But I can get the correct figures. I already gave it to the National Assembly previously.

Madam Speaker: Okay, Mr A. Duval!

Mr A. Duval: In fact, it's on the same question. It had been reported in the past that more than half of the cases on appeal are overturned decisions of the Medical Board. One reason being that they do not have specialist doctors. The second reason being that they do not have access to medical files of the patients. Therefore, is the hon. Minister going to look into that aspect with his reform urgently to ensure that people are given a fair consideration for their application?

Mr Subron: Of course, this is a major issue that will be taken in Phase 1 and in Phase 2. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes, last one! I understand it's a very touchy issue. Last one!

Mr Jhummun: Yes, can this exercise be made more scientific and systematic, so that we don't have so many people who go on appeal? Because that 60% criteria is too debatable.

Mr Subron: It is precisely what we are changing.

Madam Speaker: Oh my God! Dr. let's keep it. Talk to each other, please! *C'est insatiable cette question ! Okay, vous allez parler entre vous. Je suis sûre que vous allez trouver des solutions.*

Let me carry on because we haven't got much time left. Now B/51 is already answered, Ms Anquetil. B/52 is again Dr. Ms Daureeawo!

**PROMOTION OF SPORTS – OCTOBER 2024-17 MARCH 2026 –
INITIATIVES/PROGRAMMES IMPLEMENTED**

(No. B/52) Dr. Ms Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the promotion of sports, he will state the initiatives and/or programmes implemented since October 2024 to date, indicating the outcomes thereof, including whether same have positively impacted overall sports growth, athletes and grass roots participation.

Mr Nagalingum: Madam Speaker, this question provides an excellent opportunity to highlight the comprehensive and strategic action which my Ministry has undertaken to propel Mauritian sport forward.

My Ministry's approach has been holistic focusing on three core pillars namely, –

- grass root participation and community engagement;
- high level sports excellence, and
- development of sports infrastructure.

The above initiative implemented have indeed yielded significant positive outcomes across all these areas. I believe we should also highlight that my Ministry operates, amongst others, through its various executive arms namely, –

- The Mauritius Sports Council;
- The Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports;
- The National Youth Council;
- The Côte d'Or National Sports Complex, and
- The Commission Nationale du Sport Féminin.

It is through these institutions that multiple types of activities are organised for different strata of the population. At grassroot participation and community engagement level, the initiative includes among others the revival of the inter-collège sports competition, the '*Anou Transform Nou Landrwa*' Programme and *Course de l'unité*.

Madam Speaker, with regard to high level sport, my Ministry commitment has been equally robust ensuring our athletes sign at the regional and international stage. High-level sport excellence in Mauritius is driven by my Ministry through the High-Level Sports Unit, focussing on elite athlete development and international performance. Key initiatives include grant to national sport federation, sport organisation, the High-Level Sport Assistance Scheme and substantial cash prize scheme for medals at major international competition.

Moreover, the Trust Fund for Excellence in Sport support athletes at secondary vocational and tertiary levels. We have to mention here the individual performance of high-level athletes such as Kimberley Le Court and Noémie Alphonse at international level.

Madam Speaker, concerning our sport infrastructure, it is essential to provide our athletes with modern sport infrastructures with a view to elevating athletics' performance as it directly impacts safety, consistency and training effectiveness. Well-designed sport facilities minimise injury risks, reduce fatigue and enable athletes to train at higher intensities and with greater precision.

To this endeavour, my Ministry has moved to a proactive strategy of modernising our sports facilities. Key upgrades were completed at the Serge Alfred Swimming Pool, the Mare D'Albert Swimming Pool and Beau Vallon Football Pitch ensuring our communities have safe and modern venues to practice. The grounding achievement was the inauguration of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Sport Complex in Triolet in November 2025.

This Rs200 million state-of-the-art multi-disciplinary facility is a gamechanger for the region. This complex is a tangible example of our commitment to decentralising access to sport. It provides a dedicated space for over 350 people to engage in everything from futsal and volleyball to pétanque and jogging. This directly combats non-communicable diseases, fosters community wellness and provides a high-quality training venue for local athletes.

Substantial investment will be required to give our sports infrastructure the *lettres de noblesse* and requests for funding infrastructural projects are being made by my Ministry in the forthcoming budget exercise. However, Madam Speaker, it would not be possible for me to enumerate all the initiative programmes implemented by my Ministry. I am thus tabling a comprehensive list of these initiative programmes. These are testimonies that the policy and strategies put in place are yielding result and serve as benchmark for the other athletes.

Madam Speaker, to conclude, the initiative programmes implemented have had a profoundly positive impact. We have reenergised grassroot participation through *inter-college, anou transform nu lendroit, force de l'unité*, focus on the elite athletes, development and international performance and build and upgrade the infrastructure necessary for future champions. The foundation for a vibrant, inclusive and successful sporting nation has never been stronger.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Yes, question.

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: Madam Speaker, could the hon. Minister state what is being done to upgrade and modernise sports facilities in the Constituency of No.

13 and 14, given that we do not have any stadium or a full-fledge complex in that region?

Mr Nagalingum: It is in the agenda of the Ministry to organise a meeting with the Constituency No. 13 because we have had some meetings with different constituencies in the recent past. So, in the near future, we are going to have a meeting and we can discuss different activities that we can organise together.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes.

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: Could the hon. Minister confirm or indicate whether government is encouraging private sector investment and sponsorship in sports development?

Mr Nagalingum: Yes, of course, this is in our agenda.

Madam Speaker: Yes, you have finished.

Okay, I am going to be sweet.

Ms Anquetil : Je vous remercie infiniment, Madame la présidente. B/53.

BELLE ROSE MARKET FAIR – PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION – DETAILS

(No. B/53) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the proposed construction of the Belle Rose Market in Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, information as to the expected start and completion dates thereof.

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, in regard to the proposed construction of Belle Rose Market Fair in Quatre Bornes, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes that a plot of state land of an extent of 6548 m² at Victoria Avenue Belle Rose, previously leased to the State Investment Corporation Ltd and sublet to Mauritius Jute & Textiles Industry Properties Company Ltd, has been identified for the implementation of this project.

Following the cancellation of the lease, financial clearance was conveyed on 27 October 2023 for the payment of the compensation amounting to Rs5, 293,393.56 to the Mauritius Jute & Textiles Industry Properties Company Ltd for added value to the site. The deed of cancellation was subsequently transcribed on 27 December 2024 and the plot of state land was vested in my Ministry for the construction of the market fair.

However, I am informed that the transfer to certificate for the plot of land is still pending signature before a notary public and despite several requests made by my Ministry to expedite the matter, the formalisation of the transfer has not yet been completed. As a result, the site has not yet been formally handed over for the start of the construction works.

In the meantime, preparatory works have been initiated by the council. Bids were invited on 28 January 2026 for the demolition of abandoned buildings and the clearing of land at Avenue Victoria with the bid closing deed set for 12 February 2026 and the three bids were received. The bid evaluation exercise is currently in progress and the contract is expected to be awarded by the end of this month with demolition and clearance works scheduled to be completed by 13 May 2026.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Yes, very short and sweet.

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have got only one supplementary. Will the hon. Minister state the facilities that will be provided in the new Belle-Rose market? Thank you.

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, the project will provide market stalls, washroom facilities and space for bus holding area and a large parking space for avoiding traffic jams.

Ms Anquetil: Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Now, time is up.

I have to also tell you that several PQs, of course, have been withdrawn: B/57, B/58, B/59, B/60, B/62, B/63, B/66, B/68, B/69, B70, B/71, B/73, B/74.

Thank you.

Hon. Prime Minister, motion.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that all the business on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

Mr Mohamed rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister!

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

IMF SPECIAL DATA DISSEMINATION STANDARD PLUS –ADHERENCE OF MAURITIUS

(4.40 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I would like to make a statement on the adherence of Mauritius to the IMF Special Data Dissemination Standard Plus, the SDDS Plus, as from today.

Madam Speaker, as the House is aware, the independence of institutions, such as Statistics Mauritius and the Bank of Mauritius, were grossly undermined before November 2024. Pressure was exerted on the Statistics Mauritius and the Bank of Mauritius to dress up official statistics, thereby giving a false impression of progress and weakening their independence at the same time. We pledged when we took office to reverse this.

We have done so.

These institutions now work with restored autonomy and professionalism, and the credibility of our national statistics has been rebuilt.

But we are not stopping there. We are making further strides in our endeavour to secure the highest standards of transparency and accountability in the production and dissemination of statistics. Today, Madam Speaker, I am glad to announce to the House, and to Mauritians in general, that Mauritius is adhering to the SDDS Plus, which is the highest tier IMF data dissemination standards, which is the most advanced and demanding of all international data standards.

I would here like to add that, as a result of my Government's efforts, Mauritius subscribed to the first level of international standards, the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS) in September 2000. It was under my Government that Mauritius graduated to the SDDS in February 2012. Madam Speaker, we wanted to send a powerful signal to the world that Mauritius strictly adheres to the principles of transparency and accountability with respect to the production and dissemination of data.

In 2013, during an IMF Technical Assistance mission, we, through the then Statistics Board, seized the opportunity to request the IMF's assistance in identifying the new requirements of SDDS Plus and the steps needed towards meeting them.

Unfortunately, this was followed by, I must say, inaction for the following 10 years – 10 lost years!

Last year, I decided to revive this important endeavour. I set up a Steering Committee under my Office to speed up its implementation.

Today, Madam Speaker, I am glad to announce that we have reached the highest level, which is the SDDS Plus.

Ms Anquetil: Bravo! Bravo!

The Prime Minister: The adherence to SDDS Plus means that we are now agreeing to publish more data, faster, and with tighter guarantees on quality, integrity and openness, especially for government finance, the financial system, and external exposures. In practice, the SDDS Plus requires Mauritius to meet detailed IMF benchmarks on the coverage, the frequency and timeliness of a set of core and additional datasets that are considered essential to monitor vulnerabilities and risks in modern economies.

This is, Madam Speaker, a demanding standard, but meeting it sends a powerful message to investors, to rating agencies, and also to international partners that they can rely on our statistics when taking decisions about Mauritius.

This graduation is, therefore, not just symbolic; it has concrete implications for our economy.

The strategic benefits for Mauritius are multi-fold –

- (a) **Reinforced International Credibility.** This is especially valuable for safeguarding Mauritius' reputation and increasing global scrutiny of international financial centres.

- (b) **Stronger Investment and Rating Agency Confidence.** For a small open economy reliant on capital flows, this credibility premium is strategically important and for Moody's, it will be credit positive.
- (c) **Enhanced Financial Stability Oversight.** For Mauritius, where financial services represent quite a high percentage of our GDP, as we know, at one point it was even 15%. But this now is a significant share of GDP. Therefore, this risk monitoring capacity is critical.
- (d) **Alignment with Financial Centre Ambitions.** It would serve, Madam Speaker, as a reputational anchor consistent with global financial stability standards.
- (e) **Institutional and Governance Strengthening.** These improvements will have lasting benefits well beyond compliance.
- (f) **Efficient Access to International Markets.** For a small open economy like us, adherence will facilitate access to markets for both sovereign and the private sector at a lower borrowing cost.

Madam Speaker, for all these reasons, SDDS Plus is not merely a statistical benchmark, it is a strategic instrument for Mauritius.

I would like to reiterate that our adherence will, *inter alia*, reinforce credibility as a transparent international financial centre, strengthen financial stability oversight, enhance investor confidence and support long-term economic resilience.

In a global environment of heightened scrutiny and interconnected risks, SDDS Plus will provide Mauritius with a strong institutional signal of commitment to the highest standards of macro-financial transparency.

Madam Speaker, I would like to highlight here that the graduation to SDDS Plus is indeed a major achievement. Only 31 countries in the world have met this standard, most of which are OECD or High-Income countries. Furthermore, I should add that Mauritius is the only, only African country to adhere to the SDDS Plus.

Through this achievement, we now stand alongside advanced countries, particularly in terms of transparency, credibility and integrity of our official statistics.

Let me also highlight that adherence to the SDDS Plus will make it extremely difficult for any government to try to manipulate data.

Let me end by thanking the IMF for their generous and dedicated support. They responded quickly to field several missions to assist us. In particular, the Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSC), it was a mission which, Madam Speaker, did a full audit of our overall statistical system and framework, and this was instrumental for us to reach the SDDS Plus.

I also wish to thank all those who have worked diligently to achieve our goal, including officials from my Office, the Ministry of Finance, Statistics Mauritius and the Bank of Mauritius.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms Anquetil: Bravo PM!

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Prime Minister. Do you mind, all of you, if we have a short break?

Okay, let us go for tea!

At 4.48 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.17 p.m., with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: You may be seated!

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Optical Council (Amendment) Bill (No. I of 2026) was read a first time.

Second Reading

THE LAW REFORM COMMISSION BILL

(No. XXXI of 2025)

Order for Second Reading read.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Attorney-General!

(5.18 p.m.)

The Attorney-General (Mr G. P. C. Glover, SC): I beg to move that the Law Reform Commission Bill (No. XXXI of 2025) be read a second time.

This Bill, Madam Speaker, is at its core about strengthening one of the quiet, but essential institutions of our legal system. The Law Reform Commission seldom catches headlines. Yet, it is only through sustained methodical and principal review that the law can remain intelligible, relevant and just.

The Law Reform Commission of Mauritius was first established in 1993 through the Law Reform Commission Act 1992 which itself was repealed in 2006 with the enactment of the Law Reform Commission Act 2005.

Since then, no improvement has been brought. It is now time to bring about sweeping reforms to set up a new framework fit for the demands of the present. The stark reality, Madam Speaker, is that the LRC has, over the last 20 years, published no less than 195 papers. Yet, few, too few, may I add, recommendations have found their way to legislation. To quote the opinion paper of the LRC in support of this fundamental change in the legislation, I quote –

“This persistent gap between research and enactment is symptomatic of a deeper structural weakness. The Commission has been tasked with a mission, but not endowed with the legal instruments necessary to make its work effective.”

The purpose of the Bill is, therefore, simple enough – to repeal the existing Law Reform Commission Act to replace it with a legislative framework more suited to the needs of our country today.

Laws, Madam Speaker, do not stand still. They must evolve with society, with economic realities, with technological change and with our collective aspirations as a democratic state governed by the rule of law. The Law Reform Commission has, over the past years, contributed meaningfully to this process. Experience has shown however, that its existing statutory framework has become too narrow, and at times, administratively constraining.

This Bill seeks to give the institution the tools it needs to discharge its mandate more fully. I must immediately point out, Madam Speaker, that the impetus for this reform came from the Commission itself. It was the Commission, which having worked within the constraints of the existing Act for a number of years, identified the areas in which the legislative framework fell short and formulated proposals for its modernisation. That is as it should be.

No institution is better placed to assess the adequacy of its own governing statute than the one which must operate it daily.

I was happy to examine those proposals carefully with members of my office. Having satisfied myself that they were well-founded and in the public interest, I have deemed it fit to carry them forward in the form of this Bill.

Madam Speaker, I shall now delve brief into the principal provisions of the new law and the reasons which have prompted them.

Clause 3(1) of the Bill establishes the Commission, defines its core responsibility, that is, to keep the laws of Mauritius under review and to propose reforms aimed at simplifying, modernising and consolidating those laws.

Importantly, clause 3(2) of the Bill provides that “the Commission shall, in the discharge of its functions and exercise of its powers, act independently and impartially and shall not be under the direction or control of any person or authority.”

The Commission is also constituted as a body corporate under subclause (3), and these provisions give the institution a clear statutory identity and the autonomy necessary to carry out serious reform work.

Clause 4(1) of the Bill redefines and expands the functions of the Commission. It expressly empowers the Commission to engage in research and studies to ensure that the laws of Mauritius evolve to meet the contemporary needs and challenges of society and the legal community.

This reflects that a deliberate shift in philosophy. Law reform should not be purely reactive. It should be anticipatory. It should identify emerging issues before they harden into systemic conditions and problems.

Clause 4(1) of the Bill also provides that the Commission may consider proposals for reform made to it by the Attorney-General or by any Ministry.

Under the previous Act, only the Attorney-General could direct the Commission to examine any aspect of the law. The extension to Ministries is an important development. In practice, Ministries are closest to the operational realities of legislation within their respective sectors. By enabling the Ministries to make formal proposals, this Bill fosters a more collaborative and informed reform process across Government.

The same clause confirms the Commission's power to make recommendations to the Attorney-General and any Ministry on its own initiative. This is not an incidental point. It underscores the intellectual independence of the Commission and its role as a body capable of generating reform ideas grounded in research, consultation and comparative analysis.

Clause 4(1) of the Bill further provides for the Commission to request information from any Ministry, organisation or individual in relation to the law reform process, and to engage public involvement by publicising its work and conducting public hearings.

Law reform, Madam Speaker, must not be an insular exercise. It must be informed by public participation and professional expertise.

Clause 4(2) of the Bill adds a practical requirement: where the Commission makes recommendations to the Attorney-General or any Ministry, it shall, as far as practicable, attach a draft Bill to those recommendations. This ensures that reform proposals are not merely conceptual but are carried through to the level of initial legislative drafting.

Clause 4(3) of the Bill requires the Commission to be proactive and submit to the Attorney-General, at least once every year, a programme for the review of specific aspects of the laws of Mauritius with a view to their development or improvement.

This introduces discipline of forward planning that was absent from the previous framework.

A further innovation, Madam Speaker, lies in the introduction of structured post-legislative analysis. This is new. Clause 5 of the Bill provides that where legislation has been enacted wholly or partly on the basis of the Commission's recommendations, the Commission may subsequently monitor its operation, assess whether the objectives set out in its report or recommendations have been achieved, identify any unintended consequences or deficiencies arising from the enactment, and, where necessary, make further recommendations for reform. This is a significant step forward.

Too often legislation is passed and thereafter assumed to function as intended – and more often than we would like to admit, it does not!

A mature legal system, Madam Speaker, must be willing to review itself. Post-legislative scrutiny allows to refine the law in the light of experience rather than theory alone.

Clause 6 preserves the Attorney-General's power to direct the Commission to examine any aspect of the laws of Mauritius at any time. The Commission is required to report to the

Attorney-General on the results of any such review, including recommendations as it deems necessary.

Recently, Madam Speaker, I have asked the LRC to review the functions of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission and to report on what obtains in other Commonwealth jurisdictions, especially where there is now a need to separate the functions of that Commission in a Judicial Service Commission on the one hand, and a Legal Service Commission, on the other. The LRC's recommendations are eagerly awaited.

Clause 7 of the Bill addresses a practical difficulty which has arisen in the past. The Bill designates the Attorney-General's Office as the liaison authority were the Commission requests information from any Ministry. The Solicitor-General shall appoint an officer of the AGO to act as the liaison authority's representative.

In reality, delays or reluctance in providing information have sometimes impeded reform initiatives. By formalising this liaison mechanism, the Bill seeks to ensure that work is not stalled by administrative obstacles.

Part III of the Bill deals with the Administration and Management of the Commission.

The Commission is to be administered by Law Reform Board constituted under Clauses 8 and 9 with such broad representations brought from the Judiciary, the Office of Attorney-General, the Office of the DPP, the private legal profession, the University of Mauritius and 2 representatives of civil society – and now, and that is the novelty, the Director of the Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies.

This recommendation of the LRC was grounded in commonsense but was also a legal imperative. The presence of a Director-General of the IJLS will add another perspective and will ensure that the Commission has at its disposal the specialised experience of an institution dedicated to advanced legal education, research and training.

The Board is empowered to set up Advisory Committees under Clause 11 to assist in the discharge of its functions.

Now, Clauses 12 to 14 provide for the staffing of the Commission, including the appointment of a Chief Executive Officer qualified in law and experienced in legal research, a Secretary, and such other officers and consultants as the Commission considers necessary.

Part IV provides for the financial governance of the Commission, including a General Fund, annual estimates of income and expenditure to be submitted to the AGO and an annual report and audited accounts to be laid before the Assembly by the Attorney General.

The House will note, in particular, the savings and transitional provisions under clause 24 which ensure continuity by preserving the position and terms of appointment of existing staff and Board members.

All rights, obligations and liabilities subsisting in favour of or against the Commission under the repealed Law Reform Commission Act shall, obviously, continue to exist under the new legislation, and all assets and funds shall vest accordingly. This is both fair and pragmatic. Institutional reform, Madam Speaker, should not unnecessarily disrupt the human and operational foundations upon which effective public bodies depend.

Madam Speaker, beyond these specific provisions lies a broader a vision. The strengthening of the Law Reform Commission is part of the wider commitment to the quality of our legislation. Good governance requires not only the enactment of laws, but their constant refinement. It requires a willingness to simplify where complexity has accumulated, to modernise where provisions has become obsolete, and to consolidate where fragmentation has impaired coherence.

This new term, Madam Speaker, will thus see landmark legislation being introduced in this House, to enact profound change in the investigation of the serious crime, a new approach to certificates of character, the revamping of the organisation of sports in this country, the setting up of a modern child adoption framework, a review of sexual offences, a new Domestic Abuse Bill and much awaited amendments to the Criminal Code, including, *inter alia*, the addition of femicide to the list of offences against the person.

After that even more legislative improvement will be coming, and having a fully empowered Law Reform Commission will only make it faster and more potent.

In supporting this Bill, Madam Speaker, hon. Members are adjusting the machinery of the statutory body, but they also reaffirming the principle that the law must remain a living instrument, one that truly serves the people of Mauritius.

And with these words, Madam Speaker, I commend this Bill to the House.

Mr Mohamed rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

(5.32 p.m.)

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Mohamed): Madam Speaker, I have listened with a lot of attention and interest to the hon. Attorney General and he has been very explicit and in a very detailed manner, explained the purpose and the reasoning behind this piece of legislation. So, let me at the outset congratulate the hon. Attorney General and the officers of his Office who have done once again a formidable job in preparing this piece of legislation.

It is in my view very important to set the scene in order to show what his intent is but let me very briefly comment on an aspect of the law which I find very interesting and it is new. It is at clause 3(2) which talks about the independence, impartiality of this commission.

Now, this is a very important part. *Cela peut passer inaperçu* but so important. That shows that this is an institution that has a lot of value to this Government. An institution, because it has its value, it is being put in the law that it will operate independently and impartially. And not only that, it goes as far as to say that it shall not be under the direction or control of any person or authority. And for that matter, it also means not under the control of Government or any other entity whatsoever. When you look at the old law – well, the actual law before it is repealed – this element of impartiality and independence was not there. Not to say that they, in any way, acted under the control of any authority but to underline that part in the law, is what makes this piece of legislation, this Bill that is proposed, very modern and in line with all the legislations that exist in other Commonwealth jurisdictions such as Australia, United Kingdom and New Zealand.

The other element that I find of utmost interest is the post-legislative analysis. Very often, we are to ponder why is it important to have the possibility to have a post-legislative analysis of a piece of legislation and I connect this with the public involvement in law reform, hearings that can be conducted by the Law Reform Commission. Imagine the scenario that you have a piece of legislation that is passed and you do not have, as a matter of statute, the power for an analysis post the legislation being passed in Parliament. Then, you will have to wait for the Cabinet of Ministers, the Ministers concerned by certain pieces of legislation, to go to Cabinet, give instructions to the Attorney General's office, and then have a new proposal for changes to the law whereas, if you have a Law Reform Commission that will monitor the operation of an enactment as it is proposed here, where it has been wholly or partly based on its recommendations; if you are going to have a commission that is going to

monitor the operation, assess – as the Bill says – the extent to which the enactment has achieved its objectives or not, propose changes, corrective measures and at the same time, if you have that very same commission that will hold hearings, listen to people, listen to experts who will say exactly where you have to bring corrective measures. This is a very important element within this legislation.

And when I have, Madam Speaker, read the other law reform bodies that exist in the Commonwealth, it is clear that it is now in line with many other jurisdictions and this is why I once again would like to congratulate the Attorney General. With that piece of legislation as proposed, what do I surmise? That clearly, there is better governance. With this piece of legislation as proposed, there will be better governance. It is more effective reform – I have just spoken about the post-legislative analysis – there will clearly be greater transparency in the way that things will run from thereafter with public hearings and formal reporting that will improve trust because at the end, we have to improve trust with members of the public at large. Faster reform, this is another element that is brought forward. The Bills then will be drafted with recommendations, will speed up parliamentary consideration. There is no doubt about that.

And I end on that responsible stewardship. When you take note of the provisions in the Bill for explicit budgeting, auditing and transition safeguards to protect resources and personnel, this is responsible stewardship. So, for all those reasons – I say it again – better governance, more effective reform, greater transparency, faster reform and responsible stewardship, I congratulate the hon. Attorney General once again.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Your winding-up speech!

(5.38 p.m.)

Mr Glover: Madam Speaker, may I now present my summing-up which obviously will be short and sweet given the fact that we have not had much objection to this Bill and to add to the words of hon. Mohamed on the Bill, it is indeed an institution which has a lot of value for this Government. And what I want to add at this stage is, in fact, this Bill came to the AGO as an appendix to the paper issued by the LRC after its opinion came of its own volition on the amendments which the LRC thought had to be brought to the Act in order for them to do better work. And today, the Chief Executive Officer of the LRC is present to witness the

passing of this new legislation, which will give, of course, a serious impetus to the legislative process.

And, I do not think that there is much to add except to confirm what my learned friend has just stated, that it is now in line with most of the other Commonwealth jurisdictions which are of the same democratic system.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. You have to commend the Bill again.

Mr Glover: I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

The Law Reform Commission Bill (No. XXXI of 2025) was considered and agreed to.

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

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Law Reform Commission Bill (No. XXXI of 2025) was read a third time and passed.

Madam Speaker: Adjournment! Hon. Prime Minister!

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 24 March 2026 at 11.30 a.m.

Mr Mohamed rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned!

Adjournment matters! Yes, hon. François!

MATTERS RAISED

RODRIGUES – 15 MARCH 2026 TORRENTIAL RAIN – DAMAGES & REMEDIAL ACTIONS

(5.43 p.m.)

Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, with your permission, I will raise two matters this evening. The first one is addressed to both the hon. Prime Minister, in his capacity as Minister responsible for Rodrigues and Minister of Finance, and also to the hon. Minister of National Infrastructure and NDU, highlighting the recent torrential rain, causing severe flooding, which hit Rodrigues on Sunday 15 March.

The northern road traffic movement was affected. All *radiers*, of course, around Rodrigues became impracticable. Worryingly, the ICU at Queen Elizabeth Hospital was inundated and evacuated. Agricultural valleys were inundated and there were landslides around a few residential properties. The problem is not anew, but the urgency to address it is now greater than ever, and some require immediate remedial measures.

Madam Speaker, I will urge, in particular, the hon. Minister of National Infrastructure and the NDU, together with engineers and expert staff, to travel to Rodrigues at the earliest opportunity. A site visit is essential to see the situation at first-hand, to assess the scale and the damage, and to work closely with the Regional Assembly to determine the necessary remedial actions.

Such a visit would also accelerate the implementation of the NDU, LDA and RRA identified and approved drainage projects, which I rightly proposed during my tenure as former PPS for Rodrigues. The projects were due to start by year 2022-2023 and completed by year 2024-2025 for earmarked funds of around Rs3 billion, but were, unfortunately, delayed and cancelled by the whims and caprices of people.

The project comprises, amongst others, drains, Port Mathurin Phase III, including networks from Fond La Digue, Pointe Canon, Montagne Fanal and Camp du Roi, Grand Baie, Anse aux Anglais and Accacia. They also include the raising of several *radiers* at Diamant, Anse Pansia, Baie du Nord, Rivière Coco and Mourouk.

Madam Speaker, over and above the list mentioned, emergency attention must now be given to the road and drain behind the Queen Elizabeth Hospital at Crève Coeur, and the construction of a bigger culvert at Baie Lascar junction serving Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and drain bridges at Port Mathurin Phase III.

So, I respectfully call upon the hon. Prime Minister to consider the authorisation of a one-off allocation or reallocation of funds so that urgent repairs, maintenance, desilting, rehabilitation and infrastructural works can be undertaken without delay. Attention must also be given to the *radiers* along the Songes-Anse Raffin Coastal Road as well as those located on the link coastal road from Anse Fémie, Gravier to Var Brûlé.

Madam Speaker, the recent flooding has, once again, highlighted a reality, that the drainage and flood mitigation challenges in Rodrigues can no longer be delayed and postponed. The NDU must reprioritise needs, particularly in the context of the forthcoming budget proposals, in consultation with the RRA.

Madam Speaker, despite the people of Rodrigues' resilience...

Madam Speaker: Not too...

Mr François: This is very important. Yes, I know. I am within...

Madam Speaker: This is adjournment matters. Don't make a long statement!

Mr François: I just want to complete the information for the benefit of House and the people of Rodrigues, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, there is also a human impact. To conclude on this matter, whenever disaster events hit Rodrigues, people need to hear that their concerns are timely heard and supported. I, therefore, appeal and trust that the Central Government and the RRA will consider long-term and short-term relief measures or temporary hardship relief mechanisms or support to assist affected public in coping with the losses, and to address in a sustainable manner any flooding challenges facing Rodrigues.

I thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes, thank you for your first adjournment matter. Yes!

The Prime Minister: First of all, I express our sympathies to the people of Rodrigues. I must tell hon. François that I spoke to the Chief Commissioner the other day, yesterday, I think, or the day before. I expressed my sympathy. He explained to me exactly what you were saying. I have asked hon. Gunness, who is the Minister responsible for NDU, to go to Rodrigues to see, as you said, on site what needs to be done. I think he is going to leave, probably early next week or by the end of the week. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Okay, your second matter!

An hon. Member: *Huh?*

Madam Speaker: C'est la démocratie ! C'est la démocratie !

(5.48 p.m.)

RODRIGUES – GYNAECOLOGICAL CARE – ADDITIONAL GYNAECOLOGISTS PROVISION

Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues): Thank you. Madam Speaker, my second matter is addressed to the hon. Minister of Health, and it concerns gynaecological care in Rodrigues. At present, gynaecologists are posted in Rodrigues for a period of only one month. This means that any person having gynaecological health problem or a pregnant may be followed by as many as eight different gynaecologists during her pregnancy. Each specialist may have a different medical approach. This clearly affects the continuity and quality of care for patients.

I have also been informed that upon mutual agreement, some specialists spend only 15 days in Rodrigues. One can easily understand the consequences of a situation for patients who require regular examination.

Recently, there was an emergency case at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, where the only gynaecologist who was supposed to consult patients at La Ferme Area Health Centre could not attend. Patients had to be sent back and their appointments re-scheduled.

Madam Speaker, as the hon. Minister, himself, mentioned in a previous reply, the number of caesarean cases is increasing. I am also informed that maternal deaths are showing signs of increase, even if some cases may, unfortunately, be inevitable. These situations call

for urgent attention as Rodrigues currently has only one administrative structure in the health sector.

Madam Speaker, Rodrigues cannot continue to rely on a gynaecological system that lacks continuity in such a critical field of health care. In my regard, I humbly request the hon. Minister to look seriously into this matter and to also consider renewing – this is very interesting – the previous agreed arrangement between his Ministry and the former OPR Regional Government to recruit gynaecologists from India. This initiative had been pursued before and proved beneficial for Rodrigues.

Madam Speaker, the people of Rodrigues deserve stable and reliable gynaecological care. I rely on the usual collaboration of the hon. Minister and his Ministry. I thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister!

The Minister of Health and Wellness (Mr A. Bachoo): Madam Speaker, I am conscious that there is only one gynaecologist we are sending monthly. As a result of the introduction of 24/7 by the previous government regarding gynaecologists and paediatricians – they were bound to work for 24/7 –, this led to the resignation of dozens of such specialists from the government service. This is the reason why I see there is a big scarcity of gynaecologists and paediatricians in our hospitals.

The Public Service Commission has already invited applications. I do hope we do get such specialists so that I can increase the number of specialists going to Rodrigues.

At the same time, we are negotiating with the Indian authority, the Indian hospitals, and I believe that I will be able to get a few gynaecologists so that I can help you.

Madam Speaker: Here you are! Thank you very much, hon. Minister!

Thank you, everybody!

At 5.52 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 24 March 2026 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

PRESIDENT OF SEYCHELLES STATE VISIT – JOINT MANAGEMENT AREA DISCUSSIONS

(No. B/12) 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 Extended Continental Shelf in the Mascarene Plateau Region, he will state whether, during the recent State Visit of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Seychelles to Mauritius –

- (a) the progress of the Joint Management Area (JMA) framework was discussed;
- (b) new agreements or Memoranda of Understanding were signed to further explore and exploit the natural resources within the JMA, and
- (c) the exploration for potential petroleum and the conduct of seismic surveys were discussed.

(Withdrawn)

PALMAR PUBLIC BEACH – 25 JAN 2026 INCIDENTS – ENFORCEMENT MEASURES

(No. B/13) 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 incidents of 25 January 2026 at Palmar Public Beach, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) when was the request for police intervention received, indicating what followed;
- (b) the reported number of persons present and allegedly contravening public order and noise pollution legislation, indicating the number thereof arrested and provisionally charged;
- (c) why reinforcement was not mobilised, and
- (d) the measures being contemplated to enhance law enforcement and maintenance of public order on public beaches.

(Withdrawn)

TRIOLET - MR. R. D. B. & SPOUSE AGGRESSION – ARRESTS EFFECTED

(No. B/14) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the aggression committed against one Mr. R. D. B. of Residence Mère Theresa, in Triolet, reported on or about 08 March 2026 at the Triolet Police Station, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of arrests effected in connection therewith, if any, indicating the charges preferred against them, if any.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, on 08 March 2026, Mr R.D.B, aged 42 and residing at Triolet, reported a case of assault against him and his spouse at the Triolet Police Station. On the same day, Police Officers of the Triolet Police Station, together with Mr R.D.B, examined the site of the incident and looked for the alleged assaulters, but the latter were not found.

According to the statement of Mr R.D.B., on 04 March 2026, he was in front of his residence when a private car, driven by a lady, drove on the left foot of his neighbour's daughter, aged 06. The driver did not stop. After the incident, he went to the residence of the lady driver and reproached her. He then returned to his residence. Mr R.D.B. further alleged that, whilst he was about to convey the child to the hospital, the brother of the lady driver arrived, used filthy languages to his address and tried to hit him but he managed to escape. Subsequently, he brought the child to hospital. On his return, his neighbours informed him that some people were looking for him.

According to Mr R.D.B., on 08 March 2026, when he was at his entrance gate, he was assaulted by the brother of the lady driver and other persons. He attended hospital for treatment.

As at date, police enquiry is underway.

**ENTITIES – FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE GRANT – QUANTUM RECOUPED –
OUTSTANDING BALANCE**

(No. B/15) 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 financial assistance granted to entities, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd., information as to the quantum thereof recouped as at to date indicating the outstanding balance thereof.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/8)

RODRIGUES – AIR MAURITIUS FLIGHTS – HARD LANDING INCIDENTS

(No. B/16) 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 flights operated by Air Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of recent hard landing thereof at the Plaine Corail Airport, indicating in each case, the –

- (a) reasons therefor, indicating if the crew members effecting the landing were sufficiently experienced, and
- (b) measures taken to reassure the passengers.

Reply: I am informed by both the Department of Civil Aviation and Air Mauritius Ltd that there have been two recent hard landing incidents at Plaine Corail Airport. The first incident occurred on 31 July 2025 on Flight MK 130, involving an ATR72-500 and the second incident occurred on 07 February 2026, involving an ATR72-600 aircraft.

It is worth highlighting that Plaine Corail Airport is classified as a Category C airport due to its runway and meteorological conditions prevailing thereat and therefore, requires special pilot training.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that following the first hard landing incident, the Department of Civil Aviation initiated an investigation on 06 August 2025 in accordance with the International Civil Aviation Organisation aircraft investigation requirements. The preliminary investigation revealed that the flight was subject to crosswind turbulences.

The main contributing factor was the sudden crosswind associated with a windshear, hence causing the aircraft to land abruptly on the runway, resulting in the first bounce and thereafter, a second bounce which resulted into the hard landing.

In regard to the second hard landing which occurred on 07 February 2026, I am informed that, while approaching the runway, the aircraft encountered a northerly crosswind associated with a light tailwind which destabilized the aircraft making it to lose consequent amount of energy and fall to the ground thus, resulting into a hard landing.

Concerning the first incident which occurred on 31 July 2025, I am informed that the cockpit crew comprised a Captain with 9,124 Total Flight Hours, with over 5,000 Flight Hours on the ATR-type aircraft and a Copilot with 784 Total Flight Hours, out of which 600

Flight Hours are on the ATR-type aircraft. It is to be noted that both the Pilot and the Copilot were qualified and had the required experience to fly the ATR.

According to the Department of Civil Aviation, the aircraft was being flown by the Captain assisted by the Copilot and the Copilot made the appropriate call for go-around in accordance with the standard operating procedures during the occurrence. However, the Captain stated that he had control of the aircraft and decided to land and this contributed in the hard landing. Consequently, the licence of the Captain was suspended by the Department of Civil Aviation.

Regarding the second hard landing which occurred on 07 February 2026, I am informed that the Captain was a fully qualified instructor with 14,500 Total Flight Hours, out of which, 5,400 Flight Hours were on ATR-type aircraft. The Copilot had 13,300 Total Flight Hours, out of which 4,750 Flight Hours were on the ATR-type aircraft. Moreover, a preliminary investigation by the Department of Civil Aviation, revealed that the Pilot and the Copilot were sufficiently experienced to manage the flight in unfavourable weather conditions as per the standard operating procedures of the Department of the Civil Aviation.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that standard company procedures, approved by the Department of Civil Aviation, were followed to ensure passenger safety. After both landings, the aircraft taxied to their designated parking areas uneventfully and passengers were disembarked normally. As part of the procedure, the Captains reported the parameters of the landings, which were conveyed as hard landings as the landing limits had been exceeded.

I am further informed that as remedial actions and to ensure the safety of passengers as well as its crew, both aircraft were thoroughly inspected and repaired before returning to service. Furthermore, crew training has been intensified and Air Mauritius Ltd increased the percentage of simulations for Plaine Corail Airport. In addition, based on the recommendations made by the Department of Civil Aviation, Air Mauritius was requested to amend its operation manually to ensure that unfavourable meteorological conditions in relation to crosswind, tailwind and gusts are properly highlighted with a view to minimising the risk of similar incidents from reoccurring in the future.

I seize this opportunity to reassure the House and the passengers travelling to and from Rodrigues that Air Mauritius Ltd has classified the airport of Rodrigues as a Category C aerodrome. This means that particular attention is given to the training provided to pilots operating the ATR72 aircraft to Rodrigues. Several restrictions and requirements are in place including, special simulator training leading to a specific rating for daytime landing in

Rodrigues and additional simulator training leading to a specific rating for night landings in Rodrigues. Furthermore, only Captains are permitted to perform landings in Rodrigues at night. These measures are implemented to ensure the highest level of safety for operations to and from Rodrigues. No pilot is allowed to fly to Rodrigues unless he has completed all required training and checks.

The construction of the new runway at Plaine Corail airport will significantly enhance air connectivity of Rodrigues Island by enabling the airport to accommodate larger aircraft. Consequently, Air Mauritius will be able to operate narrow body aircraft to Rodrigues, with a seating capacity of around 200 passengers, thereby increasing passenger capacity and improving its services to Rodrigues.

CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO –MALDIVES POSITION & DIPLOMATIC IMPLICATIONS

(No. B/17) 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 Chagos Archipelago, he will state whether his office has been formally notified of the statement made by the President of the Republic of Maldives on 2 February 2026, indicating –

- (a) the diplomatic and legal measures being envisaged/taken by Government following same, and
- (b) how same may impact the –
 - (i) Chagos Archipelago treaty signed in May 2025 between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Mauritius, and
 - (ii) issue on maritime boundary contained in the 2023 ruling of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIAN ECONOMY – MOODY’S DOWNGRADE – COMPREHENSIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(No. B/18) Mr R. Beehook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister

of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Mauritian economy, he will state whether a comprehensive impact assessment thereon has been carried out should Moody's downgrade the sovereign credit rating thereof to junk status for some reasons or the other and, if so, give details thereof.

(Withdrawn)

DRUG TRAFFICKING & DEALERS – MONEY LAUNDERING – VEHICLE SEIZURES & ARRESTS

(No. B/19) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port-Louis South & Port-Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the laundering of money suspected of being proceeds of drug trafficking, since November 2024 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Crimes Commission and the Commissioner of Police, information as to the –

- (a) number of suspected drug dealers arrested in relation thereto, and
- (b) list of vehicles including cars, motorbikes and quads and pleasure craft seized in connection therein, indicating the total estimated value thereof.

(Withdrawn)

PORT LOUIS – ABANDONED VEHICLES ON PUBLIC ROADS – PARKING SPACE

(No. B/20) 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 abandoned vehicles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof currently lying on public roads in Port Louis and the extent of parking space available at the Fort George area therefor, indicating whether –

- (a) the prompt removal/disposal of the said vehicles is being envisaged and, if so, how and when, and
- (b) consideration will be given for the provision of additional parking spaces therefor.

Reply: As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that as at 14 March 2026, a total of nine vehicles had been identified as abandoned on

public roads in Port Louis. The owners had been notified and given 48 hours to remove their respective vehicles failing which, the vehicles will be towed to Fort George.

I have been informed that on 16 March 2026, seven out of the nine vehicles were removed and towed to Fort George. The Police is making arrangements to remove the remaining two vehicles.

The Fort George area, encompassing approximately 18 acres, has been provided for use by the Police as a storage facility for abandoned vehicles removed from public roads, seized vehicles, and other Police vehicles not currently in use. The site currently has a capacity of 455 parking spaces, of which, 255 are presently occupied, leaving 200 spaces available.

As regards part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the hon. Member that measures are being implemented to increase the parking capacity at Fort George by approximately 400 additional spaces in order to accommodate vehicles removed from public roads, seized vehicles and other Police vehicles not currently in use.

CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO – ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS – FINANCIAL, LEGAL & SECURITY IMPLICATIONS

(No. B/21) 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 Chagos Archipelago, he will state the current state of the negotiations with the United Kingdom, including the financial, legal and security implications for Mauritius.

(Vide reply to PQ B/1)

RODRIGUES – EARTHQUAKES – WARNING PROTOCOL

(No. B/22) 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 frequent occurrence of earthquakes in or near Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Meteorological Services, information as to whether –

- (a) any warning protocol and any sensitization programme on preventive measures have been established for the benefit of the public and, if so, give details thereof, and

- (b) Rodrigues is equipped with a seismometer and, if so, who monitors the data on seismic activity thus received and, if not, how the said data is received and monitored.

Reply: Mauritius and its outer islands are not entirely free from earthquake risks and tremors, although the region is generally considered to have a relatively low level of seismic activity.

The Mauritius Meteorological Services (MMS) is the official authority responsible for the close monitoring on a 24/7 basis of earthquakes and the progress of tsunami waves caused by seismic activity. The MMS monitors seismic activities around the world through the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and the California Integrated Seismic Network (CISN). The MMS is also responsible for the Tsunami Warning and issue appropriate bulletins and Earthquake Information Notes.

With regard to part (a) of the question, whenever an earthquake of magnitude greater than 5.0 occurs in the Indian Ocean, an alarm is triggered on the USGS System and the National Warning Centre of the MMS is activated. Information Bulletins are then issued in line with the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) of the MMS on earthquakes. The bulletins issued are as follows –

- (i) if the magnitude is greater than 5.0 and the epicentre is within 400 km of the islands of Mauritius, Rodrigues, Agalega or St Brandon, the MMS issue Information Bulletin to all stakeholders;
- (ii) if the magnitude is less than 5.0 and epicentre within 400 km of the islands of Mauritius, Rodrigues, Agalega or St Brandon, the MMS issue Information Bulletin to key stakeholders only (the hon. Prime Minister, the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service, the Commissioner of Police and the Officer in Charge of National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre (NDRRMC), and
- (iii) if the magnitude less than 5.0 and epicentre greater than 400 km, the MMS do not issue any information bulletin.

Since year 2009, Mauritius has participated in all Indian Ocean Wide-Tsunami Wave Exercise (IOWAVE) simulation exercises. The last real-time simulation exercise was carried out on 15 October 2025 across Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agalega. With regard to Rodrigues, the exercise was undertaken at three coastal locations, namely Anse aux Anglais, Caverne Provert and Jean Tac, Terre Rouge. The inhabitants in the vicinity of the coastal areas were

sensitised by the *Police du Tourisme*, *Police de l'Environnement*, Fisheries Protection Service and the National Coast Guard. The coastal communities were also familiarised on the dedicated siren and about 56 sea goers were sensitised.

Following the earthquake of magnitude 5.4 which occurred on Tuesday 06 January 2026 at around 14.10 hours, at about 77 km northeast of Rodrigues, at my request, a team from the MMS was deployed to Rodrigues to carry out an assessment. The team also carried sensitisation campaigns in Rodrigues from 07 to 09 January 2026 with the main objective of raising awareness on the earthquakes and other natural hazards, and the Early Warning System.

The MMS had several working sessions with the Members of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, representatives of public as well as private sectors, and heads of schools. Live interventions were made on radio and broadcasted on TV.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the MMS that a seismometer is operational in Rodrigues since year 2012. It was installed at Reserve Francois Leguat by the *Institut de Physique du Globe de Paris* (IPGP). All data are transmitted in real time to the IPGP Data Centre, around the world and to global centres such as the USGS, CISN and Tsunami Warning Centres.

After the mission in Rodrigues in January 2026, the team from the MMS has made the following recommendations –

- (i) Conduct of regular and continuous sensitisation on weather/natural hazards;
- (ii) Set up of a local seismic and tide-gauge network for Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agalega for early detection of an earthquake and timely dissemination of information. Negotiations for assistance from UNESCO and IOC are ongoing;
- (iii) Implementation of an effective communication system with all stakeholders, and
- (iv) Development of a well-defined protocol and SOPs to improve disaster preparedness.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD – MR. S. M., DEPUTY CEO – CONTRACT RENEWAL & CONDITIONS

(No. B/23) Mr R. Beehook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister

of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to Mr. S. M., Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Economic Development Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to his date and terms and conditions of appointment, indicating the circumstances under which his contract was renewed and the terms and conditions of his new contract.

(Withdrawn)

**MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT – IMPACT ON MAURITIAN ECONOMY –
ENERGY CRISIS – PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

(No. B/24) Mr J. F. François (Second 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 Mauritian economy, he will state Government assessment of the implications and impacts thereon of the current conflict in the Middle East, including, on the supply chain, inflation rate, oil, gas and energy prices and any other disruptions, indicating the preparedness of Government in the face thereof, including, whether negotiations are being held to mitigate the energy crisis.

(Vide Reply to PNQ)

**IRAN WAR – ECONOMIC IMPACT & FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES –
IMPORTS ASSESSMENT**

(No. B/25) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre D'or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the impact and financial consequences on the national economy due to the ongoing war in Iran, he will state if an assessment thereof has been made in terms of imports, including energy and food products, indicating whether mitigation measures are being envisaged/taken to offset the inevitable rise in the rate of inflation.

(Vide Reply to PNQ)

**RODRIGUES – HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES & WASTE – PROTOCOL &
PROCEDURES**

(No. B/54) Mr F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to hazardous substances and waste in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Environment Division of his Ministry, information as to the –

- (a) protocol and procedures, if any, put in place for collection, transportation, storage and disposal thereof and, if not, indicate the measures being envisaged, in collaboration with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, to address this issue, and
- (b) details of hazardous waste inventory in Rodrigues and those that should be shipped to Mauritius for disposal.

Reply: Hazardous wastes are wastes, that even in low concentration, have the potential to affect human health or the environment because of its chemical, physical, or biological characteristics.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that Rodrigues does not have a comprehensive hazardous waste management system for the collection, transportation, storage and disposal of hazardous wastes generated on the island. Hazardous wastes generators willing to dispose of their waste are legally required to obtain prior clearance from the Environment Division of the Commission for Environment by filling in a prescribed application form.

They are also made aware of the authorised disposal methods and approved disposal sites as follows –

- (i) Accacia disposal site in Rodrigues for electronic wastes;
- (ii) Roche Bon Dieu in Rodrigues Dumping Site for damaged neon lamps;
- (iii) Exportation of used batteries and scrap metal to Mauritius by recyclers, and
- (iv) Exportation of used oils (about 12,000 litres per annum) to Mauritius for treatment.

The House may wish to note that, as at date, no hazardous chemical wastes have been exported from Rodrigues to Mauritius for subsequent storage at the interim storage facility for hazardous wastes and export to licensed recovery/disposal facilities abroad.

As regards part (b) of the question, it is noted that no hazardous waste inventory figures were reported for Rodrigues in the last hazardous waste inventory exercise that was conducted in 2011. A new and comprehensive hazardous waste inventory exercise is being conducted for both Mauritius and Rodrigues under the GEF-ISLANDS Project.

The contract for conducting a comprehensive national hazardous waste inventory for Mauritius and Rodrigues was awarded to the Consultant, Strategic Networking Partners and

Consulting Ltd, on 21 August 2025. A first visit to Rodrigues in connection with the inventory exercise has been effected in November 2025 and it is expected that the study will be completed by September 2026.

The House may further note that the new hazardous waste inventory exercise will assist in policy development, regulatory enforcement, and sustainable management of hazardous wastes in Mauritius and Rodrigues. Additionally, it is also envisaged to develop a long term, integrated National Hazardous Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan for Mauritius and Rodrigues. The inventory exercise and strategy and action plan will provide the necessary framework to develop a proper hazardous waste management system for Rodrigues.

I wish to highlight that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has full responsibility of the portfolio of Environment by virtue of Section 26, Fourth Schedule of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001. Accordingly, implementation of policies and strategies fall under the purview of the Island Chief Executive.

METRO EXPRESS LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT SYSTEM – PUBLIC SECURITY – MEASURES TAKEN

(No. B/57) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the Metro Express Light Rail Transit System, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the measures being envisaged/taken to enhance public security around the stations and onboard the wagons thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS POST LTD – POST OFFICES – PAYMENT SERVICES

(No. B/58) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to services provided in post offices, including payment of bills and road tax, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Post Ltd., information as to the accepted modes of payment thereat.

(Withdrawn)

TAXI OPERATORS' WELFARE FUND – NUMBER OF MEMBERS – CONTRIBUTION COLLECTED

(No. B/59) Mr R. Beehook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) 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 current number of members thereof;
- (b) the quantum of contributions collected from taxi operators since the inception thereof to date, indicating the total amount disbursed therefrom under each scheme and the corresponding number of beneficiaries, and
- (c) whether a review regarding contribution thereto is being envisaged and, if so, indicate where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

BROWN SEQUARD HOSPITAL – MORTUARY – UNCLAIMED CORPSES – MEASURES

(No. B/60) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the Brown Sequared Hospital, he will state the current number of unclaimed corpses in its mortuary, indicating since when they have been lying there and the measures being envisaged to deal with this issue and whether his Ministry is in presence of requests from medical colleges to be handed over same for research purposes and, if so, where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

GLOBAL UNCERTAINTIES – FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN DISRUPTION

(No. B/61) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to potential food shortages and high prices thereof, especially, in the current times of war, global uncertainties and supply chain disruptions, he will state –

- (a) the measures being envisaged to mitigate the consequences thereof, and
- (b) whether lessons have been learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic episode for enhanced food security.

(Vide Reply to PNQ)

ELECTRONIC MONITORING BRACELETS – IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

(No. B/62) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Attorney-General whether, in regard to the use of electronic monitoring bracelets, he will state where matters stand as to the –

- (a) implementation thereof, indicating the reasons –
 - (i) why the relevant provisions for electronic monitoring have not yet been proclaimed/put into operation as at to date, and
 - (ii) for the absence of regulations defining the operational protocols and monitoring procedures, and
- (b) proposed timeframe for the full implementation thereof.

(Withdrawn)

PUBLIC HOSPITALS – CHILDREN UNDER CDU CARE

(No. B/63) Mr E. Juman (First Member for Port-Louis Maritime & Port-Louis East) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to children currently placed in public hospitals by the Child Development Unit, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof who, to date, present no health issues, indicating –

- (a) the public hospitals where they are currently placed;
- (b) the duration of stay;
- (c) since when they are missing classes, and
- (d) whether arrangements have been/are being made, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Human Resource, to ensure that they continue their education while in hospital.

(Withdrawn)

ANJALAY COOPEN STADIUM – OPERATIONALITY

(No. B/66) Mr E. Juman (First Member for Port-Louis Maritime & Port-Louis East) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Anjalay Coopen Stadium, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Sports Council, information as to the date of coming into full operation thereof.

(Withdrawn)

EBÈNE CYCLING LANE – COST & NEEDS ANALYSIS

(No. B/67) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the cycling lane at Ebène, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) the project cost thereof;
- (b) whether any survey was conducted prior to the implementation thereof, and
- (c) the average number of cyclists using same on a daily basis.

(Withdrawn)

NATIONAL PENSIONS FUND – BALANCE – RETURN ON INVESTMENT

(No. B/68) Mr E. Juman (First Member for Port-Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the National Pensions Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) balance currently standing to the credit thereof, and
- (b) return on investment thereof in the last financial year.

(Withdrawn)

BRITANNIA POST OFFICE – RENOVATION – REOPENING DATE

(No. B/69) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the proposed renovation of the Britannia Post office, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Post Ltd., information as to the duration thereof and expected date of reopening thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MONT BLANC WATER TREATMENT PLANT – EXCESS WATER DEMAND – SITE VISIT

(No. B/70) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Mont Blanc Water Treatment Plant, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to whether –

- (a) in case of excess water demand from the villages of Chemin Grenier, Surinam, Riambel, Chamouny, Rivière des Galets, Bel Ombre and Baie du Cap over supply from the said water plant, the alternatives presently available to satisfy same, and
- (b) consideration will be given for the carrying out of a site visit thereat with the relevant authorities to address the matter.

(Withdrawn)

**PUBLIC BUS TRANSPORT – CURRENT STATE ASSESSMENT –
CORRECTIVE MEASURES**

(No. B/71) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to public bus transport, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to whether an assessment of the current state thereof has been carried out with a view to addressing the issues being faced by commuters, especially during peak hours and, if so, indicate the corrective measures being envisaged in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

**FÉDÉRATION MAURICIENNE DE JUDO – CLUBS SEEKING
AFFILIATION – UPDATE**

(No. B/73) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Fédération Mauricienne de Judo, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand regarding the 18 clubs seeking affiliation thereto, indicating –

- (a) the ruling of the Sports Arbitration Tribunal in relation thereto, and
- (b) whether any decision has been taken pertaining to the recognition thereof and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

**FISHERMAN REGISTRATION CARD – CERTIFICATE OF CHARACTER
– ELIGIBILITY**

(No. B/74) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether in regard to the Fisherman Registration Card, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether it is a prerequisite for the applicants for the issue thereof to hold a clean Certificate of Character for eligibility thereto.

(Withdrawn)

**PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS – MAINTENANCE & UPGRADING –
COSTS INCURRED**

(No. A/1) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the maintenance

and upgrading of the infrastructure of public primary and secondary schools across Mauritius, he will state –

- (a) the annual budget allocated therefor;
- (b) the costs of addressing urgent repairs required thereat to ensure health and safety requirements of both children and staff, and
- (c) whether his Ministry will ensure that the most urgent infrastructural works are undertaken immediately to protect both children and staff.

Reply: As regards part (a) of the question, the annual budget allocated to maintenance and upgrading works for the Financial Year 2025/26 is Rs50 million and Rs147.5 million respectively.

As regards part (b) of the question, urgent repairs required to ensure that health and safety standards are maintained for both students and staff, an amount of approximately Rs115.8 million (Rs22.1 million for maintenance works and Rs93.7 million for upgrading works) has already been spent in the current Financial Year.

As regards part (c) of the question, I wish to assure the hon. Member that my Ministry is committed to improve the condition of school infrastructure through regular inspections, reports from school, Zonal Directorates, Occupational Safety and Health Unit and technical assessments carried out by the relevant stakeholders. The most urgent infrastructural works are prioritised and implemented in a phased manner.

It is to be noted that the implementation of works rests on availability of funds, outcome of procurement exercises and/or appointment of Contractor under the Framework Agreement of the MNI.

SMALL FARMERS WELFARE FUND – VETERINARY OFFICERS – RECRUITMENT

(No. A/2) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the number of veterinary officers required to provide adequate services to animal rearers registered at the Small Farmers Welfare Fund, he will, for the benefit of the house, obtain information as to whether measures are being envisaged to recruit qualified veterinary professionals from Southern African Development Community countries.

Reply: According to records available from the Small Farmers Welfare Fund, there are currently 921 registered breeders who are serviced by 19 veterinary officers of the Division of Veterinary Services (DVS) of my Ministry. With regard to livestock breeders, the free

veterinary services include, *inter-alia*, treatment to animals, artificial insemination, vaccination and active surveillance in respect of diseases. Also, on call services are provided after office hours and during public holidays and weekends.

In January 2024, owing to a shortage of veterinary officers at the DVS, the previous Government approved the recruitment of veterinary officer from Southern African Development Community (SADC) Member Countries on a contract basis for a period of one year, renewable on the same terms and conditions. It was also agreed that the recruitment would be extended to countries other than SADC countries. The Public Service Commission (PSC) had accordingly delegated the responsible officer of this Ministry the power to recruit veterinary officers from SADC Countries. However, the exercise was unsuccessful.

Subsequently, on 20 February 2025, 10 vacancies for the post of veterinary officer were reported to PSC, out of which, only one vacancy was filled on 15 December 2025. A recommendation has been made to the PSC on 13 January 2026 to re-advertise the post for the filling of nine permanent vacancies locally. Should not all vacancies be filled, my Ministry may explore the possibility of recruiting from SADC Member countries anew.

FOUNDATION PROGRAMME IN LITERACY, NUMERACY AND SKILLS – IMPLEMENTATION & GOVERNANCE

(No. A/3) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource with regard to the implementation and overall governance of the Foundation Programme in Literacy, Numeracy and Skills, he will state –

- (a) the established process and criteria used for the appointment of key coordinating positions within the programme;
- (b) composition, mandate and responsibilities of the Technical Committee overseeing same;
- (c) the number of official meetings held to date in relation thereto, and
- (d) whether members serving on the Technical Committee receive any remuneration or allowances in connection with their responsibilities.

Reply: As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that the appointment of key coordinating positions within the FPLNS is being undertaken in accordance with established procedures. This particular exercise requires the prior clearance of the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms and delegation of powers from the Public Service Commission. Final clearances are being awaited.

On 4 December 2025, my Ministry obtained the clearance of the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms to proceed with a selection exercise to enlist the services of six Coordinators for the FPLNS for an initial period of two years against payment of a monthly allowance of Rs12,000, subject to the necessary clearances being obtained. Eligible candidates were to be drawn from officers in the grades of Quality Assurance Officer/Senior Quality Assurance Officer, Senior Educator (Secondary) and Educator (Secondary), reckoning at least 15 years' service.

On 19 December 2025, the Public Service Commission delegated its powers to my Ministry to enlist the services of six Coordinators as per the aforesaid criteria.

The position of Coordinator, FPLNS was advertised on 6 January 2026 among the concerned officers, and the closing date for submission of applications was set for 26 January 2026.

However, on 16 January 2026, the Government Services Employees Association (GSEA) made a representation requesting that teaching personnel in the Pre-Vocational Sector also be considered for the position of Coordinator for the FPLNS.

This Ministry agreed to the request of the GSEA and consequently, on 5 March 2026, the Public Service Commission was informed accordingly. In the same context, establishment clearance from the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms has been sought anew on 5 March 2026. Once the clearance of that Ministry is obtained, the position of Coordinator FPLNS will be advertised again.

In view of the tight deadline for the preparation and implementation of the programme as from January 2025, Mr Vijay Sookharee, Quality Assurance Officer/Senior Quality Assurance Officer, was assigned the task of coordinating the work of the Technical Team set up, ensuring the preparation of the curriculum and overseeing the organisation of training workshops for Educators, Senior Educators and Rectors.

Approval has been obtained from the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms for the payment of a monthly ad hoc allowance of Rs14,150 to Mr Vijay Sookharee for performing the aforesaid tasks. The allowance is payable with effect from January 2025 and will remain in force until the recruitment of a Project Manager for the Foundation Programme in Literacy, Numeracy and Skills.

My Ministry is presently in the process of drafting of the Scheme of Service for the post of Project Manager. Once the Scheme of Service is finalised and approved by the relevant authorities, the necessary steps will be taken for the recruitment to the post.

As for part (b) of the question, I am informed that the Technical Committee set up for overseeing the design and implementation of the FPLNS was composed of representatives from key institutions and stakeholders in the Education sector, namely –

- Mr Nemorin, Chairperson (former Manager, National Social Inclusion Foundation (NSIF))
- Mr V. Sookharee, Quality Assurance Officer/Senior Quality Assurance Officer of the Ministry who is also coordinating the implementation of FPLNS;
- Representatives of my Ministry from different sections;
- Dr. Ajay Ramful Head of Curriculum of the Mauritius Institute of Education;
- Dr. Shalena Fokeera Wahedally, Principal Research and Development Officer, of the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate;
- Dr. D. Patpur; representative of the Private Secondary Education Authority;
- Mr B. Pitchen representative of the Service Diocésain de l'Education Catholique (SeDEC);
- Mrs Claire Ayoung-Herry representative of Loreto Institute;
- Dr. S. Ramful representative of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute;
- Mr P. Sawon representative of the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development, and
- Mr Ramchurrun representative of the Mauritius Qualifications Authority.

The Technical Committee was entrusted with providing technical expertise and guidance for the development and implementation of the FPLNS Programme, developing guidelines and procedures for the programme, advising decision-makers on technical matters, reviewing and evaluating technical proposals, projects or policies related to the programme; ensuring alignment with best practices and professional standards; gathering relevant technical data to support decision-making; and monitoring the implementation of technical guidelines.

With regard to parts (c) and (d) of the question, I am further informed that the Technical Committee held 20 meetings with different stakeholders and that members of the Committee have not been remunerated for their services.