



EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 14 APRIL 2026

CONTENTS

ANNOUNCEMENT

PAPERS LAID

QUESTIONS (*Oral*)

MOTION

BILL (*Public*)

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

ADJOURNMENT

QUESTIONS (*Written*)

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

Hon. Darmarajen Nagalingum	Minister of Youth and Sports
Hon. Muhammad Reza Cassam Uteem	Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations
Hon. Mahomed Osman Cassam Mahomed	Minister of Land Transport
Hon. 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 Ramtohul	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

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Deputy Speaker	Hon. Vedasingam Vasudevachariar Baloomoody, GOSK
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MAURITIUS

Eighth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 05 of 2026

Sitting of Tuesday 14 April 2026

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

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

ANNOUNCEMENT**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY – SEATING ARRANGEMENT – ALLOCATION & ADJUSTMENT**

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I have an announcement this morning.

At the Sitting of Tuesday last, I informed the House that I was awaiting a correspondence from hon. Paul Bérenger, hon. Chetan Baboolall and hon. Ms Joanna Bérenger prior to effecting any changes in their seating arrangements within the Chamber.

I am now in presence of a letter dated 13 April 2026 from these hon. Members informing me of their resignation from the MMM and of their wish to sit as an Opposition group in the National Assembly.

In the exercise of the powers vested in me under Standing Order 6 of the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly, I have, accordingly, allocated seats to these Members to sit on my left on the second rank, behind the Leader of the Opposition and the Opposition Whip, as you can see.

At the same time, hon. Members, I have taken the opportunity to make some adjustments to the seating arrangements on the Government side to ensure that no seat remains unoccupied, except for that reserved for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Hon. Jhummun has been reassigned to the seat formerly occupied by hon. Baboolall as I cannot see him when the hon. Leader of the Opposition is on his feet. I am glad that he is smiling!

I have also made certain adjustments to the seating of hon. Junior Ministers by moving them further right, including hon. Damry, who does not seem to be here right now. But after hon. Ms Foo Kune-Bacha, we will have hon. David, and then, we will have hon. Damry next to the Minister. I do not see why we should separate you.

Seats have been temporarily allocated to hon. Lukeeram and hon. Ramdass alongside hon. Junior Minister Ms Leu-Govind having regard to concerns that they have raised several times in relation to the air conditioning system.

I thank you for your attention.

For those who are listening to me, maybe in the House or outside, Happy Varusha Pirappu!

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) Virement Warrant – Quarter 3 (January – March 2026): Nos. 24, 37 to 55, 57 to 58, 60 to 75, 77 to 86. (In Original)
- (b) Virement (Contingencies) Warrant – Quarter 3 (January – March 2026): No. 10 to 13. (In Original)
- (c) Virement Certificate – Quarter 3 (January – March 2026): Programme/Sub-Programme (Certificates Nos.): 0105(1-5), 0107(2-3), 0108 (2-5), 0112(2), 0114(2,4), 0205(1), 0207(1), 0209(2), 0220(1), 0221(1), 0230(1), 0251(6), 0250(8), 0253(9), 0254(3), 0256 (1-2), 0301(6), 0402(2), 0403(3), 0404(1-3), 0501(1), 0505(3-5), 0605(1-3) ,0606(4-5), 0701(1), 0703(2), 0803(1), 1002-1004(1-6), 1101(5-6), 1201(2), 1301(1), 1303(1), 1402-1404(1), 1502(8-10), 1602(2-4), 1604(2), 1701-1702(1-3), 1703(2-6), 1901-1902(4-5), 2001(3), 2102(1-5), 2103 (2-6), 2201-2207 (6-19), 2301(6-10), 2302(2), 2401(2), 2403(3), 2502(4-7), 2504(1), 2602(2-5), 2603(8), 2701(2-3), 2702(5,7). (In Original)
- (d) The Freeport (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 40 of 2026)

B. Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection

- (a) The Consumer Protection (Control of Manufacture and Sale of Bread) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 38 of 2026)
- (b) The Consumer Protection (Consumer Goods) (Maximum Mark-Up) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2026.(Government Notice No. 41 of 2026)

C. Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research

The Higher Education (Use of Artificial Intelligence) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 39 of 2026)

D. Ministry of Arts and Culture

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund for the year ended 30 June 2024.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

PROTECTION OF WOMEN – REPORTED MURDER/ASSAULT CASES – FAMILY STRENGTHS RECONSTRUCTION

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr G. Lesjongard) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the protection of women, she will state –

- (a) the number of women killed and assaulted, respectively, in circumstances linked to domestic or intimate partner violence since January 2025 to date, indicating the number thereof, if any, having previously reported cases of threats, harassment or violence to the authorities which are still under investigation, and
- (b) where matters stand regarding the implementation of the measures Government committed itself to take to reconstruct the family strengths and create happy, supportive families as the foundations of a healthy, stable and sustainable society, in line with paragraph 47 of the Government programme 2025-29.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition for his question and for raising an issue of such critical national importance.

At the outset, I wish to underline that the protection of women against all forms of violence, including domestic and intimate partner violence, remains high on the agenda of this Government. This is a matter which not only concerns public safety, but also the dignity, rights and well-being of our citizens as well as the stability of our families and society.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that for the period January 2025 to date, ten cases of women killed and 6,478 cases of assault in circumstances linked to domestic or intimate partner violence have been recorded. Out of the ten cases of women killed, seven victims had previously reported incidents of threats, harassment or violence to the authorities, which are still under investigation.

Madam Speaker, Government has agreed to repeal the existing Protection from Domestic Violence Act and introduce a new Domestic Abuse Bill, which would –

- (a) broaden definitions to include other relationships such as intimate partners not living under the same roof;
- (b) introduce a mandatory reporting clause whereby professionals suspecting acts of domestic abuse would have the mandatory obligation to report the matter;

- (c) define the different forms of abuse, including physical, financial, sexual and psychological abuse;
- (d) introduce a Protection Notice to be issued by the Police for cases reported during the night or weekend to protect the victim from further acts of domestic violence, pending the issue of a Protection Order;
- (e) empower Enforcement Officers to make application for Orders on behalf of victims who are unable to do so;
- (f) facilitate access to Police Officers into the place of residence and accompany the victim inside to take his or her belonging;
- (g) make a statement on the case in any police station, irrespective of where the incident of violence occurred, and
- (h) provide for mandatory counselling and rehabilitation programme for perpetrators.

Madam Speaker, this legislation introduces four major innovations.

First, an expanded and modernised definition of domestic violence. We now recognise all forms of intimate relationships, including non-cohabiting partners, and modern family configurations such as step-parents. We precisely define the four forms of violence: physical, sexual, psychological and financial. Consequentially, a woman whose spouse controls all her income is a victim in exactly the same way as a woman who is physically assaulted.

Second, mandatory reporting for any professional who suspects acts of violence. This measure aims to break the silence surrounding abuse and to swiftly direct victims towards protection. Doctors, teachers and social workers will now have a legal obligation to report. Thus, creating a chain of vigilance around victims.

Third, streamlined access to justice through accelerated procedures and emergency protective measures. A victim in danger should not have to wait weeks to obtain a Protection Order.

Fourth, mandatory rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators of violence focused on preventing reoffending. We are not naive – the safety of victims remains our absolute priority, but we know that rehabilitation work can prevent violence from recurring.

This reform, Madam Speaker, marks a paradigm shift. We are moving from a purely punitive approach to a comprehensive strategy that protects, prevents and holds people accountable.

The message is clear, Madam Speaker: domestic violence is not a private matter. It is a crime. It will no longer be tolerated; it will no longer be minimised; it will no longer be ignored. With the Domestic Abuse Bill, we are finally giving ourselves the legal tools equal to this ambition.

Consequential amendments will be brought to the Criminal Code regarding cases of ‘femicide’.

Madam Speaker, the National Human Rights Commission Annual Report 2025, ‘femicide’ presents femicide as a human rights crisis in Mauritius, not as isolated murders. It is described as the fatal endpoint of escalating gender-based violence, usually preceded by coercive control, psychological abuse, threats, isolation and repeated violence.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (b), in view of promoting family well-being and addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV), my Ministry is implementing a series of awareness raising campaigns through social welfare centres and community centres. In 2025, last year, 119 campaigns were conducted whereby 4,450 people were reached, out of which, 3,309 were women and 1,141 were men.

My Ministry, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), conducted a 5-day Multi-Sectoral Training of Trainers and Coordination on the Survivor-Centred GBV Response was organised with the participation of representatives from various sectors. The training was facilitated by two trainers from UNFPA and UNODC, respectively.

The aim of this training was to deepen participants’ understanding of legal, psychosocial and health implications of GBV, while also mastering sector-specific Standard Operating Procedures. 50 representatives from different organisations participated in the training programme.

35 Police Officers and 20 Senior Officers were trained.

The purpose of the training was to –

- (a) Enhance their response to domestic violence;
- (b) Empower the Officers to better conduct risk assessment associated with domestic violence;

- (c) Enhance victim support, and
- (d) Guide Officers regarding training to be conducted in Police Training School.

In the face of rising reports, our action plan is built around several priority areas. The first is the strengthening of prevention, through more targeted and intensified awareness campaigns in schools, communities and the media. The second is early detection: our frontline workers have been trained to recognise the early warning signs of abuse. Teachers, social workers, police officers are all on the front line, ready to raise the alarm as soon as a suspicious situation is identified.

We are also intensifying our inter-institutional coordination between the Family Support Services (FSS), the Brigade for the Protection of the Family, social services and NGOs, to ensure faster and more effective support for victims. Over the past year, the Family Department of my Ministry has also put in place a family support programme – the Parental Strength Circle project, which is working very well, Madam Speaker. It consists of parenting sessions aimed at preventing at-risk situations before they escalate. Finally, we are counting on greater community involvement, particularly through Community Child Watch structures, to facilitate reporting and strengthen vigilance at the local level.

I thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, your first supplementary question, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The situation is very critical, Madam Speaker. Let me come to the first supplementary question. The hon. Minister replied extensively on the domestic abuse bill.

May I remind the hon. Minister when she intervened during budget time...

Madam Speaker: Your question!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, I will come to the question.

Madam Speaker: No, no, no! Your question !

Mr Lesjongard: This is what she said : *Un projet de loi dans ce sens est en préparation afin de renforcer la protection juridique à Maurice en élargissant les définitions de l'abus et des relations, et en renforçant les mesures de protection entre autres.* It is almost a year to go, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Please, ask a question.

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, what we want to know today, Madam Speaker: when will this bill be introduced in this House?

Madam Speaker: That is a good question. Hon. Minister!

Ms Navarre-Marie: Merci, Madame la présidente. Effectivement, il y a le *domestic abuse bill* qui est en préparation. Nous avons déjà un *draft bill* sur ce projet de loi, bien sûr. Nous sommes en train de valider le projet de loi. Nous avons organisé un *workshop* qui a regroupé plusieurs O.N.G. et le personnel du *State Law Office*. Mes officiers ont également eu, allons dire, un atelier de travail avec le *Parliamentary Gender Caucus* que vous présidez vous-même. Nous allons troisièmement organiser un *workshop* destiné à la *Law Society* et le *Bar Council* et les survivants.

Je suis confiante moi, que ce projet de loi va venir très, très vite devant cette Chambre.

Madam Speaker: Donnez-nous une indication.

An hon. Member: Voilà !

Madam Speaker: Donnez-nous une indication, Madame la ministre.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Alors, selon mes informations, ce sera dans un mois.

Madam Speaker: *Très bien!* Next question! Do not make a statement! Question!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes. Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister made reference to victims of domestic abuse, referring to cases where women lost their lives. Can the hon. Minister inform if risk assessments were conducted in each case, and, if not, why not?

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister!

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madame la présidente, nous avons, à travers l'île Maurice, 12 *Family Support Services*. Ces *FSS* offrent toute une panoplie de services aux victimes de violence domestique, à savoir, *counselling*, *mediation*, *legal service* et support psychologique.

Si, c'est nécessaire, de temps en temps, on fait des *risk assessments*, dépendant de la disponibilité des officiers et dépendant également de la demande de la victime.

Madam Speaker: Next question!

Mr Lesjongard: On est en train de noyer le poisson, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: Non, non. Cela c'est vous qui le dites. Allez ! *Question !*

Mr Lesjongard: But my question was specific.

Madam Speaker: Question!

Mr Lesjongard: Now, with regard to women who lost their lives, can the hon. Minister inform the House, how many were under Protection Orders?

Ms Navarre-Marie: Sept personnes ont eu recours au *Protection Order*.

Madame la présidente, je dois vous dire une chose. Il y a des victimes qui ont recours à nos services. Donc, nous les conseillons, nous leurs offrons les services disponibles, nous leur expliquons quels sont les services qui sont proposés par le ministère. Certaines viennent de l'avant pour faire une application de *Protection Order*. Les victimes ont leur *Protection Order* mais malheureusement, très souvent, *they withdraw their Protection Order and we cannot do anything for them. This is sad, but it is like that. We cannot force anyone to keep his Protection Order.*

Cela est un drame, Madame la présidente. Nous, les officiers, nous encourageons les victimes à venir de l'avant pour une application *for a Protection Order* mais malheureusement, très souvent, dans plusieurs cas, les *Protection Orders* sont *withdrawn by the victims*.

Madam Speaker: Next question!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes. Let me come to a specific case, Madam Speaker, and I want a straight reply. With regard to late Mrs Y.B., who lost her life, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether she had a Protection Order; whether she spent 24 days in a shelter as a temporary measure, and will the hon. Minister agree that in that case, her Ministry failed to follow up closely?

Ms Navarre-Marie: La victime Y.B., vous voulez dire celle qui dont on n'a pas retrouvé ? La personne qu'on n'a pas retrouvée ? Parce que vous me donnez des initiales, je ne pourrais pas savoir.

Madam Speaker: Donnez une indication ! Donnez une indication !

Mr Lesjongard: I am not supposed to give the name, but as a minister, she must know, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Mais vous-même, vous savez. Vous-même vous le savez. Dites !

An hon. Member: *Avoy nom la!*

Mr Lesjongard: It is Mrs Yogeshwaree Bhunjun, 37 years old.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister!

Ms Navarre-Marie: Oui, ce cas a été rapporté au ministère effectivement.

The case of Mrs Y.B. of Fond du Sac is known to our services. She first came to our services in June 2025. During the visit, she reported verbal, emotional and physical abuse by her partner, Mr P.R.

She also informed that that they have been cohabiting together since the past 10 years and have two children. She had applied for a Protection Order on 21 August 2025. However, on 25 September 2025, she decided to withdraw the case as she was then residing at the residence of her father.

Madam Speaker: Your next question. I have two members waiting for supplementary questions. I am just informing you.

Mr Lesjongard: Okay, thank you. With regard to pending cases of assault, Madam Speaker, may we know from the hon. Minister if all of these victims currently benefit from a Protection Order?

Ms Navarre-Marie: Do you mean the 4,000?

Madam Speaker: Cases of assault! Cases of assault that you mentioned.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Yes, I do not have this information. Can you repeat the question, hon. Leader of the Opposition?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, of course, Madam Speaker. With regard to pending cases of assault, may we know from you if all of these victims currently benefit from a Protection Order?

Madam Speaker: Which pending cases?

Mr Lesjongard: That she mentioned.

Madam Speaker: The ones that she mentioned, okay, because there are many probably.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madam Speaker, I have before me reported cases of domestic violence by type. Types of violence –

- Emotional violence;
- Physical violence;

- Psychological violence;
- Economic violence;
- Sexual violence;
- Verbal abuse.

And this is a ...

Mr A. Duval: That is not the question, Madam Speaker. This is not what has been asked.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: The question...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Minister! Hon. Minister!

Ms Navarre-Marie: Yes?

Madam Speaker: May I help you?

Ms Navarre-Marie: Yes.

Madam Speaker: The question was about the cases of assault which you apparently – I cannot remember – mentioned. You mentioned cases of assault.

Ms Navarre-Marie: No. According to information, not all cases of assault have a Protection Order.

Madam Speaker: Yes, it depends if they ask.

Mr Lesjongard: Let me come to the Government Programme.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr Lesjongard: And let me refer to paragraph 47. This was a pledge Government made –

“Government will encourage family interactions, mutual support, while offering more growth opportunities, namely through free internet to bridge the digital divide and fostering the development of every family member.”

May we know from the hon. Minister why up to now, this measure has not been implemented?

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madam Speaker, there is already free internet for people who are on the Social Register.

Mr Lesjongard: Then why did you mention it in your Government Programme?

Madam Speaker: Do not speak from...

(Interruptions)

Do not speak from a sitting position!

(Interruptions)

Ms Navarre-Marie: So, people have to come forward to benefit from this facility, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Yes, of course.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker...

Madam Speaker: *Tout le monde sait cela. Il faut demander.* I do not want to say more...

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: She should not beat around the bush in her...

Madam Speaker: I do not want to say more!

Mr Lesjongard: ... reply, Madam Speaker. Everybody knows that.

Madam Speaker, you will agree that the situation is alarming. Therefore, can the hon. Minister inform the House what strategies are being worked out at the level of her Ministry to end femicides in Mauritius and will the hon. Minister, on this case, commit to a timeline?

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madam Speaker, I have already answered to that question. I have already answered that we have a Bill which is in preparation and we also have awareness campaigns going through community centres and other community-based organisations.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr Lesjongard: I have two more questions.

Madam Speaker: Then there is your friend and then there is the Chief Whip.

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to Family Support Service Officers, the hon. Minister replied lengthily. Can the hon. Minister confirm to the House whether those officers are adequately equipped?

Ms Navarre-Marie: *Madame la présidente*, people are never very well equipped; there is always room for improvement. They are making their best to help whatever victim comes along to the office. So, they have been trained. They have equipment but nothing is sufficient. There is always room for improvement.

Madam Speaker: Yes, next question. Your last question and then...

Mr Lesjongard: Let me put a question. Where there is a lot of room for improvement, Madam Speaker, may I ask the hon. Minister whether she is aware that certain Family Support Service Offices, comprising some 10 officers, have only one telephone, one printer and no air conditioner units and very often – what I understand – Affidavit for Protection Orders have to be printed at the Court office because they do not have those facilities, Madam Speaker?

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *To gouvernement so leritage sa!*

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: *Calmez vous !*

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madam Speaker, this is what has been left to us by the previous Government. Over and above this equipment which the hon. Leader of Opposition is...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Let me listen!

Ms Navarre-Marie: ...is referring to...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Let me listen!

(Interruptions)

Ms Navarre-Marie: ...we have also...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mohamed, let me listen to the hon. Minister! Don't!

Ms Navarre-Marie: The Ministry also has hotlines which is operational 24/7 – the 113 for children and 139 for domestic violence. 139 and 119 – anyone who feels she/he is a victim of domestic violence can call on these hotlines.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. A. Duval.

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, thank you. Is the hon. Minister aware that internationally, according to the United Nations, 25% of cases of femicide reveal that there had been prior reports to the Police? That is the international average. In Mauritius, 70% had Protection Orders in place, not talking of prior reports, Protection Orders and yet, they have been killed. These figures are getting worse and worse.

Madam Speaker: Question!

Mr A. Duval: Does the Minister not agree that it shows a systemic failure by the Police and her Ministry in protecting persons from femicides? Figures are three times what they should be internationally.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madam Speaker, I agree that one case of femicide is too many, but we have the resources, we have the commitment to tackle the problem and that is what the Government is doing!

Mr A. Duval: But by now, it is worse!

Madam Speaker: Chief Whip!

(Interruptions)

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Chut! J'écoute la *Chief Whip*! S'il vous plaît !

Ms Anquetil: *Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.* In view of the importance of the Bill which requires wide consultation...

(Interruptions)

Wide! Wide consultation, not wild.

Madam Speaker: *Allez-y !*

Ms Anquetil: Is the hon. Minister envisaging circulating a draft thereof in the media so as to obtain maximum recommendations? Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Very clear question! Hon. Minister!

Ms Navarre-Marie: Yes, thank you, Madam Whip. We need to have Cabinet approval before circulating the Bill.

Ms Anquetil: A last one. Small one.

Madam Speaker: No. You said you have one more? Yes? I have to come back. The Leader of the Opposition has one more.

Mr A. Duval: But we all have!

Madam Speaker: *Il me reste quelques minutes.*

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, under the previous Government, the hon. Prime Minister used to chair a High-Level Committee on Elimination of Gender-Based Violence. Can the hon. Minister confirm if this is still on the agenda of the present Government to show the level of importance...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: It was chaired by the previous Prime Minister. You are talking of the...

(Interruptions)

Ms Navarre-Marie: You have the answer. It has been chaired previously.

An hon. Member: *Ena zis chair, pena latab.*

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Okay, one, one and then we finish. One, one!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, may I ask the hon. Minister with regard to Protection Orders, the 2024 figures according to Statistics Mauritius show that out of 398 Protection Orders, only one case was given an Occupancy Order, occupation order, therefore, does the hon. Minister find it normal that the ratio of Protection Orders to Occupancy Order granted is so drastically low...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: One moment, hon. Minister.

Mr A. Duval: And... Yes?

Madam Speaker: This does not concern the Ministry. It gives...

(Interruptions)

Mr A. Duval: It does not matter; it is under her watch. And what does she propose to do urgently to ensure that the 398 cases do not translate in only one Occupancy Order?

(Interruptions)

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madam Speaker, ...

Madam Speaker: I cannot hear!

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member knows quite well...

Mr A. Duval: C'est la fin...

Madam Speaker: *Chut!*

Ms Navarre-Marie: ...that this concerns the court, the magistrates...

Mr A. Duval: ... the law?

Ms Navarre-Marie: ...the judiciary. But we are proposing improvements to the law, and we are coming very soon with that.

Madam Speaker: Okay. I have one more here. And then...

Mr Mohamed: 10 years!

Mr A. Duval: *Ki* 10 years!

Mr Mohamed: *Be wi!*

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

Mr A. Duval: Worse and worse!

Ms Anquetil: La ministre peut-elle indiquer à la Chambre si les psychologues et les officiers de son ministère sont réellement formés et spécialisés dans la prise en charge thérapeutique des agresseurs ? Merci.

Ms Navarre-Marie: D'après leurs qualifications, oui.

Madam Speaker: *Hein, bon!*

Mr Beehook, yes! Then, you. Last two questions!

Mr Beehook: Madam Speaker, I would like ask the hon. Minister what will be done to ensure the security of those gender-based violence victims who withdrew their protection orders? We see that despite that, they are still very vulnerable. Thank you.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madame la présidente, dans le prochain projet de loi, ça va être moins difficile *to withdraw a protection order*. Il y aura des...

Hon. Members: Plus difficile !

Ms Navarre-Marie: Qu'est-ce que j'ai dit ? Ce sera moins...

Madam Speaker: Facile!

Ms Navarre-Marie: Ce sera plus difficile de *withdraw a protection order*.

Madam Speaker: Bon, allez, je ne fais pas de commentaires ! Je brûle, mais je ne fais pas ! Allez !

Ms Savabaddy: Merci, Madame la présidente.

Can the hon. Minister inform if the situation of welcoming and supporting victims at the level of police stations has improved? Thank you.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madame la présidente, je peux vous assurer que le *Prime Minister's Office* a déjà donné des directives au Commissaire de police pour que le staff, au niveau des postes de police, soit renforcé pour mieux protéger les victimes.

Madam Speaker: *Merci*. Time is up! Thank you, everybody.

Now, questions to the hon. Prime Minister!

Yes, my dear Mr Jhummun!

**DIRECTOR OF AUDIT REPORT FY 2024-2025 – CORRECTIVE MEASURES &
PBB INTRODUCTION**

(No. B/318) 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 Director of Audit Report for financial year 2024-2025, he will state whether an assessment of the content thereof has been carried out and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) corrective measures being envisaged in relation thereto, and
- (b) how the introduction of Performance-Based Budgeting is expected to help redress the situation.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, immediately, upon receipt of the Director of Audit Report for the financial year 2024-25, the Ministry of Finance has carried out a comprehensive review of the issues raised in the report.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the Ministry of Finance has, on 20 March 2026, issued a Circular to Supervising Officers and Accounting Officers urging them to take appropriate measures to effectively address the issues raised and implement the recommendations set out in the Report and which are justified. More specifically, Ministries and Departments will have to take immediate and appropriate actions to –

- (a) determine the root causes of these issues;
- (b) examine why they were not adequately addressed and the recommendations were not implemented;
- (c) implement corrective measures without delay, and
- (d) designate a responsible officer to oversee and monitor the implementation of these measures.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Finance has issued another Circular on 27 March 2026 to call upon Supervising Officers and Accounting Officers to exercise greater oversight over the statutory bodies under their responsibility, with a view to addressing, again, the issues raised in the Director of Audit Report. Supervising Officers should ensure that these

statutory bodies operate in accordance with national policies, comply with applicable regulatory and financial requirements, and deliver public services efficiently and effectively.

Madam Speaker, allow me to cite one example from the 2024-2025 Report of the Director of Audit with regard to the Mauritius Prison Service. A contract for the installation of CCTV Cameras at the Beau Bassin Prison was awarded for an amount of Rs13.3 million. This contract was awarded to Contractplus Ltd, whose CEO is one Mr Ashley Ittoo, former MSM Member of Parliament. This contractor stopped responding to any request from the Mauritius Prison Service. As per the Audit Report, no legal advice has been sought regarding this non-compliance. This is a clear case of negligence by design. This matter will now be dealt with shortly.

Government will not allow such situation to persist. This Government intends to take decisive and forward-looking measures to address the shortcomings highlighted in the Audit Report in a durable and meaningful manner, ensuring lasting impact and tangible improvements.

Madam Speaker, we have seen, over the years, the same thing keeps happening. It cannot be business as usual. Government has decided to set up a National Accountability Enforcement Authority (NAEA). This institution will examine findings and recommendations arising from the reports of the entities, including Public Accounts Committee, National Audit Office/Director of Audit, Audit Committee, Internal Audit and Office of Public Sector Governance. Our aim is to put in place a powerful system to reduce unjustified and irresponsible behaviour as well as waste of resources in the public sector.

It will also investigate departures from legislations, regulations, procedures and best practices by institutions and public officers referred by the Prime Minister's Office.

Following the tampering of the figures in the budget by the previous government, Government has requested for technical assistance from the IMF for preparing and implementing the Fiscal Responsibility Act. The National Accountability Enforcement Authority will be given the mandate to ensure compliance with the forthcoming Fiscal Responsibility Act, including an assessment of the macroeconomic assumptions.

Relevant legislations will, therefore, be amended so that following the submission of the report of the National Audit Office, the Director of Audit submits an additional report

focusing on the most important findings and recommendations. This will make it easier to impose sanctions where necessary. Abusive practices and waste of public resources should not become recurrent and chronic.

In addition, copies of all qualified audit reports of government owed companies and statutory bodies will be submitted to the National Accountability Enforcement Authority for investigation and remedial actions.

The National Accountability Enforcement Authority will be headed by a Director General and it will be conferred sufficient powers to convene Heads of Public Institutions, obtain relevant information in view of investigation and application of administrative sanctions.

Furthermore, as announced in the Government Programme 2025-2029, to foster greater transparency and accountability, the mandate of the Public Accounts Committee will be broadened. I will come up with proposals for consideration by the House.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the introduction of Performance-Based Budgeting has provided Government with a powerful tool to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the use of public funds. The PBB sets out Key Performance Indicators, which ministries and departments have to achieve. This is compelling ministries and departments to review their processes, eliminate wasteful and sub-optimal practices, and improve service delivery.

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

Mr A. Duval: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister with regard to the Public Accounts Committee, which he referred to, may I know when does Government envisage to amend the Standing Orders to allow the report of the Public Accounts Committee to be scrutinised by the House in debates, as was promised?

The Prime Minister: This should have been done even before.

Mr A. Duval: Yes, but...

The Prime Minister: I do not know why it was not done. I mentioned that in my answer that we are going to set up a National Accountability Enforcement Authority, which will also link with the Public Accounts Committee.

Madam Speaker: Yes, alright. Hon. Rookny!

Mr Rookny: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Prime Minister please advise the House on how would change be brought about if the same senior public officials are maintained in office or are merely shifted in-between ministries, whereby each one covers their friends? Thank you.

The Prime Minister: Unless we sack them, we cannot do otherwise. They are here.

An hon. Member: They are here to stay!

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, may I?

Madam Speaker: Yes, it must be related to the question.

Mr A. Duval: Yes. In fact, I am going back to the question I asked. My question was with regard to the amendment of Standing Orders to allow for the debate.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr A. Duval: He answered about something else. May I ask again?

Madam Speaker: No, we got the answer that it is coming!

Mr A. Duval: No, he did not say that.

Madam Speaker: Okay! Hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Yes...

Madam Speaker: Yes, I heard. We will go through the Standing Orders Committee.

Yes, hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY – KREOL MORISIEN – PROPOSED INTRODUCTION

(No. B/319) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of

Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of Kreol Morisien in the National Assembly, he will state where matters stand.

The Prime Minister: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As the House is aware, section 49 of the Constitution provides that the official language of the Assembly shall be in English, but any Member may address the Chair in French.

Standing Order 5 of the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly provides that the proceedings and debates of the Assembly shall be in the English Language, but a Member may address the Assembly in French.

Madam Speaker, the introduction of Kreol Morisien in the National Assembly has been the subject of several Parliamentary Questions in the past.

Furthermore, in the context of International Day of the mother tongue, Madam Speaker, you, yourself announced that you would hold consultative meetings with a view to looking into the practical hurdles that needed to be cleared before introducing the use of Kreol Morisien into the National Assembly.

I wish to inform the House that following the consultative meetings, a document has been submitted to me on 12 March 2026. The report proposes a structured road map. Then, now we will have to proceed in the following manner. The report, first of all, will have to be submitted to Cabinet. It has not been submitted to Cabinet yet. I will then propose a Motion in the National Assembly for the setting up of a Select Committee that would now be tasked to submit a report to the House within a period of three months so that there is no loss of time.

The practical hurdles you mentioned in the report of the Steering Committee, they concern legal procedures, procedural, technical and institutional conditions which are necessary before we introduce Kreol Morisien in Parliament.

The Terms of Reference of the Select Committee would be guided by the key actions contained in the report submitted by you, Madam Speaker, on the proposed introduction of Kreol Morisien in the National Assembly.

“Consultations between the National Assembly and the Attorney General’s Office for the drafting and –

(a) Introduction in the National Assembly of –

- (i) a proposed amendment to section 49 of the Constitution for the introduction of Kreol Morisien in the National Assembly; and
 - (ii) a motion, requiring notice, for the amendment of Standing Order 5 of the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly, to be accompanied by a draft of the proposed amendment; (...) shall then be referred to the Standing Orders Committee which shall submit, after deliberations, a report thereon, which shall be debated, following a motion moved accordingly and if and when approved, Standing Order 5 shall then stand amended accordingly; and
- (b) pursuant to Standing Order 77, prescription by Madam Speaker of the Interim Rules Governing the use of Kreol Morisien in the National Assembly during the Pilot Phase, to include the –
- scope and limitations of the use of Kreol Morisien in the proceedings of the National Assembly and of Committees;
 - rules on language decorum, and
 - use of the English language as the language for administrative, judicial and constitutional purposes.”

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes!

Ms J. Bérenger: Merci. À la lumière de sa réponse, l’honorable Premier ministre peut-il nous dire si son gouvernement soutient toujours sur le principe l’utilisation de notre langue nationale comme langue d’expression parlementaire ?

The Prime Minister: *Oui, définitivement.* This is one of the things, that... I must say, Madam Speaker, in all fairness, I was not too sure that that was a good idea at the beginning but the late Dev Virahsawmy convinced me why it was necessary. I must say that in all fairness.

So, then we started, I spoke to Dr. Arnaud Carpooran and then I launched his Kreol Morisien Dictionary, I think it was, at the University of Mauritius in September 2011. Then, the Mauritius Institute of Education has a department now dedicated in the pedagogy and curriculum of the Kreol Morisien.

In 2011, the State of Mauritius recognised an orthography for Kreol Morisien and in 2012, it was introduced in primary schools as an optional subject. Later on, it was introduced at the secondary level as well and the first exam for Kreol Morisien has been set at the School Certificate Level, and also the anthology for Kreol Morisien has been published in February 2026 just to show that we are determined that this should be the case now. This is why I put a limit of three months so that we can get on with it.

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

Ms J. Bérenger: L'honorable Premier ministre peut-il déposer le rapport soumis par la Speaker sur la Table de l'Assemblée ?

The Prime Minister: I intend to, but first I will circulate it to Cabinet. I think for the moment, just myself and the former Deputy Prime Minister have it. We will have to circulate to others, and then, we will submit it to the National Assembly.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Ms J. Bérenger: Et dans ce cas, l'honorable Premier ministre a mentionné certains *hurdles*, mais ça reste très générale. Il a mentionné des *legal procedures*, peut-il dans ce cas préciser spécifiquement quelles conditions doivent encore être réunies avant que la réforme puisse être amenée et que les amendements au Standing Orders et à la Constitution puissent être présentés ? Quels sont spécifiquement ces *hurdles* ?

The Prime Minister: I do not think they are unsurmountable hurdles that will delay. That is why I put a time limit of three months. But in the report, Madam Speaker, you mentioned these practical hurdles, which you said concern legal procedures and then technical and institutional conditions, which will be necessary. I don't think these are hurdles that are going to take us time.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Ms J. Bérenger: Merci! On a eu le calendrier de trois mois pour être présenté au conseil des ministres mais peut-on avoir...

Madam Speaker: Non ! Non ! Non !

Ms J. Bérenger: ... pour que le *Select Committee* présente son rapport au conseil des ministres ? Peut-on savoir dans la réalité, concrètement, quand est-ce que les amendements

pourront être présentés à l'Assemblée pour la réforme de la Constitution et les Standing Orders ?

The Prime Minister: Three months will take us just after the budget. So, after that, as soon as it is practical, but there won't be delay. That is why I put three months there. In your report, you suggested even up to six months, but I reduced it to three months, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Yes, I won't make any comments.

Alright, next question!

PITON – MR C. V. – ASSAULT CASE – INQUIRY

(No. B/320) Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) 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 case of assault on one Mr C. V. on, 05 April 2026, at Piton, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand regarding the inquiry initiated thereinto, indicating whether arrests have been effected in connection therewith and charges lodged.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 05 April 2026 at 22.15 hours, one Mr J. L. of NHDC Bon Espoir phoned at the Piton Police Station requesting for Police assistance. The two Police Officers immediately proceeded to the scene of the incident. Upon reaching there, they gathered preliminary information that one Mr C.V. had been assaulted and the latter, who had been stabbed and bleeding profusely, had already been conveyed to SSRN Hospital by volunteers.

The Police Officers then proceeded to SSRN Hospital to enquire about the victim, and gathered further information thereat from Mr V.R.

Later that night, at Piton Police Station, the Police recorded the declaration of Mr V.R. to the effect that he has witnessed a case of assault by Mr J.A.K.B. on Mr C.V. at NHDC Bon Espoir, Piton. On same night, the police examined the spot of the incident to secure evidence and search the weapon that was used to assault the victim. The Police also initiated and maintained mobile patrol in the surrounding on 05 and 06 April 2026 to look out for the accused.

On 06 April 2026 at 11.15 hours, the Piton Police Officers recorded the statement of the victim, Mr C.V. at SSRN Hospital and issued a PF 58. The victim stated again the same thing that Mr J.A.K.B. had assaulted him and stolen his money.

On 08 April 2026, Mr J.A.K.B., was arrested and his statement was recorded. He was provisionally charged for the offence of “Larceny with wounding” before the Rivière du Rempart District Court. The Court granted him bail after the latter furnishing a surety of Rs1,000 and Rs1,150 as costs and entering into a recognizance of Rs10,000 with the condition to report daily at the Piton Police Station between 06.00 hours in the morning to 18.00 hours. His next Court appearance is scheduled for 24 June 2026.

The Police is still in the process of recording statements from other witnesses.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, you want to question?

Dr. Prayag: Thank you, hon. prime Minister. Would the hon. Prime Minister indicate whether, in determining the conditions of the bail in this case, due consideration has been given to all relevant medical and evidential elements, including those arising from the victim’s hospitalisation having regard to the seriousness of the case and positive or negative substance abuse test done on the victim during hospitalisation?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, this is the prerogative of the court. They decide on what conditions to put in all this.

Madam Speaker: Yes, you are alright? Yes hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

BASIC RETIREMENT PENSION – ELIGIBILITY AGE INCREASE – IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(No. B/321) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the increase in the eligibility age to benefit from the Basic Retirement Pension, he will state whether, in the context of the preparation of the forthcoming Budget, his Ministry has carried out any study or socio-economic impact assessment of the effects thereof on vulnerable groups, including low-income earners and, if so, indicate the main findings and conclusions thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, as the hon. Member is aware and is indeed the whole population, the previous Government left us with a disastrous fiscal position. Public finances were in a mess and they had left the country with a public debt of nearly 90% of

GDP and a budget deficit of 9.3% of GDP. The economy had thus been irresponsibly managed over the past decade. Both the IMF and the World Bank had sounded the alarm on the imperative of reforming our pension system years back. In its report in 2015 entitled “Pension Reforms in Mauritius: Fair and Fast – Balancing Social Protection and Fiscal Sustainability”, the IMF stated that the reform of our pension system was now necessary and unavoidable.

Moody’s was on the verge of downgrading Mauritius to junk status. As Minister responsible for finance, I promptly took decisive measures in my very first budget to address and correct the situation.

We are, Madam Speaker, among the very few countries in the world, if not, probably the only one where the eligibility age for the BRP – which I want to emphasise – is a non-contributory pension, is lower than the normal retirement age. I do not think in any other country this happens; it has been 65 years since 2018. Furthermore, the cost of the BRP had become increasingly unsustainable, the words that are used in various reports. It had increased from 1.9% of GDP in 2010 to 7.8% of GDP in 2024-2025. Similarly, the percentage of BRP expenditure in Government recurrent expenditure increased from 9.6% in 2010 to 14.2 % in 2015-2016, and further to 24.5% in 2024-2025.

These figures clearly illustrate the growing fiscal pressure on public finances. Without reforms, expenditure on the BRP would have been unsustainable. The situation is such that, without reform, we risk a future where there will be no pension for any person who is retiring neither today nor tomorrow.

In addition, this significantly constrains our fiscal space thereby limiting our ability to allocate adequate resources in health, education and housing which are vital for our long term social and economic development.

Government, therefore, took a decisive action to address the issue in order to ensure a strong and reliable pension system for generations to come.

Madam Speaker, if no action would have been taken by this Government, it would have become impossible to sustain our welfare state as the cost of BRP would have reached Rs100 billion in 2035. The actual figure for BRP was Rs55.3 billion for Financial Year 2024-2025, that is, if you look at it, more than the budgets for –

- (a) Health, which is Rs17.2 billion;

- (b) Education, which is Rs19.4 billion;
- (c) Housing, which is Rs2.2 billion, and also
- (d) Police Services, which are Rs12.6 billion.

I think these figures speak for themselves.

Accordingly, we have decided to gradually increase the eligibility age for BRP from 60 to 65. I want to point out that it is a gradual increase and those who have turned 60 before the budget, they are still getting their pension at the age of 60. That is over a period, we started this gradual process from 01 September 2025.

I wish to remind the House that with a view to avoiding sudden hardship for our elderly who are impacted by the reform and protecting the vulnerable groups, including low-income earners, Government set up two Inter-Ministerial Committees to look into the matter. In the interest of time and expediency, the Committees were subsequently merged. The Committee had studied and assessed the impact of the pension reform with a view to come up with various options and possibilities to support those affected by the reform, particularly the poor and the vulnerable groups. On this basis, two main measures were proposed by the Committee.

The first measure was the implementation of an Income Support, through the MRA, to all those who are no longer eligible for BRP, provided that –

- (a) for a single individual, his or her monthly income does not exceed Rs10,000, and
- (b) for a couple, the monthly household income does not exceed Rs20,000.

This support aims at covering a range of beneficiaries including housewives, retirees, employees and self-employed persons who rely mainly on the BRP instead of focusing only on persons in sectors with difficult conditions. We looked at that but we decided to do it that way.

The monthly Income Support was set on Rs10,000 in September 2025, it has now been increased to Rs10,370 in January 2026, that is, full compensation was given to the loss in purchasing power due to inflation.

The second measure provides for the beneficiaries of Basic Invalidity Pension, the Basic Widow's Pension and the Invalidity Allowance, who turn 60 years of age, to continue to receive their respective pensions until they qualify for the BRP.

Madam Speaker, as the House is aware, Government has also set up a Commission of Experts on Pension Reform in September of last year. They were to look at the pension system globally and make recommendations to reform the three pillars of our pension system, including the pillar one, that is, the Basic Retirement Pension.

As regards the next Budget, the hon. Member will understand that I cannot reveal the policy measures now, but I will be announcing them in the budget.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, one question.

Ms J. Bérenger: Je vous remercie. Je ne demandais pas les *policy measures* qui seront prises dans le prochain budget. Ma question concernait précisément si une étude de l'impact socio-économique de la réforme a été faite avant le budget qui arrive.

The Prime Minister: Yes. We did – I cannot say it was a thorough study because there was a question of time but we are still going on doing this to check what in fact will be the impact.

Madam Speaker: Okay. *Deuxième.*

Ms J. Bérenger: Who is checking this impact? The committee?

The Prime Minister: This is done by the Ministry of Finance and also in conjunction with the Ministry of Social Security.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Next question, hon. Dr. Aumeer!

SEAPORTS & AIRPORTS – BORDER CONTROL – DRUG SEIZURES – OFFICERS POSTING

(No. B/322) 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 border control at the seaports and airports respectively, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) over the past three years, the number of –
 - (i) drug seizures carried out thereat, and
 - (ii) Police Officers, including officers of the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit, posted thereat allegedly involved in drug trafficking and the number thereof convicted therefor as at to date, and

- (b) whether profiling exercises are carried out prior to the posting of enforcement officers at strategic entry points thereof, indicating the measures being envisaged to ensure the integrity of officers posted thereat.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that from 01 January 2023 to 10 April 2026, 108 drug seizures were carried out at the seaport and 151 at the airport. Three Police Officers posted at the airport were arrested in connection with the drug cases. These Police Officers are currently in detention and have been interdicted pursuant to Regulation 28 of the Disciplined Forces Service Commission Regulations.

As regards part (b) of the question, prior to posting of Police Officers at strategic entry points, a thorough screening and due diligence exercise is carried out on the officers.

After the posting of the Police Officers, their conduct is constantly monitored by the Officer-in-Charge to ascertain that they maintain the professional standards required in the exercise of their duties at all times. Rotation of Police Officers is carried out on a need basis to preserve the integrity of the different departments. Training is also dispensed to the Police Officers on matters pertaining to discipline and integrity.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether officers posted at such sensitive points at the seaport and the airport, are subjected to the declaration of assets as per the Declaration of Assets Act 2019 so that signs of external riches match their salary or even their private business?

Madam Speaker: Good!

The Prime Minister: Very good suggestion, which we are looking at and probably we will bring to Parliament later on.

Madam Speaker: Yes, second question.

Dr. Aumeer: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister if consideration can be given to the presence of sniffer dogs at each of our six conveyor belts that are present in the arrival halls rather than random sniffer dogs assessing so that a thorough control of those who can use other means to get drugs in the country?

The Prime Minister: I looked into that matter, Madam Speaker, and the police tell me they do not have enough dogs, but they are looking into that problem.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Last one!

Dr. Aumeer: Does the hon. Prime Minister have any information from the Cargo Handling Corporation as to measures taken to have strict access to the container park and the fishing ports, particularly at night, keeping in mind that the port area was declared, in the Paul Lam Shang Leen report, as the most porous area where drugs enter the country? Thank you.

The Prime Minister: They are supposed to do that, Madam Speaker. And I hope they are doing it. Unless you have the information that they are not; you can give it to me.

Madam Speaker: We have been advised that PQ B/323 will be replied by the Minister of Health.

So, now we go to Dr. Prayag. Last question! Then, time is up.

ILLICIT DRUGS SEIZED – POLICE VEHICLE – INQUIRY & ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

(No. B/324) Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) 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 case of illicit drugs reportedly found in a police vehicle on 03 April 2026, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) where matters stand regarding the inquiry initiated therein, indicating the number of Police Officers interrogated, suspended or charged in connection therewith, and
- (b) the measures being envisaged to strengthen internal controls, monitoring and accountability mechanisms within the Mauritius Police Force.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on Thursday 02 April 2026, a Supervisor at Mitsubishi Motors, Leal Company Limited, at Pailles, found a suspicious plastic parcel containing several aluminium foils allegedly containing dangerous drugs in a Police vehicle, which had been brought for servicing and tyre check at the company's workshop.

As there was no immediate superior officer to report the matter, he kept the suspicious parcel in its original place and locked the vehicle. The next day, he informed his superiors at

Mitsubishi Motors who then reported the matter to the Police Vehicle Transport Unit, responsible for the servicing and repairs of fleet of Police vehicles.

The matter was immediately referred to the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU) and, on the same day, a team of ADSU Metropolitan called at the location and, in presence of all parties concerned, secured the suspected parcel, allegedly containing drugs. The vehicle was kept under lock and key at Mitsubishi Motors and the Police Sergeant from the Police Vehicle Transport Unit and the Supervisor of Mitsubishi Motors were brought at ADSU Office for enquiry.

The Police vehicle was examined by officers of the Forensic Science Lab and the Police photographer on 07 April 2026, as Mitsubishi Motors was closed from Saturday 04 to Monday 06 April 2026 for the Easter weekend. On the same day, the exhibits were sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory for examination as well as for DNA swab.

Madam Speaker, the said vehicle is used by eight personnel of the Special Team Metropolitan Division (North) on a daily basis and they have been interrogated and their statements have been recorded. The Police Sergeant from the Police Vehicle Transport Unit and three employees of Mitsubishi Motors have also been interviewed and their statements recorded.

On 09 April 2026, the houses of a Police Sergeant and a Police Constable of the Special Team Metropolitan Division (North) were searched, but nothing incriminating was found.

So far, Madam Speaker, there is no direct evidence against any of the Police Officers, and therefore, no arrest or suspension has been effected in connection with this case. The results of the DNA tests and further investigation will determine the course of action in terms of arrest or suspension.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I would like to inform the House that Commanders and Station Managers of the Mauritius Police Force have been instructed to strictly abide with existing Standing Orders to ensure an in-depth verification of all Police vehicles under their responsibilities and the Police Inspectorate Team to carry out surprise checks of Police Stations as well as vehicles under their responsibilities.

In addition, the Police Vehicle Technical Unit will henceforth examine in depth all Police vehicles being referred for maintenance, servicing or repairs.

Police is also carrying out specific training to Police Officers, focusing on accountability and transparency and the consequences meted out for indulging in drug related offences as public officers.

Madam Speaker: Yes, just one because we are ...

Dr. Prayag: Thank you, hon. Prime Minister. Could the hon. Prime Minister consider reshuffling police vehicles between stations as an urgent means to tackle this issue?

The Prime Minister: I can advise the Commissioner of Police of your request.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Time is up!

I have to inform you that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/327, B/328, B/329, B/332, B/333, B/334, B/335, B/336, B/338, B/339, B/340, B/342, B/343, and B/344.

Now, we go to questions addressed to Ministers. Because of the PQ's that have been withdrawn – it is a bit of a mess – it seems to me that I have to call hon. Caserne now!

CULTURAL DESK – IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

(No. B/346) Mr R. Beehook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the proposed setting up of a cultural desk that would act as a one-stop shop for concert organisers and artists, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

PETIT RAFFRAY – MULTI-PURPOSE SPORTS ARENA – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/347) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to Petit Raffray Village, he will state whether consideration will be given for the construction of a Multi-Purpose Sports Arena equipped with full facilities thereat.

(Withdrawn)

GENERAL PRACTITIONERS – STUDY LEAVE WITHOUT PAY – POSTGRAD DETAILS

(No. B/348) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to General

Practitioners of the public health sector currently on study leave without pay to pursue postgraduate studies, he will give the list thereof, indicating in each case, the –

- (a) university being attended;
- (b) field of specialty, and
- (c) duration thereof.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, I am informed that at present, there are around 108 general practitioners who have been granted study leave without pay to pursue postgraduate studies.

With regard to the list of general practitioners, the names thereof cannot be divulged for confidentiality reasons.

Concerning part (b) of the question regarding the list of universities –

- (a) China, Dalian Medical University;
- (b) Huazhong University of Science and Technology;
- (c) Nanjing Medical University;
- (d) Egypt, Cairo University;
- (e) Germany, Academic Teaching Hospital, Wilhelm University;
- (f) Asklepios Specialist Clinic Lubben, Brandenburg;
- (g) Bad Hersfeld Hospital;
- (h) GoAcademy Düsseldorf;
- (i) ISL Sprachschule University;
- (j) Medical Association of WestphaliaUppe, Munster;
- (k) Neprologicum Westfalen GbR;
- (l) Ruhr University of Bochum;
- (m) St Vincent-Kran Ken Hous Limbury Hospital;
- (n) Malaysia, University Sains;
- (o) South Africa, Nelson Mandela School of Medicine.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, may I? I am sorry. Is it okay to table this?

Mr Bachoo: Yes, of course. I am going to submit a copy of the list.

Madam Speaker: Yes, it is purely factual.

Mr Bachoo: I am going to submit a copy of the list.

Madam Speaker: Yes, if you do not mind. It is purely factual!

Hon. Caserne, you do not mind?

Mr Caserne: Yes, no issue!

Madam Speaker: Go ahead!

Mr Caserne: May I also the hon. Minister whether all the universities that he mentioned are currently recognised by the Medical Council of Mauritius? Is proper verification made prior approval to these leaves?

Madam Speaker: Proper? I did not get the last bit.

Mr Caserne: Is prior verification done prior approval of these leaves?

Mr Bachoo: Normally, when they leave for further studies after their MBBS course, then, they do not ask permission. Even the law does not compel them to seek the clearance from the Medical Council. But, in fact, we are thinking of amending the law so that before proceeding abroad for studies, they will be bound to, at least, have their names registered and they have to mention the universities where they are going. As at now, it is not compulsory.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Minister, in view of a shortage of medical doctors in the public sector, how does he compensate for the large number of junior doctors who opt to go for tertiary studies? Should he now be considering a staggered release of these doctors so that we have sufficient enough to replace them in the public sector?

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister!

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, this is a fact. There is a shortage of doctors. But you cannot compel them to stay. If they want to go for higher studies; many of them leave their jobs and they go. That is the reason why the speciality which is missing, like geriatrics and gynaecology, in these particular fields, we are allowing them. Whereas in other fields, where we have enough doctors, we try to discourage them. But unfortunately, we cannot compel them to stay in the hospitals. That is the reason why we are now trying to get doctors who can work on sessional basis. We are trying to get a few of them.

Secondly, we are also recruiting additional doctors on contract. It is a fact that we have a shortage of doctors, but we cannot compel to give up, that is, not to go abroad.

Madam Speaker: Hon. A. Duval!

Mr A. Duval: May I ask the hon. Minister on the other hand, what about the scarcity areas? What incentives are being given by his Ministry to encourage doctors?

Madam Speaker: Non, là, c'est une autre question.

Mr A. Duval: Non, c'est la même question.

Madam Speaker: Non, non, non!

Mr A. Duval: Whether there are any incentives being given to the doctors?

Madam Speaker: I am not allowing this question!

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, let me ask the question.

Madam Speaker: You cannot! I am giving a ruling.

(Interruptions)

I do not think...

Mr A. Duval: It is about doctors! May I ask the question?

Madam Speaker: No, because it does not arise!

(Interruptions)

You are still standing while I am speaking!

Mr A. Duval: But you have not listened to the question!

Madam Speaker: I know what the question is. Please, sit down.

An hon. Member: *A size, to pe argue la!*

Madam Speaker: I am not allowing this question, otherwise we can have ten questions on the doctors who are...

Mr A. Duval: But the previous question was whether we can block from looking for incentives and it is not relevant?

An hon. Member: Do not get over-excited!

Madam Speaker: So, you are going to question my ruling? Okay, I am going next to hon. Rookny.

Mr Rookny: Madam Speaker, on a point of information first, since my PQ B/323 has been reallocated to the hon. Minister of Health, should I come with that first or should I...

Madam Speaker: No, no. You go to that question. This one!

Mr Rookny: So, B/349.

Madam Speaker: Voilà !

**TRIOLET, A4 ROAD – TRAFFIC CONGESTION – ROAD MARKINGS
IMPLEMENTATION**

(No. B/349) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the persistent road traffic congestion on the A4 at Triolet during peak hours, on the stretch thereof from the Total Energies Service Station to the Fire Services Station, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, information as to whether road markings, including double yellow lines, have been uniformly implemented and enforced thereat and, if not, indicate –

- (a) the reasons therefor, and
- (b) whether consideration will be given for urgent corrective measures to be taken in relation thereto.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the TMRSU that the stretch of road in Triolet from Total Energies Service Station up to the Fire Services Station along the Terre Rouge-Triolet-Grand Baie A4 road is approximately 4.5 kilometres long and is a vital artery for vehicular traffic that experiences significant pressure during peak hours. A technical assessment carried out indicates that the primary cause of congestion in this area is chronic on-site and haphazard parking. This is largely attributed to the high number of vehicles, high volume of commercial activities in the area where businesses operate without adequate off-street parking for customers and delivery vehicles.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am advised that double yellow lines are present along the majority of the stretch of the road referred to above. However, their effectiveness is being undermined by persistent non-compliance by drivers, recurrent obstruction to private accesses and illegal curb side parking continue to impede the smooth traffic flow. Enforcement of compliance with road markings rest with the Police. My Ministry coordinates with them to step up enforcement in the region, particularly during peak hours with a view to easing the traffic problems being experienced. The TMRSU has been tasked also to conduct a fresh site visit to determine if additional interventions in terms of refreshed markings or other traffic measures are required to deal with the problem.

In the same context, I look forward to collaboration from my colleague, the hon. Minister of Local Government, also elected Member hon. Wochit of Constituency No. 5, where Triolet is located, to redrawing of yellow lines where needed. As a matter of fact, the

hon. Minister and I had working sessions on this subject last year and some very positive decisions had been reached, particularly on how we can expedite matters on road markings. We need to put these recommendations into action. Where necessary, we will have to rope in the RDA of my colleague, the hon. Ajay Gunness' Ministry as well.

Madam Speaker, while we impose fines and penalties to maintain smooth traffic flow and road safety, it is important to recognise that enforcement alone cannot be the sole solution. The public must also take collective responsibility and be introspective for their actions and their adverse impact on the road users by respecting parking regulations and being mindful of how their behaviour affects traffic flow. Responsible parking does not only reduce congestion but also ensures that the road infrastructure serves its real purpose for the welfare and good of the community at large.

Moreover, Madam Speaker, if last Friday's Cabinet decision on the promotion of carpooling is adhered to, especially during peak hours, this will go a long way towards reducing traffic congestion, not only in Triolet but island wide. The more so, important in the present context where the price of fuel has skyrocketed, thereby impacting heavily on our economy. As a matter of interest, in relation to the Cabinet decision to favour carpooling, this morning, in fact, my Ministry has received from proponents of carpooling their wish to assist Government in this endeavour by availing the latest technology, that means apps and AI. These proponents are already using that technology with a few private enterprises in Mauritius. I shall be meeting with them, on their request, to see how we can move this important initiative of Government forward.

Thank you.

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

Mr Rookny: Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister mentioned the use of apps. Is he aware that there is also trade unions that are opposing the use of these apps. Will he advise how will this affect their business?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Do you mean against using the apps that promote carpooling? The apps that I referred to are to promote, people can go into these apps to hop on onto a vehicle that is willing to provide carpooling facilities. Is this what you are saying?

Mr Rookny: Uber.

Mr Osman Mahomed: No, Uber is... Sorry.

Madam Speaker: I cannot follow. What was the answer, hon. Minister?

Mr Osman Mahomed: The hon. Member had questioned me on the apps that...

Madam Speaker: Yes, I know but what did you reply?

Mr Osman Mahomed: The apps that I referred to in my substantive reply, Madam Speaker, refer to apps that seek to promote carpooling. That means people who have spare capacity in their cars can offer seats to other people. This will go a long way to reduce...

Madam Speaker: Okay, car pooling.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Carpooling, yes.

An hon. Member: Car fooling!

Madam Speaker: You are right, yes.

Mr Rookny: Will the hon. Minister advise the House if he is aware the chronic problems he mentioned also spread to the laterals of the Triolet main road that feeds that road?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, I am sure it does...

Madam Speaker: We are still on double lines, right?

Mr Osman Mahomed: And in Triolet.

Madam Speaker: Right.

Mr Osman Mahomed: In Triolet. I am sure it does, Madam Speaker, because if the main road is congested, those coming from the lateral certainly be blocked.

Madam Speaker: Every way.

Mr Osman Mahomed: That is why we need to reduce the number of vehicles and the business owners along that stretch of the road have to make sure that their clients do not park their cars on that vital artery of Triolet.

Madam Speaker: Okay, good. We have got it. We have got a little bit more time now. Hon. Beejan!

**CONSTITUENCY NO. 6 – BUS ROUTES – COVERED BUS SHELTERS -
INSTALLATION**

(No. B/350) **Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to bus routes in Constituency No. 6, he will state whether consideration is being given for the installation of covered bus shelters along same and, if so, indicate the expected start and completion dates thereof.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the NLTA that 18 bus routes are being operated across Constituency No. 6, Grand Baie and Poudre D'or. This implies that we have scores of bus stopping places, some already provided with bus shelters and obviously, some not yet, otherwise there would not be the question.

The provision of bus shelters is a collaborative effort involving the local authority concerned and the Road Development Authority, the National Land Transport Authority, and the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of my Ministry. According to information provided by the TMRSU, since 2019, several smart bus shelters have been installed by the latter in Constituency No. 6, namely in –

- Grand Baie;
- St François;
- Pointe aux Cannoniers;
- Cap Malheureux;
- Poudre D'or.

I am further informed that the District Council of Rivière du Rempart has recently installed smart bus shelters at Mapou and L'Esperance Piton. Under the newly signed framework agreement, the TMRSU will install a smart bus shelter near the Vale Government School. As the components of the structure involve specialised units that have to be procured from abroad, works are only expected to be completed by November 2026.

Madam Speaker, I wish to reassure the hon. Member that Ministry is actually seeking to respond to all demands with regard to the construction and maintenance of bus shelters across the island. All requests are duly noted and surveys are carried out with appropriate recommendations. I wish to point out that one of the challenges faced by my Ministry is the question of funding. I must underline that funds made available in the yearly budget

encompass different types projects geared towards road enhancement and road safety and are used to meet the needs arising from all over the island.

Moreover, I wish to highlight that the Ministry has a protocol – I think this is an important part for the hon. Member – on the modernisation of bus shelters. The purpose of this protocol is to introduce comprehensive guidelines for the provision of bus shelters on main roads and motorways. The aim is to facilitate the construction of new bus shelters by interested promoters...

Madam Speaker: Exactly.

Mr Osman Mahomed: ...as well as renovation and maintenance of the existing bus shelters and demolition and replacement of any bus shelter which is in a deplorable state along the main roads and motorways while adhering to the existing legal framework and subject to all clearances being obtained at no cost to the Government. In return, they may use the bus shelters for advertising purposes as per conditions stipulated in the protocol. Upon completion of the said surveys – I go on – and availability of funds, the Ministry is requested to either fund the construction of additional smart bus shelters or seek the participation of private promoters to construct bus shelters strictly as per established protocol.

Madam Speaker, I acknowledge that construction of bus shelters in Constituency No. 6, and elsewhere, is a necessary infrastructure for the convenience of passengers. Construction of shelters in any region cannot be undertaken at one go due to budgetary constraints. It is a process which spills over consecutive financial years.

However, I wish to reassure the hon. Member that my Ministry will, within available means, consider all requests positively, subject to availability of land and all road safety issues being complied with.

As regards Constituency No. 6, the TMRSU and the NLTA will be requested to carry out a survey and establish the priority needs.

Madam Speaker: Okay, one question, then, Mr Beehook.

Mr Beejan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In view of several complaints and requests from inhabitants of St. François, Cap Malheureux, Roche Terre, Grand Gaube, Petit Raffray, Vale, Fond du Sac, Vingt Pieds, Péreybère and Grand Baie, will the hon. Minister arrange for

a consultative meeting with the representatives of villages in the Constituency Grand Baie-Poudre d'Or, along with relevant stakeholders prior to any action taken?

Madam Speaker: Short and sweet!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Will do!

Madam Speaker: Will do, good! Mr Beehook!

Mr Beehook: Is the hon. Minister aware that whenever, we, MP representatives of constituencies send requests for bus shelters, it turns out to be a hot potato which the RDA throws at the TMRSU, and the TMRSU throws at the RDA? Isn't it time to set up a specific agency or division that implements the bus shelters for the well-being of the citizens of this country?

Madam Speaker: Again, short and sweet. Very simple!

Mr Osman Mahomed: If you ask me about a specific department in my Ministry, it is my remit.

Madam Speaker: No.

Mr Osman Mahomed: But if it is another Ministry, I am afraid this is not of my remit.

Madam Speaker: But you will think of a good solution!

Mr Osman Mahomed: We will think about it. Madam Speaker, we will remove the ping-pong table.

Madam Speaker: Yes, remove the ping-pong. He is removing the ping-pong!

Mr Osman Mahomed: The ping-pong table so that there is no...

Madam Speaker: Very good! Ms J. Bérenger, last question.

TOURISM ACT AMENDMENTS – MARINE MAMMALS PROTECTION

(No. B/351) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the proposed introduction in the Assembly of

amendments to the Tourism Act for the enhanced protection of marine mammals within our waters, he will state where matters stand.

Mr R. Duval: Merci, Madam la présidente.

Les activités d'observation des dauphins et baleines et de nage avec les dauphins sont pratiquées sur la côte sud-ouest de Maurice par quelques 100 embarcations de plaisance sur 278 titulaires d'une licence délivrée par la Tourism Authority.

Dans ma réponse à la question parlementaire B/985 du 11 novembre 2025, j'ai informé l'Assemblée nationale qu'un premier projet de règlement, visant à encadrer la conduite de ces deux activités, avait été élaboré par mon ministère. Ces nouveaux règlements prévoient un certain nombre d'exigences auxquelles toutes embarcations de plaisance pratiquant les activités susmentionnées devront obligatoirement se conformer.

Madame la présidente, j'avais aussi indiqué que le projet de règlement avait été soumis à toutes les parties prenantes concernées pour la validation avant sa promulgation. Les organisations non gouvernementales (ONG), à savoir Eco-Sud, Marine Megafauna Conservation Organisation (MMCO), ont indiqué n'avoir aucune objection à l'activité d'observation des dauphins et des baleines, mais réclament que la nage avec les dauphins soit interdite. La Federation of Pleasure Craft Operators (FOPCO), qui regroupe les 278 opérateurs, demande le maintien de l'activité nage avec les dauphins et avec allègement des contraintes réglementaires.

Madame la présidente, compte tenu de ces propositions divergentes, j'ai présidé plusieurs réunions avec les parties concernées en vue de parvenir à un consensus sur la conduite de l'activité de nage avec les dauphins et au cours de ces réunions, je dois dire que plusieurs insuffisances dans l'application des règles encadrant cette activité, ont été relevées.

Lors de la dernière réunion du 10 mars, les parties prenantes présentes ont convenu que si l'activité devrait se poursuivre, une équipe d'intervention, *enforcement squad*, devrait être mise en place. Cette équipe devrait être composée d'agents de la National Coast Guard, de la Tourism Authority, de la Fisheries Division du ministère de l'Agro-industrie, et chacune de ces entités disposant des compétences spécifiques en matière de contrôle. L'équipe d'intervention devra travailler conjointement, de manière coordonnée, afin d'assurer des

pratiques raisonnables en matière d'observation des dauphins et des baleines, ainsi que la nage avec les dauphins à Maurice.

Les ressources supplémentaires requises en termes d'équipements, d'embarcation de personnel, de drones, de formations, etc., afin de permettre à cette équipe d'intervention de fonctionner efficacement et de manière efficiente, devront être communiquées à mon ministère dans les plus brefs délais.

Madame la présidente, dès réception de ces informations, une décision sera prise quant au maintien ou non de l'activité de nage avec les dauphins. Madame la présidente, j'insiste que nous devons absolument assurer la protection des mammifères marins, de notre écosystème marin et aussi protéger l'image de l'île Maurice. Nous devons, d'autre part, tenir compte des moyens de subsistance des cent opérateurs aussi, engagés dans ces activités, ainsi que de leurs employés et de leurs familles et surtout le contexte économique difficile actuellement. Donc, une décision courageuse devra être prise collectivement sur la base de la décision qui sera prise et les règlements appropriés seront élaborés.

Madam Speaker: Oui, allez-y !

Ms J. Bérenger: Je vous remercie. L'honorable ministre a fait référence à sa réponse à la PQ B/985 où il affirmait qu'un *draft* des *regulations* avait été circulé à tous les stakeholders. Comment est-ce qu'il réconcilie cette affirmation avec le courriel de la MMCO – où je suis en copie – qui a été adressé au ministre suite à la réponse à sa PQ et où l'organisation affirme n'avoir jamais reçu le *draft* des *regulations*? Comment une consultation peut-elle être réellement significative si l'organisation qui est la plus concernée par le sujet n'est pas consultée et n'a pas accès au projet de loi ?

Madam Speaker: Allons attendre sa réponse. On ne sait pas. Est-ce qu'ils n'ont pas reçu ? Vous avez envoyé ?

Mr R. Duval: *Madame la présidente*, you know exactly where lies the problem. You were in several meetings.

Madam Speaker: No, no! Speak to me! Minister, speak to me, please!

Mr R. Duval: Yes, several meetings, of which you are very aware of. The big concern, I must say, about these regulations is: who is going to take care, to take lead? No one knows. We have got three entities: the National Coast Guard...

Madam Speaker: Minister! Minister, may I? May I? The question was on this organisation which said that they did not receive the communication. Just let...

Mr R. Duval: But they can start again and come back to me. There are no worries about it.

Ms J. Bérenger: C'est ce qu'ils ont fait.

Mr R. Duval: I did not receive any...

Madam Speaker: Apparemment, ils vous ont écrit.

Mr R. Duval: I did not receive. If you got any...

Madam Speaker: No, no! Careful! Careful!

Mr R. Duval: ...no problem, give it to me.

Madam Speaker: Ask your next question!

Mr R. Duval: Give it to me. With pleasure, I will.

Ms J. Bérenger: Je vais déposer...

Madam Speaker: Vous voulez déposer.

Ms J. Bérenger: ...pas sur la table. Je vais communiquer au ministre encore une fois une copie du courriel.

Madam Speaker: Au ministre, d'accord.

Ms J. Bérenger: Mais, il l'a reçu, ça lui a été adressé.

Madam Speaker: No statement!

Ms J. Bérenger: L'honorable ministre peut-il donner un calendrier précis de quand ces *regulations* vont devenir une réalité, étant donné que ce dossier est en suspens depuis plus

d'un an malgré plusieurs relances, y compris à travers le comité interministériel qui était dirigé par l'ex-DPM ? Plusieurs relances ont été faites et le projet est toujours en suspens. Peut-il donner un calendrier précis ?

Mr R. Duval: Madame la présidente, je dois dire qu'il est très important de souligner que c'est un règlement très complexe parce que nous avons environ 100 opérateurs de bateaux de plaisance qui défendent cette activité actuellement et d'un côté, nous avons les ONG et d'autres autorités qui nous demandent d'interdire la nage avec les dauphins. Nous devons être très prudents, Madame la présidente, et veiller à ce que les informations appropriées et précises soient recueillies afin qu'une décision soit prise. Mais, aussi, je peux dire que mon ministère poursuit actuellement les consultations avec les différentes parties prenantes afin de finaliser les *terms of reference* de l'*enforcement squad*. Une fois cette étape achevée, je présenterai au Conseil des ministres un document sur la question afin qu'une décision collective soit prise.

Ms J. Bérenger: Nous n'avons toujours pas de calendrier, ni de *timeline*. Il n'y a pas que la nage avec les dauphins qui pose problème aujourd'hui. Le ministre est très bien au courant. La nage illégale avec les baleines est un gros problème. Les scientifiques ont mentionné que la population de nos cachalots résidents n'a cessé de diminuer et est arrivée, aujourd'hui, à uniquement 25 cachalots. Donc, l'honorable ministre ne convient-il pas que ce retard prolongé compromet à la fois les efforts de conservation et la crédibilité de Maurice en tant que destination touristique durable ?

Mr R. Duval : Je suis au courant de tout cela, Madame la présidente. Mais il faut prendre en considération une chose: l'*implementation* de tout ça demande un budget. Et tout ce qui s'appelle budget, ça arrive bientôt. Nous avons la National Coast Guard qui n'a pas de budget. Nous avons la Tourism Authority qui n'a pas de budget. Nous avons Fisheries qui n'a pas de budget. Donc, comment faire ? On peut parler aujourd'hui, et demain, faire mille réunions. Mais le point le plus important, c'est les fonds. C'est l'argent. C'est le budget. C'est le ministère des Finances qui doit nous en donner. Alors, comment on fait ?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker : Oui, j'attends qu'il ait fini. Question !

Ms J. Bérenger: Il a déjà eu une proposition pour cela.

Madam Speaker: Question ! Question !

Ms J. Bérenger: Le MMCO a proposé...

Madam Speaker: Non, Mademoiselle! Question, question !

Ms J. Bérenger: Le ministre est-il au courant que la MMCO a proposé un *conservation fee* pour rendre obligatoire et financer l'*enforcement* justement ? Donc, il y a une solution. Il suffit d'avoir la volonté politique !

Madam Speaker: Pas de commentaires !

Mr R. Duval : J'ai déjà répondu, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: Okay!

Ms J. Bérenger : Non, pas sur le *conservation fee* !

Madam Speaker: Question on this side!

Ms J. Bérenger : *Pe sove* !

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members: *Ey* !

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: *Chut* !

Ms Anquetil: Le ministre peut-il indiquer à la Chambre, dans le cadre de cette éventuelle législation, quelles mesures il compte prendre pour les opérateurs exerçant dans les espaces marins et risquant de perdre leurs emplois ainsi que leurs seuls moyens de subsistance ? Merci.

Madam Speaker: Je croyais qu'on avait déjà répondu à ça.

Ms Anquetil: Mais j'ai le droit de poser des questions.

Madam Speaker: Mais ça a déjà été répondu.

Mr R. Duval: J'ai déjà répondu à cette question-là. Comme je vous ai dit, Madame la présidente, ...

Madam Speaker: Non, on ne va pas répéter là. Moi, j'ai entendu !

Mr R. Duval : J'ai déjà répondu à ça, mais comme je vous ai dit...

Ms Anquetil: Les deux mesures !

Mr R. Duval: Les mesures que je vous ai dites.

J'insiste, Madame la présidente, que nous devons assurer la protection...

Madam Speaker: Les deux, vous avez dit !

Mr R. Duval: Oui. La protection des mammifères marins de notre écosystème marin. Aussi, comme l'a si bien dit l'honorable membre, l'image de l'île Maurice. Mais nous devons aussi, d'autre part, comme je vous le dis, tenir compte des moyens de subsistance de cent opérateurs engagés dans cette activité ainsi que des employés et de leurs familles, surtout dans le contexte économique actuel.

Donc, ce sera une décision courageuse qui devra être prise collectivement sur la base de la décision et des règlements appropriés. Mais c'est le Cabinet qui va décider.

Madam Speaker: Oui, mais dans pas trop longtemps !

J'arrête là. C'est l'heure du déjeuner ! Merci beaucoup!

At 1.08 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

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

Madam Speaker: We start with Mr Quirin!

CHEBEL FOOTBALL GROUND – SYNTHETIC PITCH – MAINTENANCE & REHABILITATION

(No. B/352) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Chebel Football ground, he will state whether his Ministry is in presence of any representation from the Municipal Council of Beau-Bassin/Rose-Hill as to the dilapidated state of the synthetic pitch thereat and, if so, indicate the measures being envisaged in relation thereto, if any.

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, I am informed that the Lindsay Law Kwan Football Playground at Chebel was converted into an outdoor synthetic football pitch in 2020 by contractor Best Care Ltd. The works were completed and handed over to the Municipal

Council of Beau-Bassin/Rose-Hill on 30 January 2021. The facility was subsequently inaugurated on 13 August 2021.

Thereafter, due to normal wear and tear over time, maintenance and rehabilitation works became necessary.

Madam Speaker, in view of the observed deterioration, bids were invited through the e-procurement system on 28 October 2025 for the maintenance of synthetic football pitch at seven sites, including the Lindsay Law Kwan Football ground. The contract was awarded to Grassworld Ltd, being the lowest evaluated responsive bidder, for a sum of Rs238,050, inclusive of VAT.

The scope of works includes cleaning of the playing surface, replacement of damaged synthetic turf, mechanical bushing, installation of silica and rubber granules, replacement of worn-out field markings as well as a general repair and rehabilitation of the pitch and associated facilities.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed that works have already started on site. However, following recent complaints from inhabitants and observations made by the Municipal Council, certain discrepancies have been noted in the execution of the works. These issues have been largely attributed to the persistent heavy rainfall experienced since last week which has affected the proper setting and adhesion of the materials used particularly the glue.

A site visit is being carried out today with the contractor Grassworld Ltd in the presence of the relevant officers of the Municipal Council to thoroughly assess the situation. The contractor has been formerly instructed to redo at his own cost any works that are not to the required standards or not to the satisfaction of the Council.

Madam Speaker, I am also informed that the Welfare Committee has requested that a technical evaluation of the material used including the glue be conducted to ensure full compliance with prescribed norms and standard. I wish to make it clear that no payment whatsoever will be effected to the contractor until all works have been completed satisfactorily, certified by the relevant officers of the Municipal Council and fully compliant with contractual specifications.

Madam Speaker, the Municipal Council continues to closely monitor the situation and has also undertaken cleaning and maintenance of the surrounding areas to ensure a safe

environment for users. I wish to reassure the hon. Member that all necessary corrective measures are being taken promptly so that the facility is restored to its full functionality and to the expected standards.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes.

Mr Quirin: Merci, Madame la présidente. Vu que les travaux qui sont apparemment déjà complétés mais qui n'ont pas été entrepris à la satisfaction du conseil municipal et de tout un chacun, peut-on savoir s'il existe un contrat de maintenance, – vu que même après quelques jours que les travaux ont été complétés, on a constaté des lacunes au niveau de la finition – qui lie bien sûr le conseil municipal au contracter, et si tel est le cas, quels sont les *clauses* et quel est la durée de ce contrat de maintenance ?

Mr Wochit: Madam Speaker, I do not have this information right now. I can get it for the next meeting. I can table it.

Madam Speaker: The next question has been withdrawn.

BLACK RIVER DISTRICT COURT – BUILDING – RENOVATION WORKS

(No. B/353) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Attorney-General whether, in regard to the building which formerly housed the Black River District Court at Bambous, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the current state thereof, indicating –

- (a) since when same is closed;
- (b) whether funds have been earmarked for the renovation thereof and, if so, indicate the expected start and completion dates thereof, and
- (c) whether any security services are provided thereat.

(Withdrawn)

Madam Speaker: Now, we have the hon. Third Member for Rodrigues!

CARDIAC PACEMAKERS – PATIENTS – CURRENT STOCK & REPLACEMENT BATTERIES

(No. B/354) Ms D. Henriette-Manan (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard cardiac pacemakers, he will state the –

- (a) number of patients currently living therewith and being treated in the public health sector, and
- (b) current stock thereof and of replacement batteries therefor in the public health sector.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, cardiac pacemakers are devices with a battery life of around 8 to 10 years. Used to control abnormal heart beat rhythm, beat abnormally low or abnormally higher than normal heart beat. Cardiac pacemaker's implantations are carried in each of the cardiac units of five regional hospitals as well as the cardiac centre. There are three types of pacemakers –

- (i) single chamber pacemaker;
- (ii) dual chamber pacemaker, and
- (iii) triple chamber pacemaker.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that the number of cardiac pacemaker implantations carried out in public health institutions for the period 2021 to 2025 amounts to 1,421.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the current stock of pacemaker replacement batteries in our public health institutions is 37. Additionally, all public health institutions carry out local purchase as and when required for emergency cases.

Madam Speaker, as regard to the replacement of batteries, I am informed of the following –

- the duration of pacemaker batteries is on average 8 to 10 years, and
- the appointment to patients with pacemakers is given on a frequency of six months to one year for review.

Madam Speaker, let me briefly enumerate the problem faced by my Ministry regarding the procurement of pacemakers. After floating of tenders for annual requirements for implants for pacemaker for Cath Lab, Cardiac Unit, Victoria hospital, an evaluation was carried out and IBL Ltd was selected. Notification prior to award in accordance with the provisions of Public Procurement Act was issued to both successful bidder IBL Ltd bidder A and the unsuccessful bidders on 18 December 2025.

Subsequently, a challenge was lodged by one unsuccessful bidder namely, MSJ Unicorn Ltd on 23 December 2025. The case was referred to Independent Review Panel on 05 January

2026. On 02 February 2026, IRP ruled that the bid from IBL was not responsive and directed my Ministry to carry out a re-evaluation of the items by a new bid evaluation team.

Accordingly, the new bid evaluation team submitted its report on 13 February 2026 and recommended the award to MSJ Unicorn Ltd. Notifications were issued on 24 February 2026, this time a challenge was lodged by IBL Ltd, the previous selected bidder. The matter was subsequently resubmitted to IRP; the latter suspended all procurement procedures pending hearing of the case.

However, given the urgency of the procurement, the more so as the stock of cardiac pacemakers were depleted, my Ministry had no alternative than to have recourse to a Certificate of Urgency issued on 17 March 2026 to waive the suspension of the procurement proceedings imposed by IRP in line with the provisions of PPA. Should the IRP rule in favour of the challenged, the bidder will be reimbursed the cost of participation in the bidding exercise. Consequently, the letter of award was issued MSJ Unicorn Ltd on 24 March 2026 with the first consignment expected to be delivered by 24 May 2026. Such situations handicap the service delivery of health care services unnecessarily.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Ms Henriette-Manan, yes.

Ms Henriette-Manan: Is the hon. Minister aware that a patient from Rodrigues requiring an urgent pacemaker battery replacement has been unable to access the necessary treatment having been referred back at least six times since last year due to supposedly unavailability of the battery pending the completion of the procurement, the tender exercises.

Can he propose what immediate measures that can be taken to ensure that such critical medical interventions are not delayed henceforth? Thank you.

Mr Bachoo: This particular case from Rodrigues was referred to me by hon. François, if I am not mistaken. He has already related to me and the needful has been done. This is what information I have got. On two occasions he spoke to me on that issue.

Madam Speaker: Okay. You have another question? Hon. Ms Henriette-Manan, you have another question? Speak up, speak up!

An hon. Member: Stand up!

Ms Henriette-Manan: Yes. The family has approached me; it has not yet been done. He is still waiting for it.

Madam Speaker: Okay, just follow up.

Mr Bachoo: Well, I have not received any information if this the case. So, tomorrow around 1 pm, the parents can come to me in my office, I will look into it.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr Bachoo: Every day, I receive public. I have no problem to receive her or him. Okay?

Madam Speaker: Okay. Are they in Mauritius?

Mr Bachoo: *Non, non* in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker: They are in Mauritius? The parents are in Mauritius.

Mr Bachoo: Okay, I will do it.

Madam Speaker: Okay good. Now, the next question will be for hon. Etwareea!

MIDDLE EAST CONFLICTS – MAURITIANS’ SAFETY – ASSISTANCE & SUPPORT

(No. B/355) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand’ Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the recent escalation of conflict and prevailing tensions in the Middle East spilling over the neighbouring region, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) number of Mauritian nationals currently present thereat, indicating whether their safety has been ascertained, and
- (b) nature of assistance requested therefrom, if any, and the support provided thereto.

Mr Ramful: Madam Speaker, I will seek your indulgence, my reply will be quite long. Thank you.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that in light of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East affecting the entire region. My Ministry has been closely monitoring the situation through our diplomatic missions particularly our Embassy in Riyadh and our Consulate in Dubai. Continuous coordination has been maintained with host countries and Mauritian diaspora networks to ensure timely assistance and information sharing.

My Ministry has issued two alert notices since the start of the conflict namely on 28 February and 09 March 2026 cautioning Mauritian nationals to refrain from travelling to the

Middle East and informing them of the hotline established at the level of the Ministry and our Missions in both Riyadh and Dubai.

Additionally, we issued two press statements on 03 and 14 March 2026, respectively, expressing concerns on the loss of lives, destruction of critical economic infrastructures and the complete shutdown of air traffic. We also called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and the resumption of talks between the concerned parties for global peace and stability.

Madam Speaker, as regards the number of Mauritian nationals currently present in the affected regions based on the latest information available from our embassy in Riyadh and consulate in Dubai, there are several hundreds of Mauritian nationals residing across the gulf region.

In the United Arab Emirates alone, more than 300 Mauritian nationals who were temporarily stranded following the outbreak of the conflict of 28 February 2026 and the resulting flight disruptions, have since been assisted in returning safely to Mauritius through commercial flights, notably those operated by Emirates.

Additionally, several hundreds of Mauritian nationals continue to reside and work in the UAE mainly in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. According to official figures from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, as of March 2026, there were approximately 2148 Mauritians living in the UAE.

The current number of visitors from Mauritius in the UAE stand at 204. The number of departures of our nationals from the UAE to Mauritius, from 28 February 2026 to date is 2299.

Our embassy in Riyadh was contacted by Mauritian nationals from the following cities and countries –

1. Riyadh – 58;
2. Jeddah – 38;
3. Madina – 15;
4. Dammam Tabuk & Buraidah – 8;
5. Qatar – 89;
6. Bahrain – 20;
7. Kuwait – 7, and

8. Oman – 4

Through the coordinated efforts of my Ministry and our diplomatic missions, contact has been established with the vast majority of these nationals via direct outreach, diaspora networks and dedicated communications platforms.

The embassy in Riyadh has issued an advisory note, activated hotline services and maintained active engagement through WhatsApp groups and other communication channels.

Madam Speaker, at this stage, no confirmed report of harm to Mauritian nationals have been brought to the attention of the Ministry. Host countries, particularly the United Arab Emirates and the kingdom of Saudi Arabia have implemented precautionary measures to ensure public safety including dissemination of safety alerts, promotion of remote working arrangements and temporary closure of educational institutions.

Madam Speaker, with respect to the nature of assistance requested, a limited number of Mauritian nationals have sought support mainly in relation to consular guidance, travel arrangements and precautionary advice. In some cases, our nationals, on holidays in the region, expressed concerns regarding their safety and opted to return to Mauritius at their own expense.

The Ministry, through its diplomatic missions, has responded promptly and effectively by facilitating the repatriation of Mauritian nationals including those stranded in the UAE through coordination with airlines and local authorities, establishing dedicated hotline numbers and email channels to respond to consular queries and emergency requests, providing real-time information and regular safety advisories to Mauritian nationals across the regions, advising on precautionary measures and safe movement including evacuation options where necessary, maintaining continuous communication with diaspora groups to monitor their well-being and provide psychological and technical support where required, liaising with host governments including the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs to facilitate transit arrangements, notably enabling Mauritian nationals from the Gulf region to access connecting flights from Jeddah to Mauritius where regular flights remained operational.

It is also worth noting that thanks to the personal intervention of the hon. Prime Minister with Senior Vice President of Emirates Airlines, Mauritius was amongst the first countries to initiate repatriation assistance for its nationals following the escalation of the situation on 28 February 2026.

Madam Speaker, the government remains on high alert and fully mobilised. We are firmly committed to safeguarding the interest, safety and well-being of Mauritian citizens abroad. Our diplomatic missions continue to monitor developments closely, maintain constant communication with our nationals and stand ready to extend any further assistance as may be required including evacuation support should the situation so warrant.

Mauritian nationals in the Middle East regions are being continuously advised to remain vigilant, adhere to local authority guidance and stay in close contact with our diplomatic missions.

I wish to assure the House that the safety and well-being of Mauritian citizens abroad remain a top priority of his government.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you very much, hon. Minister.

Hon. Etwareea, are you okay? Yes, hon. A. Duval!

MANUAL GRADE WORKERS – RECRUITMENT – TERMS & CONDITIONS

(No. B/356) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to recent recruitment of manual grade workers, comprising scavengers, refuse collectors, general workers and handy workers by the Municipal City Council of Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof, indicating the –

- (a) terms and conditions of employment thereof, and
- (b) number thereof whose services were terminated on or about January/February 2026.

Mr Wochit: Madam Speaker, at the very outset, I wish to inform the House that pursuant to section 4(1) for the Local Government Service Commission Act 1975, the power of appointment as well as removal from office in respect of employees of local authorities rests exclusively in Local Government Service Commission, that is, the LGSC.

Section 4(2) of the same act further provides that the Commission shall not, in the exercise of its functions, be subject to the direction or control of any other person or authority.

Having stated the above, I am informed by the LGSC that the recruitment exercise for the Municipal City Council of Port Louis following advertisement released on 28 May 2025, is ongoing.

Madam Speaker, all appointments in the workman cadre comprising scavenging, refuse collectors, general workers and handy workers are made on a purely temporary day-to-day basis in accordance with established procedures.

Thereafter, a year after joining service, the incumbent is appointed to the permanent and pensionable establishment, subject to a good performance, attendance, conduct and being medically fit for duty.

Madam Speaker, I wish to emphasise that these terms and conditions are clearly communicated to recruit prior to the assumption of duties and form part of the standard administrative framework governing all such appointments. They are applied in a uniform, transparent and consistent manner across all local authorities under the supervision of the Local Government Service Commission.

Madam Speaker, as regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that following the judgement of the Supreme Court delivered on 23 January 2026 to the effect that the recruitment exercise of the employees of the workman cadre effected prior to November 2024, was illegal and acting on the advice of the hon. Attorney General Office which took the view that the termination was legally in order, the services of the workers concerned were terminated. Termination letters were accordingly issued by the Chief Executive of all the local authorities including the Municipal City Council of Port Louis on 29 January 2026.

Out of the 164 employees who had been recruited in July and October 2024 for the Municipal City Council of Port Louis, the services of 158 employees were terminated on 29 January 2026.

As regards the remaining six employees, four had resigned, three were similarly dismissed and one passed away. Madam Speaker, it is important to underline that the appointments concerned were temporary in nature and the decision related to appointment and termination falls exclusively within the statutory remits of the LGSC.

I am further informed that recruitment exercise for the other 11 local authorities has recently been completed by the LGSC and appointments in the grade of workman class have already been made thereto on the basis of vacancies reported to the LGSC by the Unified Local Government Service Board of the Ministry of Local Government.

As regard to the Municipal City Council of Port Louis, the recruitment exercise initiated following the advertisement of 28 May 2025 is as I have stated, still ongoing.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes!

Mr A. Duval: May I ask the hon. Minister to confirm that only, not more than 15% of the employees who have been terminated, have been re-employed, be it at the Municipal City Council of Port Louis or in other District Councils –how is it that those recruitments which was promised to be done...

Madam Speaker: One question at a time. Let him confirm that first.

Mr A. Duval: Okay. Confirm that not more than 15%.

Madam Speaker: 50%?

Mr A. Duval: 15%

Madam Speaker: 15%?

Mr Wochit: Madam Speaker, recruitment exercise is conducted by the LGSC.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Wochit: In a very transparent and merit-based manner. All eligible candidates must apply and will be considered in accordance to the prescribed procedures. So, the recruitment rests on the LGSC itself.

Madam Speaker: But can you confirm this 15%?

Mr Wochit: Not in local government.

Madam Speaker: Yes, we know that. Can you confirm that 15% has been...

Mr Wochit: No, no, I cannot.

Madam Speaker: You cannot?

Mr Wochit: No, because it depends on the LGSC.

Madam Speaker: Second question!

Mr A. Duval: If he cannot confirm, I will ask him a second question.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr A. Duval: Is the hon. Minister aware that whilst it was promised that recruitment will be done on the basis of transparency and meritocracy, that those persons who have

worked for 16 months, who have contributed to the SICOM Pension Fund – who by the way have not been reimbursed – and thus have had experience and a track record, have not been considered for recruitment again?

Madam Speaker: But he will reply again...

Mr A. Duval: I will ask whether it is in line with his promise of meritocracy? Given that they have a track record. According to the information I have, the vast majority has been left out.

Madam Speaker: No, but once...

Mr Wochit: Madam Speaker, I have already replied to that question

Madam Speaker: Yes!

(Interruptions)

One moment.

Mr A. Duval: I have a third; another question.

Madam Speaker: Yes, but you cannot put a question when we know that we got an answer already.

Mr A. Duval: But it is not the same.

Madam Speaker: And then everybody knows. I do not want to get involved.

Mr A. Duval: Another one. It is not the same, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: But the question is...

Mr A. Duval: Yes?

Madam Speaker: The LGSC recruits, not the Ministry of Local Government.

Mr A. Duval: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he will see to it that the contributions made by those persons to SICOM, namely to the tune of Rs1,084 per month for 16 months – so, we are talking about Rs17,000-Rs18,000 – be reimbursed to those persons who have been now left out of the job?

Madam Speaker: Yes, that is okay. You can consider that, hon. Minister.

Hon. Minister, can you consider?

Mr Wochit: Madam Speaker, I will have to get advice from the SLO. If it is fit and proper, I can consider.

Madam Speaker: Yes, alright. But you can deal with the question.

Mr Wochit: Yes.

Madam Speaker: You will look into that question, okay? Next question!

Ms Savabaddy: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can I ask the hon. Minister if he can provide to the Chamber the list of recruitment for all local governments? Thank you.

Madam Speaker: You mean concerning the same?

Ms Savabaddy: Yes.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Can you provide it?

Mr Wochit: Madam Speaker, I can give the number, but not the list of the names.

Madam Speaker: Exactly, yes! He can give the number.

Ms Savabaddy: At least for Constituency No. 4? Thank you.

Mr Wochit: Madam Speaker, with data protection, we cannot give the names. According to the Local Government Services Commission, we cannot give the names.

Madam Speaker: Right.

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, may I ask my last question?

Madam Speaker: A last question!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you. Madam Speaker, there was an inter-ministerial committee set up to look into this issue. I will ask the hon. Minister whether he has taken note of the Supreme Court judgment, whereby it stated that it was abundantly clear that it was not through any fault of those employees, the fact that they were employed under *un vice de procedure*.

Madam Speaker: D'accord.

Mr A. Duval: The LGSC was being invited to consider those persons in the recruitment process. I will ask the hon. Minister whether he has taken note of same and whether he intends to do anything about it?

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, the issue was not one of the fault of the workers, but the legality of the recruitment process.

Madam Speaker: That's it!

Mr Woochit: The decision was taken by the LGSC in compliance with the Supreme Court judgment and legal advice, which confirmed that the appointments were invalid.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: One moment! I do not want to give the answer, although I do have the answer. People who are not appointed; maybe the hon. Attorney General can help?

Mr A. Duval: No, it was decided by the inter-ministerial committee.

Madam Speaker: No, but there is the law. There is the law, hon. A. Duval! You are a lawyer! Hon. Attorney General, can you help us?

Mr A. Duval: This question was being put publicly.

Madam Speaker: Never mind! Let us go to another question. Later on, I will tell you the answer.

Mr A. Duval: You do not have to tell me! There was the inter-ministerial committee. You have seen the...

Madam Speaker: Okay!

NURSING STUDIES – SCHOLARSHIPS & TRAINING CAPACITY EXPANSION

(No. B/357) Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research whether, in regard to nursing studies, he will state whether consideration –

- (a) is being given for the provision of scholarships or other financial assistance schemes therefor coupled with bonds requiring beneficiaries thereof to serve in Mauritius for specified periods, and
- (b) will be given, in the longer term, for the expansion of the national nursing training capacity beyond domestic requirements once local shortages are adequately addressed.

Dr. Sukon: Madam Speaker, I thank hon. Dr. Prayag for this question. Let me begin with an unvarnished truth. Mauritius has a nursing shortage. It is not a future problem. It is a

present one. Our hospitals feel it, our patients feel it and every nurse currently working beyond one shift feels it most acutely.

Mauritius is not alone. According to the World Health Organisation, it is estimated that there will be a global shortfall of 6 million nurses by 2030. Every country in our region is competing for the same trained professionals. If Mauritius is not deliberate, generous and urgent in its response, we risk losing our own graduates to better paying destinations before the ink is dry on their certificates.

But here is what I want this august Assembly to understand: this Government is not merely intending to act. This Government, especially through the Ministry of Health and Wellness and my Ministry, is already acting. The frameworks are in place; the funding is in place; the bonds are in place; the international partnerships are being forged, and enrolment in nursing programme is growing.

Let me set out the facts, Madam Speaker. Financial support and service bonds are not matters under consideration. They are matters already in operation. There are two main routes to becoming a registered nurse in Mauritius under the Nursing Council Act (2003) and both are backed by the full weight of public investment.

The first route is through the Public Service Commission. Candidates are recruited directly as trainee nurses at the Central School of Nursing, under the Ministry of Health and Wellness, where they undergo three years of fully funded theoretical and clinical training. They also receive a monthly allowance throughout. Their training cost them nothing. Upon enlistment as trainee nurses, they enter into a bond to the effect that they will follow and complete the training course. After successful completion, registration with the Nursing Council and appointment as Nursing Officer, they are required to serve in a government hospital or health institution in Mauritius, Rodrigues or Agalega for a minimum of three years.

The second route is through our public higher education institution under the Free Tertiary Education Scheme. Students enrolled full time at Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd for the National Diploma in Nursing or the Diploma in Mental Health Nursing and at the University of Technology Mauritius for the BSc (top-up) Nursing pay zero tuition fees. Education is free. The State funds the tuition fees.

Madam Speaker, beyond these public pathways, nursing education in Mauritius has matured into a genuinely international credential offering. There are currently six accredited

nursing programmes delivered in Mauritius through affiliations with Curtin University of Australia, La Trobe University of Australia, Swansea University UK and University of Suffolk UK, covering both entry level, BSc, global programmes and top-up degrees for practicing registered nurses, seeking to elevate their qualifications. These are degrees awarded by internationally ranked universities, but earned on the Mauritian soil.

According to the Higher Education Commission, as at December 2025, enrolment across public and private institutions stood at 206 students at UTM, 75 at PML and a further 280 across private HEIs. A total nursing student population of 561 and growing.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question related to expanding training capacity for regional and international demand, this Government, over and above meeting domestic demand, is deliberately and systematically positioning Mauritius as a regional hub for nursing and healthcare education. Our public and private institutions already have spare capacity to absorb additional students.

Under the Mauritius-Africa Scholarship Scheme, deserving residents of African Union and African Commonwealth Member States are already eligible for full scholarships to study nursing in Mauritius, not at some future date, but today, under the existing arrangement. My Ministry has launched the ambitious Study in Mauritius marketing campaign, currently targeting African countries and shortly to be extended to Asia.

Three landmark international quality assurance agreements underpin our global credibility and give international students the confidence that a Mauritian qualification will be recognised beyond our shores. Our agreement with Quality Assurance Agency of UK, our agreement with HCERES of France and our agreement with University Grants Commission of India, recently signed, are the evidences. Together, these three agreements position Mauritius as a serious internationally connected education jurisdiction, capable of attracting students, validating qualifications and comparing for enrolments with best destinations in our region.

Madam Speaker, the ambition is clear. The direction is set. A nursing sector that first serves Mauritius completely and then trains the region with distinction. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, Dr. Prayag, do you have any question? Okay, good.

Next question! Dr. Ms Daureeawo, yes!

**YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT – RATE & EMPLOYABILITY ENHANCEMENT
PROGRAMMES**

(No. B/358) Dr. Ms R. Daureawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to youth unemployment, he will –

- (a) state the current rate thereof gender-wise, region-wise and by educational level, and
- (b) outline the programmes being implemented to promote employment opportunities for young graduates.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, according to Statistics Mauritius, as at December 2025, the rate of unemployment among youths, that is, aged between 16 and 24 years, was 16.8%, representing 10,800 unemployed youths, comprising 5,000 men and 5,800 women. The employment rate among the youth is more than three times the rate of employment for the same period, which stands at 5.4%.

The National Employment Department of my Ministry also registers interested job seekers, including youths through their 13 Employment Information Centres across the island. At the level of the NED, the definition of “youth” covers job seekers aged between 16 and 35 years. As at 30 March 2026, there are a total of 14,509 registered young job seekers, out of which 5,954 youths were unemployed, comprising 3,738 women and 2,216 men. The remaining 8,555 – it is more than half – registered job seekers, actually, they were in employment, but looking for better job opportunities.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that Statistics Mauritius does not produce the youth unemployment rate region-wise, given the relatively low number of households surveyed for Continuous Multi-Purpose Household Survey. However, I am tabling the information relating to the number of youth job seekers registered at the 12 Employment Information Centres district-wise.

As regards the education level, according to Statistics Mauritius, out of the 10,800 unemployed youths, some 2,900, representing 27%, possess qualifications below School Certificate level – that is Statistics Mauritius. However, according to information gathered

from the 13 Employment Information Centres as regard to young job seekers registered at these centres, the percentage of unemployed job seekers that failed at PSAC level or CPE is 15%, 44% have attained up to Form 4, 22% have reached School Certificate level, 11% have completed HSC, and 8% were graduates.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, youth unemployment among graduates remains a pressing challenge in Mauritius. To address this issue, several employability enhancement programmes are being implemented by my Ministry to promote employment opportunities for young graduates, namely –

(i) Youth Employment Programme

The Youth Employment Programme provides for up to two years of placement in public or private sector and a stipend. For the period 2015 to 2026, 6,320 young graduates, including 2,533 men and 3,787 women have benefited from this programme, out of which 60% have secured a permanent employment in the private sector after completion of the programme.

However, Madam Speaker, the Youth Employment Programme is currently open only for those holding HSC and above, which represents only 19% of the number of young job seekers, thus depriving those having lower qualifications from having an opportunity to join the programme.

My Ministry is, therefore, looking into the possibility, with the assistance of the Ministry of Finance, to extend the programme to all registered young job seekers, irrespective of their qualifications, to facilitate their integration into the labour market.

In addition, the stipend payable in the public sector, today, varies between Rs6,000 to Rs12,000. Whereas in the private sector, it is between Rs8,000 to Rs15,000, and the private sector contributes another Rs8,000, another Rs10,000, another Rs15,000 to degree holders. So, today, there is a difference in the YEP as far as the stipend is concerned, and as a result, a number of youths are not joining the programme for the public sector because they get only between Rs6,000 for HSC holders and up to Rs12,000 for postgraduate holders.

(ii) Trainee Engineer Scheme

The other scheme is the Trainee Engineer Scheme. From October 2016 to March 2026, 1,069 placements were made across the public and private sector under the scheme. Despite provision for Rs35 million in the present budget, placement of youths holding degrees in chemical, mechatronics, robotics, electronics, communication, telecommunication, aeronautical, industrial and computer engineering has been challenging due to a dearth of supervisor to oversee their two years training. So, we have the money, we have the graduates, but we do not have supervisors to look after those potential engineers. So, my Ministry has made a request with the employers' organisation for their collaboration to ensure the placement of these graduates.

(iii) Reskilling and upskilling of job seekers

To address reskilling and training needs of unemployed job seekers, including young graduates, we are providing training to young unemployed in digital proficiency course, aging and managing disability, smart agri-business and pastry making so as to open up their career avenues. To date, 35 youths are enrolled in these courses.

To promote employment opportunities, since early 2025, my Ministry has already organised four regional job and training fairs in different parts of the island, resulting in the employment of 278 job seekers, including young graduates. The next job fair is scheduled in the western region later this month.

(iv) *Nou Travay Nou Lavenir* Programme

Another initiative to enhance employment of youth graduates is through *Nou Travay Nou Lavenir* Programme, broadcasted on the MBC TV and radio, which was launched earlier this year, in February, to inform the public on labour trends and vacancies.

An innovative component has been included in the form of a QR Code at the end of the programme which can be scanned by viewers to link them to Mauritius.com platform where they can apply for the advertised jobs.

In addition, Madam Speaker, there is a range of activities organised at Employment Information Centres to further support job seekers including young graduates. These includes organising, job dating, how to draft curriculum vitae, interviews, how to conduct interviews and also career guidance sessions.

Madam Speaker, over and above these measures, my Ministry is in the process of acquiring a new software with an automatic matching mechanism with AI to increase efficiency in job matching. My Ministry has, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, sought technical assistance from France and India for the implementation of that project of job matching using AI technology. At the level of my Ministry, we also intend to reinforce collaboration with the Career Guidance Services at the Ministry of Education and Human Resource so that school leavers intending to pursue undergraduate studies, avoid saturated fields of studies and are geared toward emerging sectors.

Finally, Madam Speaker, the time has come to revalorise certain professions and my Ministry is working with training institutions to address the issue of skills mismatch to meet the demand of the evolving labour market. Enhanced labour market intelligence and forecasting will also help anticipate future skills requirement and guide policy decision. In the same vein, we are embarking on the implementation of a labour market information system which is the first step towards the setting up of a labour market observatory with the collaboration of the SADC and the International Labour Organisation to enable better mobility of workers at regional level.

The above-mentioned measures will ensure that our young people, including young graduates are not just employed but meaningfully engaged in building a bright future for the benefit of the population and the country at large. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Excuse me, I don't know if I am the only one who feels very warm. Everybody is feeling warm. I have already asked for...

An hon. Member: Save energy!

Madam Speaker: Yes, maybe. I don't know. Let's hope so.

I am sorry. Dr. Daureeawo, do you have a question?

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: I have two questions, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Yes, of course!

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: So, could the hon. Minister state what targeted measures are being implemented to address the imbalance of higher unemployment rate among young women?

Mr Uteem: This is a real concern and in fact, my Ministry has been working with the Ministry of Gender and also with employers' group like Business Mauritius and very often, the answer we got is that there are certain issues with certain types employment which are more geared towards men whereas in fact, there is a greater number of qualified women, we can see it from the result of the HSC, SC or even Undergraduate. The other explanation that was given to me is that after being pregnant and after maternity, some of the women do not want to come back to work or find it more difficult to resume work and have to choose to leave their baby behind but we are very conscious about this problem and we are working with the Ministry of Gender and the workers' organisation to ensure that there is no discrimination on recruitment against women graduates.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: My second question – can the hon. Minister clarify whether there are significant disparities between urban and rural areas and how is the Government addressing this?

Mr Uteem: In terms of unemployment, no. When you look at the list that I have tabled, it's quite evenly balanced. It is evenly distributed but I have to specify something, Madam Speaker. More than half of the young people who register themselves are already employed and most of them, I don't know why, they have an obsession of being employed in Government or in Local Government.

So, there are a lot of jobs available in the private sector, that is why we are having to have recourse to foreign workers because there are jobs available in the private sector but there is unfortunately a tendency for, not just young graduates but generally, for certain job seekers to prefer to go and work in Government Services and Local Government Services.

Madam Speaker: Okay, one more? Yes!

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: And what measures are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the programmes, the schemes, YEP, the engineers?

Madam Speaker: All the programmes?

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: All the programmes?

Mr Uteem: Yes, I mean as I mentioned, this is something that ought to have been done years ago because these programmes had existed, for example, YEP, I just gave you the

answer. It's not working and we are now going to try to extend it not just for people with HSC qualification and above but also those who don't have the qualification. Similarly for the training of engineers, we are going to work with the training organisation to see how we can facilitate the training of those graduates.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Dr. Aumeer!

**PHARMACY BOARD – MR B. N. & MR D. J. – APPOINTMENT – HEALTH
SUPPLEMENTS IMPORTATION**

(No. B/359) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the Pharmacy Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) whether Mr B. N. has been appointed Registrar thereof and Mr D. J. has been appointed Secretary of the Health Committee thereof and, if so, when, and
- (b) it has authorised the importation of health supplements containing cannabis and morphine derivatives, and if so, when and whether the views of the State Law Office were sought and obtained prior thereto.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, the Pharmacy Board is set up in accordance with Section 3 of the Pharmacy Act, *inter-alia*, to exercise control over the manufacture, importation, distribution, sale and possession of any drug, poison, dangerous drug and psychotropic substance. The Pharmacy Board comprises –

- (a) the Chief Medical Officer (now Director General Health Services), as Chairperson;
- (b) the Chief Government Pharmacist (now Director Pharmaceutical Services);
- (c) 5 pharmacists appointed by the Minister, and
- (d) a law officer designated by the Attorney-General.

The Act also provides for the Minister of Health to designate a Government Pharmacist to act as Registrar of the Board.

On the other hand, the Health Supplements Committee is an ad-hoc committee set up at the level of the Ministry to examine requests for import of health supplements. It comprises the Director of Pharmaceutical Services as Chairperson, one Pharmacist from the Public

Sector, three pharmacists from the Private Sector, the Chief Nutritionist and the Director/Deputy Director of Public Health and Food Safety Unit. A Government Pharmacist is designated to act as Secretary to the Committee.

With regard to part (a) of the question, Mr B.N. has been appointed as the Registrar of the Pharmacy Board as from 03 March 2026. It is worth pointing out that there was a backlog for registration of some 450 new pharmaceutical products. This was unacceptable as there was a chronic shortage of pharmaceutical products both in the public and private sectors, thus preventing delivery of appropriate healthcare services. There were also several grievances from various stakeholders regarding registration of products and issue of licences for the operation of new pharmacies, among others.

To remedy the situation, Mr B.N. was appointed as Registrar of the Pharmacy Board in view of his experience and capacity in dealing with such matters. Since his appointment, the new Registrar has already completed the procedure for the registration of some 60 products by the Pharmacy Board and has planned to complete the registration of the remaining products within a time frame of three months.

Madam Speaker, as regards Health Supplements, which are similar to dietary supplements, they are not regulated under any legislation. However, they are assessed administratively by the Health Supplements Committee. Any prospective importer is required to submit the Good Manufacturing Practice Certificates or equivalent documents, Free Sale Certificates and Certificates of Analysis. These documents are scrutinised by the Health Supplement Committee before authorisation for import and marketing are granted. The authorisation is valid for one year and may be renewed following assessment of any modification of the product.

Upon arrival of the consignment to Mauritius, the importer had to submit the invoice to the Pharmacy Department of my Ministry. This invoice is examined by a team of pharmacists who authorise the release of the product. The consignment is then subjected to a further visual verification by another pharmacist posted at the port or airport in the presence of Customs and ADSU officers, prior to final release. However, if there is any suspicion that the products may contain prohibited substances, the Customs Department is mandated to detain the products and send them for analysis.

I am informed that products containing cannabis and its derivatives are strictly prohibited in Mauritius, except medicinal cannabis. However, morphine and its derivatives,

also listed in Schedule II of the Dangerous Drugs Act, are used at hospital level and in private clinics under strict medical surveillance. Such products are registered by the Pharmacy Board and are given special permit for importation by the Pharmacy Board.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that no authorisation for importation of health supplements containing cannabis and morphine derivatives have been given either by the Pharmacy Board or the Health Supplement Committee since the appointment of Mr B.N. and Mr D.J.

However, I am informed that on 28 January 2026, clearance by the Pharmacy Division of my Ministry for importation of a consignment of homeopathic products, subject to final authorisation by the Customs Department. I am also informed that some products from the consignment have been detained by the Customs as they were suspected of containing cannabis or morphine. The incriminated products have been sent for further analysis to the Forensic Science Laboratory. Appropriate action will be taken in the light of the result of the analysis, including seeking advice from the Attorney General's Office.

Madam Speaker, a distinction should be made between health supplements and homeopathic preparations. Homeopathic preparations are very diluted preparations that are not regulated worldwide except for presence of heavy metals.

In fact, homeopathic preparations are made using extreme dilution to the point where the original substance is present only in minute or non-detectable quantities. At such levels, they do not have any drug-like narcotic effect, they cannot cause dependence or misuse, and the original substance cannot be recovered in any meaningful amount.

Madam Speaker, even though the preparations are not regulated, my Ministry still applies quality assurance checks before allowing their importation. Any prospective importer has to submit the following documents –

- A letter of authorisation from the prescribing doctor;
- The reason for the authorisation;
- A written undertaking that the products were not for resale;
- Good Manufacturing Practice Certificate of its requirement;
- A licence to manufacture homeopathic products issued by the drugs licensing authority for the manufacturer of the exporting country;

- A Free Sale Certificate;
- A Certificate of Analysis;
- Certificate of Compliance for the invoice on the manufacturer.

These measures that even products outside the scope of Dangerous Drugs Act meet acceptable safety and quality standards.

Madam Speaker, my Ministry is also working on the Medical and Health Products Bill which will cater for regulation of all medicines, health supplements as well as homeopathic products, medical devices, in-vitro diagnosis, cosmetics, complementary medicines, blood and blood products alongside existing laws relating to regulation of the products.

I am informed that a first draft of the bill which has been prepared by a consultant is being reviewed in consultation with the Attorney General's Office.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Minister confirm whether his Ministry has sought information from the Financial Crimes Services in regard to Mr B.N. and Mr D.J. who were interrogated and investigated in the Molnupiravir case, and are now today, despite having the vast and massive experience that we have heard, holding sensitive positions at the Pharmacy Board and at the Health Commission Board?

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, this is a fact that these two gentlemen were detained in the previous government on charges, but the court has cleared one. The agency withdrew the case for one of them, and the second was cleared by the court. They have not seen any incriminating case against him. So, all of us know that you are innocent unless you are proven guilty.

If I am going to listen to his line of reasoning, even in this very House, we have friends, including me, I was charged with all types of immoral, unethical and illegal cases. So was our hon. Prime Minister! And another gentleman sitting by my side! If I am going to believe in this, it means that all of us are accused then! I do not have the right to be in this House! But the common sense says that so long as you have not been proved guilty by a court of law, you are innocent.

Why should I deprive these two gentlemen of their rights when the big bosses are moving up and down the streets, and nothing has happened to them? They were mere pharmacists and they got cleared; one by the court and another one by the very agency which wanted to bring him down. So, my duty, unless and until they proven guilty, they are bound to work in my Ministry. I do not have any problem with that.

Madam Speaker: Okay, hon. Minister. Yes!

Dr. Aumeer: I have listened to the defensive attitude of the hon. Minister with regard...

Mr Bachoo: What defensive? It is the truth! I am speaking the truth! That was the truth.

Dr. Aumeer: But the point is...

Madam Speaker: That was not...

Dr. Aumeer: My question is: Did his Ministry ensure that the FCC is either no longer investigating on these two gentlemen or is there still an investigation being carried out? Nonetheless, these two people can act at different levels, but not at a sensitive position where they were involved heavily – and I repeat–, heavily in the Molnupiravir case.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, it is as simple as that: so long as they have not been charged! Again, tomorrow, there can be a case against A, B, C, D or anybody in my Ministry, of course, actions will be taken. But the very fact that these gentlemen have suffered so much, as far back as 2023, they were cleared, and after two years, after getting clearance from the State Law Office, then we have taken them back. In my Ministry, I need pharmacists and I need people because there is a lack. There is a shortage.

Just imagine, 450 products were still pending in order to be registered. I have plenty of problems. Too much of problems. I could not have waited. But one thing is clear: they have been proven innocent. They are innocent. If tomorrow, cases are lodged against them, I will not have any other alternative than to kick them out of the Ministry. That is all I can say!

Madam Speaker: No. The question, it seems to me, was whether the FCC is still inquiring? So, if I get you right, they are not?

Mr Bachoo: Well, I am not aware of this.

Madam Speaker: You are not aware?

Mr Bachoo: Because I do not have any contact with the FCC.

The only contact I have is with the State Law Office because we have written to them and they have clearly maintained that we can take them back. I am aware, as far as Molnupiravir is concerned, the investigation is going on and there are big bosses who are involved in that. Let the FCC do its work. If they find that these two gentlemen, in one way or another, have to be incriminated, they have done any wrong, then, of course, the law will follow its course.

Madam Speaker: Okay!

Dr. Aumeer: One last question.

Madam Speaker: One last question!

Dr. Aumeer: In a different context, in the light of Government's commitment to combat drug abuse, what urgent measures his Ministry has taken to implement to ensure that para-pharmaceutical and homeopathic products are systematically tested to prevent any backdoor entry of narcotic or synthetic substances irrespective of the minute amount that we may have, considering that we have a Dangerous Drugs Act in Mauritius?

Mr Bachoo: I repeat it over again: I have mentioned that though these medicines are coming to Mauritius, they do not need any extra certificates. I have mentioned a series of decision that we have taken to ensure that everything is done in the perfect way. At the same time, I have also mentioned that we have just passed the Optical Council Bill. After that, we are having the Medical Council. Thirdly, the Medical and Health Products Bill is coming, which will cater for regulations of all medicines, health supplements as well as homeopathic products, medical devices, in-vitro diagnostic, cosmetics, everything.

All these things would be taken care of. I can assure the hon. Member that I am really concerned about it. I will see to it that not a single, a minute mistake be committed as far as the importation of these supplements are concerned.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Ramdass! I am looking here, but you are here!

VIEUX GRAND PORT - LA TOUR DES HOLLANDAIS – INAUGURATION

(No. B/360) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the project for the inauguration and opening of the La Tour des Hollandais at Vieux Grand Port, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand.

Mr Gondeea: Madam Speaker, in regard to the project at La Tour des Hollandais located at Vieux Grand Port, I am informed by the National Heritage Fund, which operates under the aegis of Ministry, that this National Heritage building was restored and renovated in October 2020.

However, since then, the building has remained closed to the public. I am further informed that following its restoration, the site was subject to misuse and acts of vandalism. However, instead of implementing appropriate management and security measures to ensure its proper utilisation and valorisation, the previous government opted to restrict access to the public.

As a result of the prolonged closure of the site and the absence of regular maintenance during that period, the building has progressively fallen into a state of neglect. Madam Speaker, I am further informed that recent technical assessments carried out by the NHF have revealed a number of maintenance issues affecting the structure, including the development of a rust hole on the roof as a result of prolonged exposure to weathering.

This has led to vegetation growth within the tower causing potential safety risk concerns. Consequently, it has been deemed necessary to keep the site closed pending remedial works. The services of an engineer have been enlisted to look into the matter and propose remedial works.

Madam Speaker, it is to be noted that in the past while investments were made in the restoration of certain heritage infrastructure, there was a clear lack of strategic vision regarding their post restoration management, valorisation and integration into a broader cultural and tourism framework.

As a result, facilities such as La Tour des Hollandais remained underutilised after renovation which is with no public access. This situation not only undermined the intended purpose of such investments but also deprived both Mauritians and visitors to the opportunity to fully appreciate our rich historical heritage.

Madam Speaker, this Government is now adopting a new and forward-looking approach by placing heritage as a key pillar of cultural tourism and sustainable development. As part of this approach, La Tour des Hollandais could be considered as potential site under the Heritage Stewardship Scheme. Once this scheme is finalised, whereby a partner could be engaged to ensure its regular opening to the public, proper upkeep and its valorisation for cultural educational and tourism-oriented activities.

Madam Speaker, these measures will ensure that heritage infrastructure is no longer left dormant but is actively preserved, managed and utilised as a driver of economic activity, community engagement and enhance cultural visibility in line with the objectives of the Government Programme 2025/2029.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Ramdass!

Mr Ramdass: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As rightly pointed out by the hon. Minister, we are here talking of a National Heritage Building, a potential place of attraction for tourists.

Madam Speaker: I do not hear you.

Mr Ramdass: A potential place of attraction for tourists...

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Ramdass: ... seeking to learn about the history of Mauritius. May we have a timeline or rather the opening, thereof, by the hon. Minister?

Madam Speaker: Short please, hon. Minister.

Mr Gondeea: As soon as we Stewardship Award Scheme is ready, we will go forward to open the space you are looking for. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Hon. Lobine!

INDIA-MAURITIUS DOUBLE TAXATION AVOIDANCE AGREEMENT – MAURITIAN GLOBAL BUSINESS SECTOR – IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(No. B/361) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning whether, in regard to the Mauritian Global Business Sector, she will state whether her Ministry has conducted a thorough and detailed assessment of the impact of the recent judgment of the Supreme Court of India in the case of Tiger Global International II Holdings vs. The Authority for Advance Rulings thereon, particularly concerning the future eligibility of Mauritius-resident entities for capital gains tax exemptions under the India-Mauritius Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement.

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for this very pertinent question.

Madam Speaker, the Supreme Court of India has on 15 January 2026 in the case of Tiger Global International Holdings vs. The Authority for Advance Rulings issued a ruling which had cast doubt scope on the grandfathering of investments made before 01 April 2017 and negotiated during the protocol amending the India Mauritius Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement in 2016. This has caused much concern across the financial services sector which, as the House is aware, is the first pillar of the Mauritian economy.

Madam Speaker, following the entry into force of the protocol of the 2016, amending the India-Mauritius DTA, the right to tax capital gains arising from sales of shares held in the Indian company by an investor who is a tax resident in Mauritius was as follows –

- shares acquired before 31 March 2017 were fully grandfathered and would be taxed in Mauritius;
- shares acquired as from 01 April 2017, if sold before 31 March 2019, 50% would be taxed in India, and
- any shares acquired after 31 March 2019 may be taxed solely by India.

Madam Speaker, the ruling unsettled one of the most fundamental assurances given to foreign investors in India, therefore, exposing *bona fide* established structures to the risk of being subjected to the application of the general Anti-Avoidance rules under the Chapter 10A of the India Income Tax Rule 1962.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that following the Supreme Court ruling, this Government initiated immediately a series of high-level initiatives to find appropriate solutions. The Cabinet was apprised on the following day, on 16 January 2026, and I chaired a meeting which was attended by the Governor of the Central Bank, the Chief Executive of the Financial Services Commission, the representatives of Ministry of Finance, Mauritius Revenue Authority, Mauritius Finance and Financial Services Professionals from the industry to assess the impact of the judgement on the global business sector.

During the meeting with the members, it was agreed that in the aftermath of the Supreme Court Judgement, the Mauritius IFC was confronted with two main challenges –

1. How to ascertain that the existing transactions made before 01 April 2017 which were grandfathered under the protocol of 2016 remained protected, and
2. how to ascertain that entities which are resident in Mauritius demonstrates sufficient substance to be eligible for exemptions under India-Mauritius DTA.

Madam Speaker, in February 2026, the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, directly raised the issue with the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, reaffirming the strength of the strategic partnership between the two countries.

During a bilateral meeting with the Indian Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, he discussed the India-Mauritius Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement, Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, assured of the continued stance of India of not taking any action that would undermine the existing economic benefits that Mauritius currently enjoys under the DTA.

In parallel, during a mission in February in India, I met with Mr Ravi Agarwal, the chairman of the CBDT, and Mr Arvind Shrivastava, Secretary of the Department of Revenue, to share the concerns of the industry and our government following the Tiger Global case.

Madam Speaker, as the House may be aware, within weeks of those discussions held with the Indian authorities on 31 March 2026, the Central Board of Direct Taxes of India moved to correct this position for the Rule 128 of the Income Tax Amendment Rules 2026 which has been gazetted to restore in explicit legislative terms, the grandfathering protection that the court has effectively diluted. It is noted that the concerns were well received by the Indian authorities demonstrating that they are attentive to our requests. Madam Speaker, this is clear evidence of the success of the economic diplomacy taken at the highest level by the hon. Prime Minister with the Indian Prime Minister.

This measure, first, reaffirms the grandfathering protection established by the 2016 protocol amending the DTA between India and Mauritius, paving the way for a revival of confidence among foreign investors regarding Mauritius. Hence, as from the 01 April 2026, international investors can rest assured that the transfer of investment made before 01 April 2017 will remit exempt from GAAR.

Madam Speaker, in so far as the future structures are concerned, in order to ensure that our operators continue to benefit from the remaining incentives under the DTA, works are currently being underway to consider reviewing the conditions for issuance of Tax Residence Certificate in order to provide the necessary comfort to the Indian authorities.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, hon. Lobine first.

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Minister, with regard to the Financial Services Commission, have they conducted any impact assessment on any potential capital outflows or restructuring of the global business entities following this judgement?

Dr. Ms Jeetun: I did ask that question, Madam Speaker, and there were no major outflows or companies leaving the Mauritian jurisdiction and that is why we acted very swiftly and quickly and quite aggressively at various levels to get this sorted out.

Madam Speaker: Yes, second.

Mr Lobine: Is the Minister in a position to provide data with regard to whether there has been any recent decline in India-focused investment flows routed through Mauritius since this ruling?

Dr. Ms Jeetun: I can say that in general, since the 2016 protocol was amended, there had been a decline and Mauritius as it is widely known, lost its place as the first FDI driver to India. And Singapore and US were sort of first, second and Mauritius is sort of back as second position. I am not aware of major outflows but I can certainly ask FSC to provide data regarding the post-Tiger Global judgment but when I asked that question, the answer was there has not been major outflows.

Madam Speaker: Okay, hon. Rookny!

Mr Rookny: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Has the Ministry specifically engaged with the Financial Services Commission and the Economic Development Board to quantify the number of global business licence entities currently exposed to the enhanced scrutiny under India's GAR Framework following this judgment?

Dr. Ms Jeetun: I can certainly ask the question.

Madam Speaker: Yes, second?

Mr Rookny: Madam Speaker, does the hon. Minister accept that given Mauritius' long-standing role as the preferred gateway for FDI into India through its global business sector, this judgment represents a structural threat to that positioning and if so, what is the Government's contingency plan?

Dr. Ms Jeetun: As I said in my answer, Madam Speaker, it did raise a lot of concern after the judgment came but the initiative taken by this Government and the rule that was published in the Government Gazette of India has secured our investments that were made prior to 01 April 2017. As regards the future ones, as I said, we are working – the Ministry, the MRA, the AG's office – to see how we can ensure that we can reassure the Indian authorities regarding substance requirements.

Madam Speaker: Yes?

Mr Rookny: Madam Speaker, allow me rephrase it. What I meant was if the India route is a dying route, what will be our contingency plan to keep the global business sector alive?

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Madam Speaker, I can reassure the hon. Member that India route is not a dying route. As I said, we were first and then we sort of became third. Now we are back to the second place. So, it is of course a very competitive environment and that is why we have to be kept on our toes all the time but it is definitely not a dying route. What the Ministry is doing is that we have to keep on consolidating the India market but we as a sector, we have to also diversify. That is why we are working on an Africa strategy and that is why more and more focus is also going into diversifying our markets into Africa.

Madam Speaker: Yes, one more.

Mr Lobine: Yes, thank you.

Madam Speaker: Maybe one last.

Mr Lobine: One last, yes.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Lobine: May I ask the hon. Minister, are there immediate plans to re-negotiate or further clarify provisions of this treaty with India to safeguard our jurisdiction after this judgment?

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Madam Speaker, that is a good intention to have. We have been trying to negotiate that for a long time but I understand that the Indian side – I myself have met them at least twice since last year – they cannot bring Mauritius different from other countries because they have relationship with so many other countries. So, on multilateral basis, they cannot do that. We will have to compete on an international level but I am reassured that in Mauritius, we are doing what needs to be done as a sector from a government and regulatory point of view but also as an industry that we can promote, grow and maintain our Indian market as strong as possible.

Madam Speaker: Yes, alright. Now, the next one is going to be replied by the hon. Minister of Local Government. Dr. Ms Daureeawo!

**DRAINS, RIVERS & CANALS – ILLEGAL DUMPING – MEASURES
IMPLEMENTED**

(No. B/362) Dr. Ms R. Daureawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to illegal dumping in drains, rivers and canals and the contribution thereof to flooding, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –
 - (i) number of reported cases thereof over the past two years and number of prosecutions initiated in connection therewith, and
 - (ii) measures implemented in known illegal dumping hotspots, and
- (b) state whether consideration is being given for the strengthening of the existing legislation in relation thereto.

The Minister of Local Government (Mr R. Wochit): Madam Speaker, with your permission, I shall reply to PQ B/362.

Madam Speaker, local authorities carry out the cleaning drains and the desilting of rivers and canals on a continuous basis. These operations are conducted in close collaboration with the Land Drainage Authority which identifies priority areas annually. In addition, regular site inspections are undertaken within their respective jurisdiction to monitor the condition of waterways and to ensure timely intervention where required.

However, Madam Speaker, illegal dumping by certain members of the public remains a significant contributing factor to the obstruction of waterways and resulting flooding risks as the hon. Member said. With regard to part (a)(i) of the question, I am advised that over the past two years, a total of 525 cases of illegal dumping in drains, rivers and canals have been reported to local authorities, the *Police de l'Environnement* and the Environment and Climate Change Division. A detailed breakdown of these cases, including actions taken, fines issued and nuisance abatement is being tabled for the benefit of the House. Out of these cases –

- 14 cases resulted in fines being paid;
- 96 cases led to nuisance abatement, and
- 3 cases are currently under enquiry.

Madam Speaker, prosecution in such matters remain challenging as these offences are often committed at odd hours and in many instances without direct evidence or identified offenders. Nevertheless, enforcement action continues wherever sufficient evidence is available, particularly through the issuance of fixed penalty notices and follow-up intervention by the *Police de l'Environnement*.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a)(ii), the local authorities, the *Police de l'Environnement* and other relevant agencies have adopted a coordinated and proactive approach, particularly in known illegal dumping hotspots. All these measures include –

- (i) identified monitoring and surveillance in vulnerable areas;
- (ii) regular cleanup and desilting operations;
- (iii) installation of appropriate signage in dumping prone locations;
- (iv) strengthened enforcement by the *Police de l'Environnement* and Police Division;
- (v) deployment of the Emergency Response Service (ERS) and Divisional Support Unit (DSU) to monitor and intercept suspicious activities;
- (vi) restrengthening neighbourhood watch groups;
- (vii) public awareness and sensitisation campaigns;
- (viii) sensitisation of land owners on their legal responsibilities;
- (ix) public education on the provisions of the Environment Act 2024.

These measures are ongoing and are continuously reinforced.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that a robust legal framework is already in place to address illegal dumping. Under the Local Government Act 2011, notably section 61(11), it is an offence to deposit waste, including builder's rubble, vehicle wreck and other materials in drains, rivers, canals or public places. Furthermore, the Environment Act 2024 provides for additional enforcement mechanisms including –

- eye sore abatement notices with intrigant penalties;
- fixed penalty notices currently set at Rs25,000;
- enhanced action for dumping in environmentally sensitive areas, and
- a strict penalty for offenses in coastal and maritime zone.

A document outlining these legal provisions is being tabled for the benefit of the hon. Member.

Madam Speaker, Government is also actively considering further measures to strengthen the existing legislative framework. For the Financial Year 2026-2027, proposals have been submitted to review and increase fixed penalties including the doubling of certain fines.

Measures are under consideration to harmonise and enhance penalties for littering and illegal dumping, and the introduction of community service as sanction for repeat offenders is being examined, in consultation with the Attorney General's Office.

Madam Speaker, I am also chairing regular coordination meetings with Chief Executives and Health Inspectors of local authorities to strengthen enforcement, improve inter-agency coordination and ensure sustained actions against illegal and its associated public health and flooding risks, among other items. My last meeting was held on Monday 06 April 2026.

Madam Speaker, Government remains fully committed to reinforcing enforcement, enhancing public awareness and strengthening the legal framework to effectively combat illegal dumping and mitigate its impact on drainage systems and flooding. With these measures being implemented across the island, sustained success requires close collaboration between different Ministries and the public.

In this respect, I wish to assure the hon. Member that my Ministry and local authorities remain fully receptive to any specific representation, including the identification of particular hot spot within her constituency or elsewhere. Should any additional information, proposal or suggestion be brought forward, these will be duly examined and appropriate site visit and targeted intervention will be carried out promptly in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders. This approach ensures that our response remains proactive, evidence-based and focused on priority areas in the interest of protecting public health, preserving the environment and reducing flood risks. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Dr. Ms Daureeawo!

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: Could the hon. Minister state whether consideration is being given to introducing stricter liability provisions as a means of deterrence?

Mr Woochit: Yes, Madam Speaker. We have fixed penalty notices currently set at Rs25,000. For the financial year 2026-2027, the proposal has already been submitted to review and to increase fixed penalties, including the doubling of certain fines.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: Can the hon. Minister state whether in all the known illegal dumping hot spots, there are CCTV surveillance?

Mr Woochit: Yes, Madam Speaker, I have already listed a series of mitigating measures. The increased use of Safe City cameras is also considered. It is one among them.

Madam Speaker: Okay, fine!

Now, Mr François, Second Member for Rodrigues!

NATIONAL ARCHIVES – RODRIGUES HERITAGE VALUE DOCUMENTS – DIGITALISATION

(No. B/363) Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the digitalisation of the National Archives, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom information as to where matters stand, indicating whether documents of heritage value pertaining to Rodrigues available thereat have already been digitalised.

Mr Gondeea: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the National Archives Department that the Digitalisation Programme, which is an ongoing exercise, has already enabled, under Phase 1 and 2, approximately 1.3 million pages to be successfully scanned, indexed and uploaded on the Document Management System. These records comprise a wide range of archival materials, dating back to the colonial period, including secretariat correspondences, official government papers, administrative records, judicial and magistracy records as well as other historical documents of national and heritage value.

I am further informed that the National Archives Department is currently finalising the scope of services and the bidding documents for the implementation of Phase 3 of the project, whereby about 400,000 archival records will be digitised.

Madam Speaker, as regards documents of heritage value pertaining to Rodrigues, I am informed that all the 101 volumes of archival records, representing approximately 50,000 pages, have already been scanned and digitised as at date. These include secretariat correspondences, secretariat papers and Rodrigues magistracy letters, covering the period from 1795 to 1929. The process of the uploading and indexing these reports on the Document Management System is ongoing.

I am further informed that the Archives Department is already providing access to scanned records upon request, including from the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. However, the Document Management System has not yet been deployed for online access as there are some technical issues with the system, and which are currently being looked into.

Moreover, to facilitate the sharing of archived information with our counterparts in Rodrigues, a Memorandum of Understanding between the National Archive Department and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly is currently being finalised by my Ministry.

Madam Speaker, I wish to highlight the House that the initiative of digitising our archival records, including the records pertaining to Rodrigues, forms part of Government's broader strategy to both preserve archival heritage and progressively enhance access to historical records through modern digital platforms and strengthen institutional collaboration. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr François: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. May I know from the hon. Minister, given that the public and we, from Rodrigues, cannot get online access to the readily available digitised archive system, what is the timeframe to allow access thereof? The approximate timeframe. Do we have a timeframe?

Madam Speaker: The timeframe, if you can.

Mr François: Approximately.

Mr Gondeea: As I said in my reply, there are some technical issues on the system. We are working on it. As soon as it is okay, it will be available shortly.

Madam Speaker: Good! Mr Edouard, last question!

**RODRIGUES VEHICLE FITNESS CENTRE – SERVICE INTERRUPTION &
DECENTRALISED OPERATION**

(No. B/364) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the vehicle fitness centre in Rodrigues, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to the reasons for the recent closure thereof, indicating why the public was not informed accordingly, and
- (b) state whether consideration will be given for the operation thereof to be entrusted to a local vehicle examiner.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the NLTA that there is currently one vehicle examination centre in Rodrigues, which is manned by a vehicle examiner of the NLTA, posted to Rodrigues on a tour of service of one year.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the vehicle examination centre was closed for one day, on 20 March 2026, due to the absence of the vehicle examiner. A notice to that effect was issued to inform the public through a communiqué posted at both the NLTA Office at Baie Lascar and at the Vehicle Examination Centre of Port Mathurin as from Monday, 16 March 2026. So, the public was informed.

I have a copy of the communiqué. I can table it.

I am further informed that the centre resumed its activity on the following day. Also, I am further informed that it has been the practice for the vehicle examination centre to be closed when the said officer is on leave.

Madam Speaker, as regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the NLTA that the appointment of a locally based examiner for the setting up of a private examination facility has also been examined in line with my reply to PQ B/864 of 07 October 2025.

However, I am made to understand that in view of the size of the vehicle population in Rodrigues and the relatively low number of vehicles requiring examination, averaging some 160 vehicles per week, that is, about 32 vehicles per day, the level of activity remains insufficient to sustain a dedicated facility on a viable basis.

It is apposite to highlight that the setting up of such a facility requires significant capital investment and reasonably high operational costs. This is the reason why one has ever expressed interest to launch into that activity.

Nevertheless, like I have stated in my reply, my Ministry has requested the NLTA to launch and expression of interest for inviting vehicle examination stations currently in Mauritius to extend their services to Rodrigues. If they should find the initial investment to be too high for it to be done on a solo basis, they may join with other examination operation centres in Mauritius to submit a joint proposal, in the spirit of social contribution. So to speak for the sake of road safety.

However, the quest for developing social capacity for enhancement of the equipment will continue to be explored. My Ministry will be attentive to all proposals that may bring a lasting solution to the prevailing situation.

Madam Speaker: Yes, alright. We have got one minute left!

Mr Edouard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Minister if there is a Memorandum of Understanding, if not, if he will consider one with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for NLTA Services in Rodrigues? Thank you.

Mr Osman Mahomed: I believe there should be one because NLTA has been posted in Rodrigues for a long time now but then if that needs to be reviewed, we will do so.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Time is up!

Now, the Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn – B/323, B/365, B/366, B/367, B/370, B/371, B/373, B/374, B/376, B/377, B/379, B/380, B/382, B/383, B/384, B/386, B/388, B/389, B/392, B/393, B/395, B/396, B/397.

The Table has advised me. I trust it is correct.

Yes, maybe motion!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Mohamed): 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 Bhagwan rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Now, let's break for half an hour! Let's come back at 16.30 hours.

On revient à 16.30.

At 4.07 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 4.34 p.m., with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: You may be seated!

PUBLIC BILL

Second Reading

THE ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING, COMBATTING THE FINANCING OF TERRORISM AND COUNTERING PROLIFERATION FINANCING

(MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL

(No. III of 2026)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Second Reading of the Anti-Money Laundering, Combatting the Financing of Terrorism and Countering Proliferation Financing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. III of 2026).

Question again proposed.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, normally, the Leader of the House would have been speaking much later. Let me refer you to Standing Order 39 which says –

“(11) No Member shall address the Assembly on a particular question after the speech, if any, of the Leader of the House, except the mover of a motion for his or her winding-up speech, unless the Leader of the House has indicated to the Speaker his or her intention of addressing the Assembly at an early stage in the debates.”

Which is the case for the hon. Prime Minister.

So, hon. Prime Minister, you have the floor on the Second Reading.

(4.35 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: I thank you, Madam Speaker. It is because I have to catch a plane basically.

Let me first of all, Madam Speaker, commend the hon. Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning for introducing this very important legislation, which provides for amendments to no fewer than 21 pieces of legislation. 21, Madam Speaker!

The amendments are necessary to ensure that our framework for Anti-Money Laundering, Combatting the Financing of Terrorism and Countering Proliferation Financing is fully aligned with the updated Financial Action Task Force (FATF) standards.

They will place Mauritius in a stronger position for the forthcoming Mutual Evaluation exercise by the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group, which is scheduled to start in 2027.

The House will recall, Madam Speaker, that following the Mutual Evaluation exercise carried out by the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group in 2018, Mauritius was obliged – I stress on the word ‘obliged’ – to implement the recommended action to address the deficiencies and shortcomings in its AML/CFT/CPF framework.

However, after that, the previous government failed to implement the recommended actions effectively. Consequently, in February 2020, Mauritius was placed on the FATF List of “Jurisdictions under Increased Monitoring”, that is, the FATF Grey List. Mauritius was also placed on the High-Risk Third Countries Lists of both the European Union and the United Kingdom.

The then Government again was compelled urgently to take appropriate action to comply with the requirements of FATF.

It was only then that Mauritius escaped from the Grey List; they were in the grey list before we came to power in 2005. Subsequently, the country was delisted from the European Union and the United Kingdom lists of High-Risk Third Countries.

But that Government failed to draw the lessons of its inaction because nothing was further done.

So, upon assuming office, we undertook a comprehensive and rigorous assessment of our AML/CFT/CPF framework in line with the revised FATF Recommendations.

This Government is fully committed to the necessary action to ensure full compliance with the FATF Standards and to strengthen the effectiveness of our system in combating money laundering, terrorist financing and proliferation financing.

Madam Speaker, we shall spare no effort to ensure that Mauritius does not find itself on the FATF Grey List again because a return to the Grey List would have far-reaching and damaging consequences for our financial services sector and the economy as a whole.

We acted decisively to implement a comprehensive set of measures to ensure our full preparedness for the forthcoming Mutual Evaluation exercise.

First, we have taken immediate measures to enhance the effectiveness of our institutions. We reinstated the primacy of the Director of Public Prosecutions in its criminal proceedings, so dangerously and deliberately undermined during a decade of unconstitutional abuse. We will ensure that the Financial Crimes Commission (FCC) is able to focus on its core mandate of investigation and enforcement.

Today, the statistics speak for themselves. Since November 2024, some 400 investigations have already been initiated.

Very soon, we shall introduce into this House, I must say, the most far-reaching and radical reform of our systems of law-enforcement and prosecution that this country has seen, probably since the 19th century – I am sure since the 19th century. They are the most radical and far-reaching reform that this country would have seen. Those reforms will entrench a new culture of independence, impartiality and effectiveness into the detection, investigation and prosecution of serious and complex crimes.

Second, we have put in place the necessary governance structure to drive our reform agenda. An Inter-Ministerial Committee, co-chaired by the hon. Attorney General and the hon. Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning, has been set up to steer and coordinate all the preparatory efforts. This Committee provides strategic guidance on priority reforms, strengthens the coordination across the 16 Competent Authorities, and oversees the effective implementation of the national AML/CFT/CPF reforms agenda.

The Inter-Ministerial Committee is further supported by the Core Group on AML/CFT/CPF, under the chairmanship of the Financial Secretary.

I am maintaining a close oversight of the work carried out by both the Inter-Ministerial Committee and the Core Group.

Third, Madam Speaker, within this relatively short period, we have made significant and tangible progress with critical AML/CFT/CPF initiatives. These include –

- (a) the completion of the National Risk Assessment, providing an up-to-date understanding of the evolving money laundering and terrorist financing risks facing our country;
- (b) the completion of a dedicated risk assessment for Non-Profit Organisations;
- (c) the formulation of a comprehensive National AML/CFT/CPF Strategy for the period 2026-2029, and
- (d) the development of a robust Administrative Penalty Framework to ensure that non-compliance with our legislation is effectively detected, addressed, and also sanctioned.

Fourth, Madam Speaker, we have effectively enforced the United Nations (Financial Prohibitions, Arms Embargo and Travel Ban) Sanctions Act and, based on evidence gathered, already three individuals have been listed under the sanction regime for their links to terrorist financing activities.

Fifth, despite severe fiscal constraints, we are providing the necessary financial resources to build capacity and recruit critical expertise to ensure the sustained implementation of our AML/CFT/CPF reforms.

Madam Speaker, let me now turn to some key amendments being brought to this legislation falling under the purview of my office and that of the Ministry of Finance.

First, the Bank of Mauritius Act and the Banking Act – these amendments aim to enhance the effectiveness of supervision and enforcement by the Bank of Mauritius. They also facilitate timely information sharing with law enforcement authorities where there is suspicion of an offence.

Second, the Companies Act – the amendment provides for a clearer and more structured definition of a beneficial owner, ensuring consistent interpretation and application across entities. This ensures, Madam Speaker, that the true individuals, who ultimately own or control business activities, may no longer hide and operate behind corporate structures and remain beyond the reach of institutions. We see so many times, people using *prête-nom*. I tell them: game over!

Third, the Gambling Regulatory Authority Act – the gambling sector continues to present heightened exposure to illicit financial flows. The proposed amendments are intended to reinforce regulatory oversight, strengthen control mechanisms, and enhance compliance measures, thereby safeguarding the sector against money laundering risk.

Fourth, the Income Tax Act and the Mauritius Revenue Authority Act – these acts are being amended to reinforce the powers of the Mauritius Revenue Authority, enhance coordination among the competent Authorities, and ensure that illicit gains do not escape scrutiny.

And fifth, the United Nations (Financial Prohibitions, Arms Embargo and Travel Ban) Sanctions Act is being amended to further strengthen the implementation of targeted financial sanctions.

Madam Speaker, I should remind the House of the chaotic situation prevailing before the elections in November 2024 in the institutions which were supposed to combat fraud, corruption and financial crime.

There was total incoherence in the way these institutions were operating. There was no collaboration or exchange of information among them. They had over the years developed, I think, willingly, a ‘silo mentality’ with consequences that I need not rehearse now!

We all recall how drug traffickers, money launderers and those engaged in criminal activities were having a field day, while the rule of law was daily abused in our public life by the behaviour of those who were supposed to be looking after safeguarding the security.

Today, our institutions are once again functioning without fear or favour and in collaboration for the public good. As I have said, Madam Speaker, the House will imminently have the opportunity to make further profound reforms to strengthen the independence and effectiveness of those institutions.

It is not only domestic voices who say that. It is not just me or Members of the House. The 2026 Report of the respected V-Dem Institute (Varieties of Democracies Institute), which is based in Sweden, published recently the following observation. I quote, Madam Speaker –

“The 2024 general elections brought a change in government and halted authoritarian transgressions.”

“Halted authoritarian transgressions!” This is what the MSM was doing daily!

It is worth dwelling on those words, Madam Speaker. Transgressions were, indeed, the modus operandi of the previous Government.

So deep and so widespread was the abuse, extending to the very top of government, encompassing even those entrusted with the task of ensuring the integrity of our system of law enforcement, that the imagination shrinks from the prospect for our nation had they succeeded in their objects.

This House will recall the statements I made here last year, reporting the conclusions of international experts – they have not actually concluded it completely – but on the Orwellian technology, if I may use the word, secretly installed by the previous government, illegally, to intercept and spy on the communications and social media of the entire nation. Believe it or not! We will come with proof on this.

Even hon. A. Duval who is here, he was being listened to! Judges were being listened to! Well, what was happening?

Mr A. Duval: You too!

The Prime Minister: Everybody, yes! Of course, me! And people in the Opposition.

(Interruptions)

Yes, but even people in the government, they were being listened to! Not just political opponents; the whole population!

The House will also recall with disgust the ugly window thrown open by the *Moustass* leaks on the inside workings of an autocratic and immoral regime. They even went to the extent of defaming Virgin Mary. The Commissioner of Police did that. He did that! And it was tolerated. Nothing!

I know, hon. A. Duval's father went to see the former Prime Minister on this. I know that! And he told him: 'You have to remove this guy.' No, no, you get lost!

His hands were tied! When you do dirty business with people, your hands get tied! That is the problem!

The V-Dem views on Mauritius reflect the seriousness of the purpose of this Government to ensure that our institutions operate transparently and independently and never again, never again, go back to the sinister and dark path charted by that discredited regime.

But I am glad to say, Madam Speaker, that in the Global Financial Centres Index (GFCI 39) published on 26 March 2026, Mauritius has now gained 8 places and ranks in the 50th position globally.

This achievement did not happen by itself; it is testament to the strategic focus of this Government to enhance our regulatory frameworks and protect our reputation as a trusted International Financial Centre.

Madam Speaker, I want to refresh the memory of those who seem to be suffering from selective amnesia, in particular those who are desperately trying to re-emerge on the political scene. He is not here, but Minister Patrick Assirvaden mentioned the name, Alvaro Sobrinho, described by the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, and I quote...

(Interruptions)

Yeah, I will say that!

Look what it says –

“Angolan banker who led an Angolan bank that collapsed with billions of dollars of unexplained debts, linked to a scheme to siphon off hundreds of millions of dollars of government-backed financing”.

Yet, this man was given red-carpet treatment in Mauritius, granted access to the VIP lounge, not once, not twice, 31 times! 31 times! And he was not alone. There were others of dubious background who were facilitated and feted, as investigations into the collapse of Silver Bank is now beginning to show us.

In fact, I should say, Madam Speaker, this Mr Sobrinho, I did not realise because I never met him, but somehow, he found his way to the PMO. He called my secretary and he said he needs to meet the Prime Minister. It is urgent. He was not on the...

When I give appointments, if I give appointments to Mr A. Duval...

Mr A. Duval: You have not ...

The Prime Minister: I will see him alone. Not with somebody else! I need to know who comes in my office.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: *Pou li...*

Mr A. Duval: *Non, li pann dir mwa!*

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Not yet. Not yet.

The Prime Minister: *To bien kot to ete la!*

(Interruptions)

I tell you, Madam Speaker. So, my secretary...

Madam Speaker: You have not met him yet?

The Prime Minister: Huh?

Madam Speaker: He said you did not meet him. But you have not met him yet.

The Prime Minister: No, I have not met him. I was giving an example. Even somebody in the Opposition, I will meet only on appointment.

Mr A. Duval: But I raised the... I raised the...

The Prime Minister: And so, my secretary came to see me and said there is this man here, Mr Sobrinho, who says he needs to see you.

I said –

‘Why? Does he have an appointment?’

‘No!’

‘So, why does he want to see me?’

He said to my secretary: ‘I have millions of dollars to invest in Mauritius.’ You know when you come in the Office of the Prime Minister and you say: ‘I have got millions of dollars to invest,’ what does it mean? It means: Meet me. I will give you some millions!

That is what it means! That was what was happening before!

And I said to my secretary, if he wants to invest in Mauritius, he does not have to come and see the Prime Minister. Go to the Board of Investment! This is where they look at investment. So, I threw him out. He was not happy, but he went.

And I must say, at that time, the Board of Investment did due diligence. They thought his money was dubious, of dubious sources, and they rejected his millions that he was bringing in Mauritius. They rejected it! What did he do you think, Madam Speaker? He came

back to my office and told my secretary: ‘These people at the Board of Investment do not understand anything. They have rejected my project. I must see the Prime Minister!’

So, again, my secretary came to see me. I said, tell him: ‘If the Board of Investment has rejected his demands, then, I have nothing to do with it. He must get out of the country.’

This is how I treated him!

And this is the very man who came, after I lost the elections, he was given red-carpet treatment, 31 times! And he was not alone, as I said. There were others.

Dr. Boolell: *Karpet inn ize!*

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: In 2015, Mr Sobrinho was granted a Global Business Licence (Category 1) and the authorisation to operate Collective Investment Schemes by the Financial Services Commission (FSC) chaired at that time by the late Dev Manraj.

In 2016, Mr Sobrinho was issued an Investment Adviser (Unrestricted) Licence and an Investment Banking Licence by the same FSC.

Let me remind the House who conducted, and how was the due diligence... You must do due diligence. How was due diligence done on Mr Sobrinho?

Mr Jhummun: *Get dan lizie!*

The Prime Minister: It was done by eye contact!

I quote the former Deputy Prime Minister, Ivan Collendavello, a lawyer, who said – what is all this nonsense? – he said –

« (...) avoir regardé dans les yeux de [M. Sobrinho], [je peux dire que] ce dernier est crédible. »

That is why I said we do not have to do due diligence! Just get this man to come and look at the other prospective investors. This is what he meant.

(Interruptions)

And he is trying to give us lessons! How can a supposedly, allegedly eminent lawyer say it is due diligence: I look at his face, I say ‘no, he is innocent’?

Alvaro Sobrinho was issued an Investment Banking Licence, after those procedures had been transferred from the Bank of Mauritius to the FSC. Now, it is important to realise in

what circumstances were these amendments made and why were they made. I will tell you why; because the then Governor of the Bank of Mauritius, Mr Basant Roi, flatly refused to give Mr Sobrinho an Investment Banking Licence, in spite of the pressure being put on him. He refused!

Then the Banking Act was amended in *catimini* to remove “investment banking business” from the definition of a “bank” so that only the Financial Services Commission thereafter regulated this business. Consequentially, amendments were brought to the Financial Services Act. All this to grant Mr Sobrinho his licence that the Governor of bank then thought he should not be given such a licence.

Remember how in 2017, on a Saturday morning, a special meeting of the Board of the FSC was called, chaired by late Mr Dev Manraj. It was convened to put pressure to amend the law.

I must say to the House as perhaps some people do not know it. The then Solicitor General, Mr Dhiren Daby was the vice-Chairperson of the Board. He refused to be associated with the said manoeuvres in spite of all the pressures. Further to the ‘Saturday morning meeting’ when he said he would not agree, Mr Daby and three other members of the Board resigned from their position. They did not look at the money, the *per diem*, or whatever. They resigned from their positions at the FSC. I will tell you who the three others were –

- Mr Warda Dulmar Ebrahim;
- Mr Rhoy Ramlakhan, and
- Mr Jacques Li Chung.

These are the men of principles who resisted pressure.

You know, recently when the people from the IMF were here, they were asking us: ‘But when the Finance Minister was manipulating figures, we cannot understand, this is a democratic State. Why did everybody keep quiet?’ I do not want to say the words because there are ladies here, but they did not have the guts. They kept quiet, afraid.

Mr Jhummun: *Ti pe manze ansam.*

The Prime Minister: I always say, you know what Shakespeare said –

“The cowards die many times before their deaths;

The valiant never taste of death but once.”

This is what we should do. We pray every day. We are a nation which prays but this is what we should do. We should not be afraid. We must do what must be done.

The Sobrinho affair, Madam Speaker, involved shady dealings, investments in property schemes to the tune – believe it or not – of Rs52 million, and the purchase of luxury cars for millions of rupees.

The same Mr Sobrinho was authorised to purchase 131 villas and apartments – worth more than Rs1 billion – at Balaclava, under the *Vente en Etat Futur d’Achèvement*.

An hon. Member: VEFA!

The Prime Minister: Yes, VEFA.

The above demonstrates to what extent in the 2014-2024 days, money laundered through property development and property acquisition was welcomed as if foreign investment was going up. And if you look at the list – we are looking at the list – you will see who are the people who got flats and apartments. They will have to respond. Do not think we have forgotten! It is taking time but they will have to explain all this. It is coming, I can tell you.

Another example is the Silver Bank Saga!

Let me mention the troubling circumstances under which a Banking Licence was issued to Silver Bank, formerly, I think, it was called BanyanTree Bank, in November 2021.

First, we should ask a pertinent question: Who was it who recommended Mr Prateek Gupta to take over BanyanTree? Who was it? He came from nowhere?

There was reasonable cause to believe that the capital of Silver Bank was potentially impaired and that its directors could have engaged in practices detrimental to the interests of its depositories. Silver Bank had absolutely no track record. Its Ultimate Beneficial Owners had no banking experience and the bank, which is currently under investigation by the Financial Crimes Commission, deceived thousands of Mauritians. I see some people are protesting. They should go and protest to these people who allowed this to happen. We are putting order in these things.

This is unbelievable but I will tell you. Before Silver Bank came into the picture, a circular was issued by the Ministry of Finance of the previous regime requesting government-related entities to invest their surplus cash into treasury certificates because they are much safer. Issued from the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Mauritius was involved, to put the

money where it is safer. This very Ministry then purportedly, to create a misleading enhancement of the bank's balance, they decided to issue a circular – this very government – to tell the related entities, that is, the Municipal Council, Sugar Insurance Fund, I think, the National Insurance Company and all that, they invested a total of Rs3.55 billion in the Silver Bank. They had issued the circular. They contradicted themselves.

They issued another circular now, put the money in Silver Bank and look at the result. Who is losing money now?

(Interruptions)

Yes, but they thought this country belongs to them. They can do what they want.

Mr Guinness: *Bizin donn li kout savat dodo.*

The Prime Minister: Yes! This was, as I said, purportedly done to create the misleading impression of enhancing the balance of the bank's balance sheet. This decision to invest so much money in such a bank was outright incompetence bordering on criminal offence. They had a duty to safeguard public funds. I hope speaking *Kreol* in Parliament will come earlier because many people do not understand. In *Kreol*, I could have said it better: *se bann kriminel...*

Mr Jhummun: *Voler!*

The Prime Minister: *... kin pran lamone lepep, inn fer investi dan enn labank ki zot ti kone pou koule divan!*

Sa ki zot finn fer!

What is even more unexplainable, as I said, the issue in the circular, a clear dereliction of duty in safeguarding public funds.

The serious mismanagement, Madam Speaker, fictitious guarantees and recklessness pertaining to loan reimbursement led to the toxicity of the loan portfolio of Silver Bank. This is how they operated and we all know what happened. We are sitting on it now.

Silver Bank was placed under conservatorship in February 2024. A monthly conservatorship fee of Rs3.5 million was payable to whom? Grant Thornton Advisory Services Ltd.

Mr Jhummun: Sattar!

The Prime Minister: And who was the Director? The close friend of the former Prime Minister, close friend! Outside he was making a campaign against Muslims, and yet his close friend was this man. And we all know his name – Sattar Hajee Abdoula. Hajee of all things!

I need to add, Madam Speaker, that during this process several potential investors expressed the interest to acquire Silver Bank. This happened even when Mr Rama Sithanen was Governor of the bank. But then when they saw what was on the balance sheet, they all disappeared one by one. Only one prospective investor submitted an application, but his application, I can say I think, he wanted to get the bank but not take the debts. How can we do that? He was asking for more time.

In the interest of depositors and creditors of Silver Bank, the Bank of Mauritius has been engaging with the prospective investor and granted several extensions to each successive deadline – there were deadlines, again deadlines and again deadlines – to enable them to see what they can do. On 30 March of this year, on the last deadline, the Bank of Mauritius did not receive any application.

After careful consideration of all facts and information available, the Board of the Bank of Mauritius, on 30 March of this year, decided to terminate the conservatorship of Silver Bank. Mr Huns Biltoo of KPMG Mauritius has now been appointed as Receiver of Silver Bank.

Madam Speaker, the scandals to which I referred earlier, gave a severe blow to our hard-earned reputation as a credible International Financial Centre. They illustrate the kind of occult interest and influences which were encouraged and provided by the previous regime. I think it is more than criminal negligence; it is criminal intent. There is criminal intent there. It is more serious. It is not just negligence. It is intent.

In due time, these people, I say it again, will have to answer for their misdeeds. This is one of the reasons we are coming up with the National Crime Agency. You will see the difference very soon.

A lot of criticisms have been levered at the level of the EDB. They say undue delay in processing applications for investment in Mauritius, so many millions are waiting. There is a due process that they follow. Maybe we could do it a bit quicker, I do not know, but let me

give to the House a concrete example to show how it is extremely important to have a thorough prior check and assessment.

Quite recently, a prospective investor came with a project worth nearly Rs5 billion. When they investigated, he was getting all sorts of nervousness. He was trying to contact people in high office but they found out it was a blatant case of laundering dirty money, and it was refused, turned down. But it took a long time to investigate.

Madam Speaker, it is ironical that the hon. Leader of the Opposition reminded the House that “justice denied is justice delayed”. But that was the philosophy of the previous Government which cost the taxpayers billions of rupees! Not millions; billions!

We remember the Betamax case. It has cost the country Rs5.6 billion of taxpayers’ money, that is, everybody who is here, their money which has gone down the drain because of the incompetency and the criminal negligence. In that case, in terms of legal costs, the State Trading Corporation paid Mr Ravin Chetty nearly Rs20 million! What do we do with these people? What should we do with these people?

The delays referred to by the hon. Leader of the Opposition are the result of longstanding structural weaknesses by the former regime. And everywhere it is like that; even in the Police. That is why we are bringing new laws. We cannot afford to have these structural weaknesses everywhere. You know what happened? Look at the former Commissioner of Police. He was called by the FCC. He had already prepared an ...

An hon. Member: A statement?

The Prime Minister: Not a statement. He even prepared what is called in court...

An hon. Member: An affidavit?

The Prime Minister: An affidavit. Before the questions were asked, he knew what questions were going to be asked! How does this happen? Leakage! These worms, who are leaking information, they will have to answer in the future. I must tell you this!

We have taken decisive actions and we are going to do more. The Administrative Penalty Regulations, pending since 2022, were finalised last year. They now allow authorities to impose sanctions directly, without lengthy court procedures.

Madam Speaker, hon A. Duval describes these reforms as “cosmetic”. This is not only inaccurate, but it undermines the extensive work carried out by our institutions.

These amendments are the results of work undertaken by professionals from the Attorney-General’s Office, the Bank of Mauritius and the Financial Crimes Commission, in consultation with other competent authorities.

The amendments take into consideration the findings of the National Risk Assessment, as well as an independent assessment of our AML/CFT/CPF framework, and are supported by a detailed mapping against FATF requirements. Therefore, with all due respect, it is not cosmetic. It is a serious, technical and coordinated reform effort.

Hon. A. Duval also raised concerns regarding the motor vehicle sector and has suggested, like many others do, that the framework is inadequate in addressing the associated risks.

Let me clarify that the AML/CFT/CPF framework is complex and evolving, requiring a risk-based and carefully calibrated approach. Any reforms must be properly analysed because you can get unintended consequences on economic activities and on citizens.

It is precisely in this context that the Ministry of Financial Services and Economic Planning is currently undertaking a Typology Report on Motor Vehicle Trade. This exercise will enable a comprehensive assessment of money laundering risks and typologies associated with the sector, determine appropriate thresholds for cash transactions, and identify robust safeguards to prevent abuse for money laundering purposes. In this regard, a Typology Report on Motor Vehicle Trade is underway and it will assess risks, determine appropriate cash thresholds, and identify safeguards.

However, we are not just saying this, Madam Speaker. Last year, the Government introduced regulations requiring traceable payment methods, with only a limited cash deposit of Rs20,000. Maybe Rs20,000 is a bit low, but we are looking at this.

Let me reiterate the statistics on enforcement actions by the Financial Crimes Commission in relation to motor vehicle-related money laundering activities –

- (a) a total of 86 attachments and seizure orders have been issued;

- (b) over 300 vehicles have been seized, including luxury vehicles;
- (c) the estimated value of vehicles seized exceeds Rs280 million, and
- (d) several car rental companies have been identified and are being investigated as vehicles for laundering criminal proceeds.

These are real actions delivering real results.

Madam Speaker, we must remain steadfast and forward-looking, driving the reforms necessary to safeguard and strengthen the AML/CFT/CPF framework. It is, in a way, a very clear national imperative.

To those engaged in doom-mongering and unwarranted criticism, let me be clear: our focus remains firmly on implementing the reforms, upholding transparency and accountability, and successfully navigating the forthcoming Mutual Evaluation exercise. There are people who actually want us to be downgraded; to go on the grey list. We must be more patriotic.

The other day, I met a lady from India actually. Do you know what she said to me? She said, 'I am very sorry for you, Prime Minister.' I asked why. She said, 'I see very few patriots in this country. Everybody is looking for something.' Where is patriotism? We have to reunite the country and be patriots.

As I repeatedly said during the campaign – *Nou pou met lord kot ena dezord. Kwar mwa. Nou pou mete sa lord la !*

Let me conclude by acknowledging the collective efforts of all the institutions engaged in this national endeavour, Madam Speaker, as well as the continued collaboration of the private sector and our international partners.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon. Minister Subron!

(5.14 p.m.)

The Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity (Mr A. Subron): Madam Speaker, first let me express my appreciation to the Minister, the Attorney General and all the other Ministers who were part of the Interministerial Committee, who spearheaded this milestone bundle of a legislation.

Various colleagues, Ministers and Members of the Government made significant contribution during the debate on this Bill. My thanks go to them too. Some elaborated on the technical and institutional dimensions while others explained the further needs for a more transparent and efficient financial sector.

I will focus my intervention on a more philosophical dimension and a global historical context for this Bill to be laid on the Table of this Assembly. Let me start by addressing some issues raised by the Opposition parties. The Leader of the Opposition has essentially said, primo, that the measures contained in this Bill are fine, but the problem will lie in the implementation. My colleagues in Government have already responded to this argument.

Secundo, the Leader of the Opposition went on and said, let me quote the Hansard, Madam Speaker –

“On novel offences, clause 8 amends the Environment Act 2024, introducing for the first time the offence of ecocide with penalties up to ten years of penal servitude.

Madam Speaker, may the House be informed as to why this clause has been introduced in this Bill.”

He added –

“I sincerely think that this amendment has nothing to do with AML/CFT.”

To this statement, my hon. colleague and comrade, hon. Etwareea, certainly one of the most leftist-leading Members of this Assembly, spontaneously responded to the Leader of the Opposition: ‘*Bizin lir impe!*’, hon. Etwareea said.

As a long-standing journalist with international experiences, he depicted instantly the blunder of the Leader of the Opposition. I will come back later to this erroneous statement made by the Leader of the Opposition when he stated that ecocide and environmental crimes are not part of AML/CFT framework.

Tertio, the Leader of the Opposition then added that he sincerely believes that the amendment on Environment Act on ecocide has been put in this Bill to please a party in the government.

Madam Speaker, one does not have to climb on the top roof of the Sun Trust Building to know that the Leader of the Opposition was referring to my party Rezistans ek Alternativ, which is the most ecologically inclined party in this government. Well, on this statement too, the Leader of the Opposition has exposed his slander understanding of politics and its dynamics, especially in this global era.

As for the other Member of the Opposition who is still here – I am glad he is here – hon. A. Duval, his stand can be summarised as follows –

- The present legal framework to tackle money laundering are already here and this legislation is cosmetic and has been introduced to please AML/CFT.

He is wrong too.

To say the least, this posture certainly exposes his political dizziness of not understanding that one of the major amendments on ecocide would lead Mauritius forward amongst the few first countries in the world to be introducing ecocide as a major crime connected to financial crime.

This leaping section has not ever existed before in our statutes, and its introduction is certainly not cosmetic, nor has it been made to please this time AML/CFT.

Madam Speaker, fundamental laws in society are not made to please x or y. Those in Opposition who may have made laws within this constricted vision of pleasing somebody cannot understand that fundamental local and domestic laws are the product of social struggles, in this case, of global social struggles, establishing new balance of forces, ethics and paradigm shifts. Of course, those who have never been part of or who are disconnected of social struggles, be it locally or globally, will never understand the dialectics of social struggle and legislative enactments.

Major struggles have led to major law changes in the history of humanity. In colonial slavery times, the abolitionist movement has been instrumental to bring laws to abolish slave trades and system.

The liberation and pro-independence struggles triggered fundamental laws to enact self-determination, especially in the global south. Global solidarity actions reinforce the local struggle in South Africa to end apartheid legal framework. Workers' struggle gave birth to critical ILO Conventions. This piece of legislation, to be precise, this package of legislative amendments, is the direct product of global struggles, emerging at the end of the last century and the beginning of this century. It is the product of the struggle of global movements for social, economic and environmental justice in the era of limitless global capitalism dominated by net worth billionaires.

The Global Justice Movement includes many organisations and networks. I will mention a few: Global Tax Justice Movement, Alternative World Social Forums, Our World Is Not For Sale, ATTAC, Third World Network, Oxfam, Friends of the Earth, Stop Genocide, Climate and Capitalism. Just to mention a few.

In these global networks and struggles, my party, Rezistans ek Alternativ, and other movements in which we are part of, and, myself, as an activist in various global justice movements, have played an important role. Madam Speaker, these global justice movements are, in reality, the genesis of what we are debating today.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, this law is not meant to please my party, but my party, as part of the global justice movement, contributed to shape the new laws to better protect the people and the planet, which are being robbed by global capitalism. Yes, Madam Speaker, robbed! I mean it.

Let me refer to the latest report of the prestigious Oxfam International, just published on 02 April 2026. The amount of untaxed wealth hidden offshore by the richest 0.1% exceeds the entire wealth of the poorest half of humanity, 4.1 billion people. The new Oxfam analysis published it ahead of the 10th anniversary of the Panama Papers.

The findings show that a decade later, the super-rich continue to explore offshore systems to evade taxes and conceal assets, highlighting the urgent need for coordinated international action to tax extreme wealth. Oxfam estimates that 3.55 trillion in untaxed wealth are stashed offshore in tax havens and unreported accounts in 2024. This sum exceeds the GDP of France, and is more than twice the GDP of the world's 44 least developed countries! The richest 0.1% hold approximately 80% of all untaxed offshore wealth or around \$2.84 trillion. Within this timely group, the ultra-wealthiest, 0.01%, hold roughly \$1.77 trillion.

This isn't just about clever accounting. It is about power and impunity. When millionaires and billionaires stash trillions of dollars in offshore tax haven, they place themselves above their obligation that binds the rest of society. The consequences are predictable as they are devastating. We see our public hospitals and schools starve of funds, our social fabric shredded by rising in equality and ordinary people forced to shoulder the cost of a system rigged to enrich a tiny few.

Madam Speaker, it is because of this cruel tendency of global capitalism that global, social and ecological justice movements have fought for the regulation of offshore financial centres for more than 40 years. The AML/CFT and the FATF arose from those sociopolitical dynamics which have had to be taken on board by the political and ruling elite in many western countries. So, are some of the amendments being presently brought to this House.

I will now deal specifically on three major dimensions of the emerging legal frameworks in connection with offshore financial sector and its impact in Mauritius –

1. Taxes.
2. Secrecy, and
3. the environmental crime and ecocide.

Taxes. To curb tax evasion and tax avoidance, the Global Minimum Tax of 15% adopted by the OECD has been incorporated in Mauritian law last year in the form of Qualified Domestic Minimum Top Up Tax (QDMTT). As a matter of fact, the Global Minimum Tax is itself the product of long-standing struggle of global justice movement. The global justice movement which includes organisation as Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions and for Citizens' Action (ATTAC), and Global Alliance for Tax Justice has been fighting to end the race to the bottom in terms of taxation.

After the Global Minimum Tax, the Global Justice Movement are now currently campaigning for a UN tax convention which would move tax rule making it a more inclusive platform where developing nations have an equal vote. They are also fighting for a broad Financial Transaction Tax over the Global Minimum Tax. Unlike the GMT which targets corporate profits, the FTT will target the volume of financial trades to curb market speculation and raise funds for global public goods.

Madam Speaker, maybe one of these days we will see future legislations to be debated in this House on UN Tax Convention, on Financial Transaction Tax not to please anybody,

but as a direct product of the relations between global social struggle and domestic law enactment.

On secrecy, the fight against tax haven secrecy has been led by a coalition of whistle-blowers, investigative journalist, non-governmental organisation who have worked for decades to export the hidden financial system of world elite. These included the global NGO like Transparency International and many media such as the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists who have been the spear heads of the global social movement against the secrecy that underpins many offshore financial sectors.

Ten years ago, the Panama Papers were leaked to the world, this caused offshore finance to come under mounting international scrutiny. The Panama Papers exposed how shell companies with complex corporate structures use secrecy to launder money and avoid paying taxes. The secrecy of the Mauritian offshore, its lack of supervision was notorious. This contributed for Mauritius to be put on the grey list.

Mauritius took several steps including abolishing GBC2 licenses and replacing them with a more regulated authorised company regime. The reform focused on implementing stricter substance requirements, requiring companies to have a physical presence and real activity in Mauritius. In parallel, the law on ultimate beneficial owner in Mauritius has evolved significantly, shifting from light disclosure to strict transparency to meet international compliance standard of the FATF.

In 2024, the Registrar of Companies was tasked to maintain a largely confidential, beneficial ownership accessible only to competent authorities. With the amendment proposed today, in the Companies Act, the primary difference lies in moving from simple threshold-based percentage, 25%, to a broader natural person and control focus that aligns with international FATF standards. Thus, the amendment will expand, control definition. The new framework users cascade approach, looking beyond simple ownership, percentage, to include control *via* voting rights or other means. It attributes default senior management if no natural person is identified through ownership or control, the senior managing official must be identified as a beneficial ownership. Madam Speaker, these are real changes not cosmetic ones as claimed by the Opposition.

Let me come now to the environmental crimes and ecocide. Madam Speaker, that is the introduction of environmental crime and ecocide as part of anti-money laundering framework. This is a recent and accelerated development; this again does not fall from the

sky. It is due to the persistent global socio-ecological justice movement campaign after clear links have been established between environmental crimes and companies operating the offshore sectors. Many organisations such as Stop Ecocide International, Transparency International, Global Witness are part of them.

Historically, money laundering was viewed as victimless financial crime. The Global Justice Movement reframed it by highlighting how illicit financial flows drain resources from developing nations. This advocacy led to the inclusion of grand corruption and environmental crime as predicate offences for money laundering.

The Global Justice Movement also pushed for the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) to ensure that AML laws are not just stopping the flow of money but returning the stolen assets to their rightful citizens. The intersection of environmental crimes, ecocide and reparation represent a major shift from traditional human centred justice to a more eco-centric model that treats the environment as a victim on its own right. The inclusion of ecocide in law means criminalising the mass destruction of ecosystems thus, essentially, treating environmental devastation with the same gravity as genocide or war crimes. I will not go into the definition because of time.

Madam Speaker, let me say, in this era of climate crisis, since extinction of biodiversities, destructive extractivist-driven economy, this amendment reflects the level of consciousness attained by the people of the planet and their movement. It has become a matter of survival. By adding ecocide in our statute book, Mauritius becomes a pioneer country in socio-ecological justice and custodianship.

I think, this section on ecocide and environmental crimes marks the biggest leap in Mauritian environmental law since independence. The European Union has already moved to criminalise environmental crime and countries like Belgium, France, Vietnam, Chile have already incorporated ecocide and ecocide-like legislations in their domestic law.

For the hon. Leader of the Opposition who is not here but who was sincerely wondering why the inclusion of this amendment in our law for FATF compliance purpose, I will humbly request him to read, *lir impe* the FATF report on Money Laundering from Environmental Crime, June 2021. I will recommend him to *lir impe* the new Environmental Crime Directive, Directive 2024/1203. These two documents will surely enlighten him on the issue.

Let me add that the amendments we are bringing to this House, beside making ecocide a crime in our law punishable by imprisonment, criminalises non-compliance to

environmental protection fee. It extends the provision of assets recovery to environmental crime and the ecocide and for the first time ever, introduces reparation in our law for ecocide. The new Section 135B provides for Non-Criminal Penalties or Measures. The new section 135C provides for Recovery of Expenses.

Madam Speaker, we, the people of Mauritius, who lived the first marine ecocide of our history through the oil spill arising through Wakashio shipwreck, should applaud this amendment being brought to the Environmental Act.

I am sure if the previous government could be brought to court under this new law, it would have surely been condemned for ecocide. The wanton, the reckless disregard for an environmental consequence during the first 12 days of Wakashio shipwreck would have been sufficient for them to be condemned for ecocide.

In any case, this law would have also opened the door for massive reparation for the prejudice caused to the people of Mahebourg and South East coast by the companies and agencies which caused this ecocidal spread of the *marée noire* – the oil spill after 12 days of reckless disregard for an environmental consequence.

Having been on the waterfront, I know what we are talking about. Madam Speaker, this Bill gives hope to humanity and Mauritius. It shows that as global capitalism unravelled, it also generated its own contradictions that is, the rise of global people's movement for social justice and ecological justice. It generates the very seeds to challenge its dominance and build new world with shifting paradigms. *Rezistans ek Alternativ*, my party and me, are proud to be in this House and to vote for this Bill.

Today is a historical day because not only because of a change in seating arrangements. It is a historical day because of the piece of legislation that we will be enacting in a few moments.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Yes, let me tell everybody. I have got hon. Boolell, hon. Bhagwan and hon. Mohamed, Ministers who will have to speak and then the hon. Minister of Financial Services will be making her winding up speech. I would greatly appreciate if you could really respect the time because after that, we have to do Committee Stage. I have a statement from a hon. Minister. We are not home yet, please!

Hon. Dr. Boolell! I did not want to embarrass you.

(5.38 p.m.)

The Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries (Dr. A. Boolell): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The joy of having to intervene after two eloquent speakers – the hon. Prime Minister and our good friend, the hon. Minister of Social Security, there is not much left for me to say except that I will stick to the time allotted to me.

I am not saying that I will be like a jurisdiction without substance but I have a few things to say. Now, the days, Madam Speaker, of preferences and rent seeking are over. Financial services sectors, competitive. As a responsible government acting as an enabler, a facilitator of a dynamic sector which is brain gain for young ambitious graduates, we constantly have to re-engineer the sector and to gain competitive and comparative advantages – our jurisdiction has to be neat, clean and a jurisdiction of substance.

Singapore, Luxembourg, Malta, Liechtenstein, Bermuda, Dubai, Ireland just to name a few – would not hesitate to ruffle our feathers to have a competitive edge – make Mauritius our preferred destination is our mantra. And, the financial services thrive in the name of effectiveness, transparency and accountability.

The hon. Minister responsible for financial services and economic planning wasted no time to move 24 amendments of the Bill as recommended by the Ministerial Committee co-chaired by herself and the hon. Attorney General. And the amendments were moved 24 hours after the Bank of Mauritius announced the termination of the conservatorship of Silver Bank and the Bill is the gatekeeper of our jurisdiction. As a jurisdiction of substance, we should not be caught off the cuff – I am not going to say with our pants down but certainly not off-the-cuff.

Our Financial Services Centre has taken the rung of the FATF ladder and within a year, as the hon. Prime Minister stated, has gained eight places. The Chief Executive of Financial Services Commission is confident; our jurisdiction would pass the ESAAMLG test with flying colours.

May I remind the House, Mauritius was placed on the FATF grey list and black list of EU in February 2020. On the global financial index, Mauritius went on a precipitous fall from 63rd to 89th place. Why? Because MSM-led regime was a laundromat for criminals to wash, rinse, dry and spin-dry dirty money.

The hon. Minister rightly so, and has to be congratulated because she conveyed strong signals in relations to –

- (i) Know Your Client and customer due diligence is the premium of the sector;
- (ii) suspicious transaction reporting;
- (iii) application of law to the core;
- (iv) and open and resilient jurisdiction;
- (v) confidence and integrity.

I would also like to draw attention to alleged online attractive portfolio to lure investors and no one Madam Speaker, should be impervious or sensitive to change, especially to fundamental changes.

I heard a good colleague, the hon. Minister of Social Security, talking of ecocide. In 2019, the Rome statute was amended to make ecocide an international crime but the previous regime never dared. The amendment brought to the Environment Act through the Bill is a testimony of affirmed commitment neither to dither nor to delay and the Bill makes provision for scrutiny of cooperative enterprises.

A pillar of democracy – that is what cooperatives are. Equality, equity unfortunately has been used as a conduit for criminal activities by cronies of the MSM. The Vacoas Multipurpose Cooperative Society scandal was a pillar of big financial mess – almost Rs400 million was siphoned. It is a broad day light robbery by cronies of MSM. MSM-led regime was eternally in collusion with McMafia, Madam Speaker and McMafia operates all over and especially in the real estate. Unexplained wealth from dirty money has been invested in Dubai. The criminals have to be answerable to unexplained wealth order.

The hon. Prime Minister has said it, everybody has reinforced it and it has to happen. They cannot get away with murder. Government has taken the right decision to call a Forensic Audit of Silver Bank's past transactions. The various fraudulent practices which occurred with the connivance of persons within the bank and outside, have been exposed. Silver Bank was run by bankster and not by bankers, anointed by the former Minister of Finance with the blessings of his leader. The Internal Auditor sounded the alarm in relation to illicit activities was threatened.

Madam Speaker, the singsong of Pack & Blister, Silver Bank, MIC, Alvaro Sobrinho, should not simply be a lullaby. Sobrinho, as the hon. Prime Minister has stated, was responsible for many illicit activities, but he was also responsible for a near constitutional crisis which provoked the departure of a president in 2018. Of course, as has been stated by

the hon. Prime Minister, he got a Certificate of Character from the then DPM when the latter looked him in the eyes!

The hon. Prime Minister has consolidated democracy and there is no price for it. The demarcation lines between democratic institutions are wide. With due respect, both prosecution and the Judiciary should know that time is of an essence. Government is Government, but Parliament is supreme. An important Bill is being moved, Parliament so decides. The nation does not want to be packed with blisters over delays while the guilty parties are enjoying armchair comfortability in Maradiva Hotel. A symbol of fraudulent practices.

Madam Speaker, there have been complains made over the rigidity of the Bill by some operators. Yes, indeed, and rightly so. If not, our competitors and even MGos would go for our jugular. That was to some extent stated by our colleague, the hon. Minister of Social Security. Oxfam staged a protest against Mauritius at an OAU conference in March 2014, held in Abuja, following the report submitted by Thabo Mbeki as Chair of the High Panel on Illicit Financial Flaws. I had to stand for our friend, the then Minister of Finance. I think it was Xavier-Luc Duval, and I had to rebut and highlighted the merits of our jurisdiction as a clean, neat and a low tax jurisdiction of substance.

The name of the game under the previous regime was opacity. Pockets first, country last. FATF judged Mauritius to have a low or moderate effectiveness across the 11 immediate outcomes. The mutual evaluation found that Mauritius was largely fully compliant on 14 of the 40 Financial Action Task Force recommendations while 26 recommendations were rated as partially or non-compliant.

The keyword, Madam Speaker, is effectiveness. FATF's revised methodology places a much stronger emphasis on measurable effectiveness, not only where the laws exist, but whether they deliver concrete results. The FIU has reporting obligation. The legislative amendments in 2020 enforce stricter reporting, requiring reporting persons or auditors to submit requested information to the Financial Intelligence Unit within 15 days. But under the previous regime, it was hardly enforced.

Our Government, through the hon. Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning, has said it loud and clear, without fear, favour or prejudice, all suspicious related transactions have to be reported.

To be forward-looking, Government has finalised the National Anti-Money Laundering, Combatting Financing Terrorism Strategy for 2026-2029. The accompanying action plan assigns clear responsibilities to each institution and ensures preparedness for the 2027 mutual evaluation. This approach was recognised and supported during ESAAMLG Executive Secretary's High-Level Mission in July 2025.

A comprehensive technical compliance assessment was conducted in 2025 using the revised FATF methodology to identify legislative gaps, particularly in relation to the 12 recommendations leading to the introduction of the Anti-Money Laundering, Combatting the Financing of Terrorism and Countering Proliferation Financing (Miscellaneous) Bill to ensure continued alignment with international standards. Preparations for 2027 mutual evaluation are well underway. These reforms are not being pursued for the sake of only an assessment. They are essential to safeguard the integrity of our financial system, protect Mauritius' reputation and ensure continued investor confidence.

Madam Speaker, our status as a trusted International Financial Centre must be preserved through collective effort by government, regulators, private sector and the civil society. This Bill reaffirms our collective determination to deny criminals the opportunity to exploit Mauritius, to recover illicit gains and to preserve the integrity of our institutions. It confronts contemporary threats, including proliferation financing and virtual asset, while preserving space for legitimate economic and charitable activity.

Madam Speaker, in the light of climate of uncertainty in the Middle East, it is an opportunity which is knocking for our jurisdiction. We have to act without fear or prejudice to ensure that we attract investors to widen the circle of opportunities in Mauritius and to make our jurisdiction a prime jurisdiction.

The amendments in relation to the Bill speak volume of opportunities which are knocking. I thank the hon. Minister. Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Thank you for respecting the time. Thank you very much.

Hon. Minister of Environment!

(5.52 p.m.)

The Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change (Mr R. Bhagwan): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Will you also keep an eye on time?

Mr Bhagwan: I will try my best.

Madam Speaker: You will also keep an eye.

Mr Bhagwan: I will watch the time.

Madame la présidente, l'*Anti-Money Laundering, Combatting the Financing of Terrorism and Countering Proliferation Financing (Miscellaneous) Bill*, c'est une nécessité absolue pour le pays et il n'y a pas de temps à perdre.

Je voudrais d'emblée féliciter mes collègues, l'honorable ministre des Services financiers et l'honorable *Attorney General* et leurs équipes respectives pour le travail abattu pour préparer ce projet de loi qui vise à mettre toutes les lois régissant notre système financier en diapason avec les nouvelles normes internationales. Ce qui a été dit déjà. Une nécessité parce que les dérives et les magouilles sous l'ancien régime – nous ne cesserons jamais d'en parler – ont terni la réputation de notre centre financier et nous nous sommes retrouvés sur le banc des accusés.

Ce projet de loi vise avant tout, Madame la présidente, à redonner confiance en nos institutions financières et bancaires, et surtout, à minimiser les risques d'abus et les dérives. Un système financier, Madame la présidente, est un peu comme le passeport d'un pays. À quoi bon avoir un passeport superbement imprimé, mais qui n'est reconnu que par une petite poignée d'états ? Un passeport trouve sa légitimité quand il est internationalement reconnu, accepté et permet au détenteur de ce document de voyager librement aux quatre coins du monde. C'est dans l'acceptation de ce passeport que la souveraineté d'un état est reconnue. Et cette souveraineté, comme le passeport, n'a aucun sens en l'absence de réciprocité.

En effet, Madame la présidente, la souveraineté et la réciprocité sont les deux piliers fondamentaux de nos relations internationales du droit. Un demi-siècle de cela, ce principe était adéquat, suffisant pour être accepté dans le Conseil des nations. Mais les choses ont évolué drastiquement avec la mondialisation, la globalisation et la financiarisation de l'économie. Le commerce international a atteint en 2024, 3 300 milliards de dollars, représentant 60% du PIB mondial. Et ce commerce mondial dépend énormément des services financiers devenus eux-mêmes un élément très important des exportations.

Ce vaste mouvement de capitaux à travers le monde comporte évidemment des risques et les fraudeurs sont nombreux quand les contrôles sont insuffisants. L'offshores, avec ses

sociétés écrans et ses montages complexes, est devenu un terrain de prédilection pour les *white collar criminals*.

Madam Speaker: Prédilection.

Mr Bhagwan: Oui, prédilection.

C'est ainsi que notre petite île était devenue une plaque tournante sous le précédent régime. Des Panama Papers en 2016 au Pandora Papers en 2021, en passant par les *Mauritian Leaks* ou autres Paradise Papers, la réputation de notre pays était ternie et le pays s'est retrouvé sur des listes peu honorables. Des impostes, des fenêtres et des égouts permettaient ces transactions douteuses avec la complicité tacite des institutions réduites à des *rubber stamps complaisants*. Les autorités dites compétentes fermaient les yeux, pire, encourageaient ces activités illicites, éclaboussant même des personnalités au plus haut sommet de l'État mauricien. Mes collègues et moi-même, nous avons posé pas mal de questions avant les élections générales et nous savions comment ce *loudspeaker* qui nous empêchait d'avoir des réponses.

Le pays lui-même était devenu une Silver Bank, une BanyanTree Bank – un *rogue State*. Le smoking gun, Madame la présidente, était entre les mains des grosses pontes du MSM. Il faut impérativement mettre de l'ordre dans nos lois régissant les secteurs bancaires et financiers pour se mettre enfin en conformité avec les normes internationales. Pour que le pays ne soit plus sur la touche. Pour que notre souveraineté, sur tous les plans, bénéficie d'une réciprocité des États et de nos partenaires pour que notre passeport financier devient réellement un passepartout. Et c'est donc ce pilier fondamental dans nos échanges internationaux que ce projet de loi vient consolider.

Ce projet de loi est, en substance, un texte qui permettra à Maurice de se conformer à la dernière série de normes internationales établies par le GAFI. Par l'adoption de ce projet de loi, nous renforcerons notre cadre juridique afin d'éviter que notre pays ne soit inscrit sur la liste grise des juridictions du GAFI.

Madame la présidente, bien que la République de Maurice dispose jusqu'en 2027 pour se conformer aux 40 recommandations formulées par le GAFI, notre pays fait l'objet d'un suivi étroit et nous avons le devoir de faire de notre mieux et vite pour démontrer des progrès concrets année après année. Il n'est pas nécessaire de rappeler aux membres de cette

Assemblée, à nos amis, les dangers liés à un non-respect des recommandations – des conséquences économiques, financières désastreuses et une image écornée pour la République de Maurice. Dans ce contexte de tensions géopolitiques et de marges de manœuvre budgétaires limitées, notre pays ne peut tout simplement pas se permettre de prendre le moindre risque de figurer sur cette liste grise.

Madame la présidente, les recommandations du GAFI exigent que les infractions de blanchiment d'argent s'appliquent à un éventail le plus large possible d'infractions. C'est dans ce contexte, le GAFI a explicitement souligné que les crimes environnementaux constituent des infractions graves générant des produits susceptibles d'alimenter les opérations de blanchiment d'argent. Selon le *Global Risks Report 2023* du Forum économique mondial, la perte de biodiversité et l'effondrement des écosystèmes figurent parmi les risques mondiaux qui se détérioreront le plus rapidement au cours de la prochaine décennie. À l'échelle mondiale, la nature « faible risque et forte rentabilité » des crimes environnementaux en fait une source de revenus lucrative pour les criminels. Ne croyez pas, Madame la présidente, que nous sommes à l'abri de telles pratiques. En effet, alors que certains pensent encore que le blanchiment d'argent est une affaire abstraite de chiffres et de comptes offshores, une réalité circule dans des tuyaux en PVC, remplis d'oiseaux vivants, anesthésiés pour tromper la vigilance. Oui, des serins siffleurs, jusqu'à 75 par tube PVC, échangés contre de la drogue, au cœur d'un trafic organisé entre Maurice et la Réunion. Derrière chaque oiseau, c'est un système criminel qui prospère, qui blanchit et qui corrompt.

D'ailleurs, ce trafic, où un oiseau peut valoir plus de R 18 000, a été largement abordé durant le Séminaire Franco-Mauricien relative à la Lutte transnationale contre les atteintes à l'environnement, tenu à l'île-sœur au début du mois et auquel a participé la police de l'Environnement et d'autres parties prenantes mauriciennes. Ce trafic n'est pas marginal, il est le symptôme d'un crime organisé, inventif, cynique, capable de transformer la biodiversité en monnaie d'échange. Alors oui, Madame la présidente, cette loi doit frapper fort. Elle doit remonter les filières, assécher les flux financiers et briser les complicités.

D'ailleurs, les rapports des Nations unies placent désormais les revenus issus des crimes environnementaux au même niveau que ceux provenant d'autres crimes financiers graves. À travers ce projet de loi, nous prenons des mesures pour que ceux qui tirent profit de la destruction de nos terres, de notre air et de nos mers soient tenus responsables de leurs actes. Il convient de noter que les « crimes environnementaux » englobent différentes réalités.

Ils incluent l'extraction illégale ou le trafic de divers éléments, qu'il s'agisse de ressources naturelles et de minéraux, de déchets ou encore d'espèces de la faune et de la flore protégées. Ils concernent également des actes susceptibles d'entraîner des dommages graves, étendus ou durables à l'environnement, tels que des marées noires majeures ou des activités nuisibles ou illégales affectant la faune sauvage.

Madame la présidente, pour lutter efficacement contre ces crimes, nous devons renforcer notre arsenal législatif. À cet effet, ce projet de loi introduit des amendements corrélatifs spécifiques aux articles 128 et 135 de l'*Environment Protection Act 2024*. Dans un premier temps, de nouvelles dispositions seront introduites afin de sanctionner ceux qui se soustraient délibérément au paiement de la redevance de l'*Environmental Protection Fee*. Les nouvelles dispositions comprendront notamment –

- La criminalisation de la soumission de fausses déclarations et d'informations erronées ;
- L'imposition de sanctions significatives à l'encontre de ceux qui induisent ou tentent d'induire en erreur le Directeur général de la MRA ;
- Une augmentation substantielle des peines pour les contrevenants condamnés, avec en plus d'amendes comprises entre R 100 000 et R 500 000 et d'une peine d'emprisonnement pouvant aller jusqu'à 10 ans, et la possibilité pour la Cour d'ordonner le paiement d'un montant pouvant atteindre le double de la différence des sommes dues.

Madame la présidente, à la suite de consultations avec le bureau du Directeur des poursuites publiques et celui de l'*Attorney General*, nous intégrons de nouvelles dispositions à l'*Environment Protection Act 2024* relatives à l'écocide.

Madam Speaker, our pride as Mauritians – whatever community we belong to, whatever political ideologies, whatever religious beliefs we might have, and whatever our age – is our unique environment. Our environment – our beaches, seas, mountains, fields, trees or birds – is something we all cherish. We all have fond memories of afternoons spent at the seaside or walks in our forests or hikes up our mountains. And we all know that our environment is fragile. We all remember, a few years ago, how the Wakashio incident deeply affected all of us. More importantly, it made us realise how vulnerable we all were. The

immediate reaction of all Mauritians was then commendable. Still, we can remember the contribution of *Rezistans ek Alternativ* and all the friends of Eco-Sud and others. Across the island, people volunteered their time, and, some of us, even their hair to try to contain the noxious *marée noire*.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Bhagwan: Again, this shows how dear the environment is to all of us Mauritians. Quite a lot of laws in Mauritius do offer protection against all categories of violence against people.

Mauritius *mare noir*, again this shows how dear the environment is to all of us, Mauritians. Quite a lot of laws in Mauritius do offer protection against all categories of violence against people. Sadly, violence, whether wilful or negligent against our environment, is not adequately criminalised. The existing laws, at best, only marginally punish those who harm nature. Existing offences against our environment are not even considered as a crime in our statutes but only as a misdemeanour. This has to change. This law, creating the crime of ecocide, changes that. The crime, inspired by growing global movement, led by small island nations, is crafted in such a way as to capture all possible harms against nature.

There will be no more legal loopholes and no more impunity. It targets unlawful or wanton acts causing severe widespread or long-term environmental damage. The punishment is extremely severe. Those found guilty risk a maximum of ten years imprisonment.

Another novelty is that there is no maximum fine. Instead, the fine will be proportionate to the damage caused. The law also provides for remedial actions or compensation. The law, Madam Speaker, ensures accountability for environmental disruption, deters against future harm, protects human lives and aligns our country with the FATF expectations.

Lastly, this crime aligns itself with a promise this Government made which prominently features within the Government Programme 2025-2029 – to recognise the importance of our environment and protect it. I am here focusing on the inclusion of the right of nature within the constitutional and legal frameworks of the Republic of Mauritius. Pending the work of the Constitutional Review Commission, the consequential amendments proposed by the currently

Bill are a step taken towards mainstreaming the rights of nature within our legal fabric, especially by criminalising ecocide.

We, however, recognise that environment protection duties are shared amongst various institutions. Indeed, technical competences and enforcement duties are shared across various authorities as described within the Fifth Schedule of the Environment Act 2024. While the Office of the DPP will lead prosecution of offenders, we are ensuring a whole of government approach where technical competences from competent authorities are integrated within our judicial process. We are aware of potential logistical challenges such as the need for specialised experts to assess environmental damage. These will be duly called upon if the need arises. However, the United Nations Environment Programme advocates technical hurdles should not serve as an excuse for environmental impunity. The planetary crisis requires us to be bold.

Madame la présidente, mais aussi collective, vigilante et citoyenne, c'est précisément le sens du programme 'Service à L'écologie' qui sera bientôt lancé par mon ministère. Notre ambition est de fédérer à travers toute l'île des éco pôles rassemblement des experts, formateurs, mentors, professionnels, retraités, académiciens, chercheurs et citoyens engagés pour créer un véritable réseau d'alerte de transmission d'actions sur le terrain, au plus près de réalité.

J'appelle donc, à chaque citoyen, engageons-nous à faire émerger une société mauricienne lucide, formée, mobilisée, capable de détecter, dénoncer et de protéger. Un pays où chacun, Madame la présidente, devient gardien de l'environnement et de sa biodiversité.

Madame la présidente, ce projet de loi ne concerne pas uniquement la conformité financière, il touche à l'âme-même de notre état océan d'une superficie de 2.3 millions de kilomètres carrés. J'envoie un message clair – notre capital environnemental n'est pas à vendre. Les braconniers et les autres criminels qui cherchent à tirer profit de sa destruction ne dormiront plus tranquille.

Madame la présidente, ce projet de loi est un grand pas pour la mise en conformité de notre system financier mais un plus grand pas pour la protection de notre capital environnemental.

Sur ce, je soutiens vivement ce projet qu'a présenté mon collègue.

Madam Speaker : Merci, monsieur le ministre d'avoir respecté le temps.

Hon. Minister for Housing and Lands!

(6.10 p.m.)

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Mohamed): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Indeed, it is an important piece of legislation, and from the very outset, I also, would like to congratulate the hon. Minister for bringing this piece of legislation to this House.

As far as my Ministry is concerned, we are to refer to Clause 18 of the present Bill, that talks about the Real Estate Agency Authority. And, what I would like to address, I am of the view, is of utmost importance. Having listened to everyone, every single person has made a very important contribution to this democratic process but allow me at the outset to make reference to the interesting exchange at the time that the hon. Prime Minister was addressing the House and in front of him was the hon. A Duval. Mention was made of recordings, audio recordings and I saw how comforted hon. A. Duval was when he said, from a sitting position, all of us heard him said that he was himself victim of those recordings. Fact. Very true.

The hon. Prime Minister also talked about the former Commissioner of Police. Once again, I looked at my good friend, hon. A. Duval, and saw the smile on his face where, once again, he tried to explain that he has been victim of the acts and doings of certain people at the time but what shocks me, apart from the fact that I am sad and that he is not here right now, but what is even more saddening, Madam Speaker, is that he chose, knowingly, to side with those that were spying on him.

Now what does that show? I fail to understand, I mean, I would have huge difficulties sitting next to those who have championed the cause of spying unlawfully, ...

(Interruptions)

That has nothing to do with spy, I can assure you because a spy would have been quiet.

Madam Speaker: This happens but try and keep it quiet.

Mr Mohamed: So, I fail to understand how he could do that. I mean, I wish he could, at some stage, explain and tell the people and the House how has he put that aside because, at no time, did I hear anyone from the former regime apologise. At no time did I hear the Leader of the Opposition whom he sits shoulder-to-shoulder say –

“Sorry, I did not know but I condemn what was happening.”

At no time, have we heard any member of the MSM condemned the fact that there was such unlawful behaviour from those at the very top of our executive in those days but then, we have also heard about the whole issue of Álvaro Sobrinho. True. Once again, hon. A. Duval, in a sitting position, said –

“Not Assirvaden, I am the one who brought it up.”

Good for you and true it is, I did hear him bring it up. True it is that, the then Leader of the Opposition, who was Xavier Duval, did also question the Prime Minister of the day on that particular issue. There was crossing of swords between the Prime Minister of the day and the Leader of the Opposition and there was hon. Collendavelloo who was sitting there in a very squared position feeling so proud of himself. I remember those days.

But then again, how is it that hon. A. Duval, not only him, but his whole party sat shoulder-to-shoulder with those who supported Álvaro Sobrinho?

How did he stand on the same electoral platform as the person who said –

“ I only *get li lizie dan lizie* and I gave him a due diligence exercise?”

How could he do that? How could you forgive? How could you forget so easily?

Today, you want to take the position, your high moral position of supposedly representing the right side? But you should always choose the right side of history. You should believe in those positions that you adopt. You should believe and act accordingly!

It is sad because my good friend, hon. Adrien Duval, has chosen to forget the moral of the ground or has a different definition than I have. I shall deal with it at the end of my intervention.

Madam Speaker, to come to this legislation, clause 18, let me say it is necessary to understand how we have arrived at the current state of play in real estate sector. Back in 2018, ESAAMLG Mutual Evaluation Report highlighted a very important fact, let me quote this.

I quote –

“Mauritius does not have a specific legislation which requires real estate agents to be registered. The only requirement is that anyone wishing to operate this business must obtain a general business registration certificate.

On the other hand, with respect to real estate agents and dealers in precious stones, there are no specific measures in place to prevent criminals and their associates from entering the market and being beneficial owners or holding a management function in this sector.”

The vulnerability rating from the 2019 National Risk Assessment was thus high (high in bold and underline). What did the government-of-the day then do? Despite the shortcomings identified in ESAAMLG, no credible action was undertaken by the then government across all sectors. As a result, we were eventually placed on the FATF Grey List and also on the EU Black List.

This is what the hon. Leader of the Opposition pretends not to remember or not to know. He puts that aside as though it never happened. He tries to rewrite history, but this is the truth. He cannot run away from that truth. So, the Real Estate Agency Authority Act was enacted in 2020 to establish a dedicated authority for real estate sector, with a view to both regulating the activities of the real estate agents, including developers and promoters.

I will try to explain as I go along why this is of utmost importance. So, what did the government do? I have a document which is Proclamation No. 10 of 2020. I have it here, signed by the President of the Republic of the Day. So, the Act comes into force as from 01 November 2020. Sections 1 to 11 are proclaimed. Sections 17, 20, 33, 41, 43, 45 and 47 are proclaimed, but the other sections of the law are not proclaimed. Therein I start putting questions. The whole idea is to clean up the sector to ensure that we comply with what we have to comply with, to ensure that there is monitoring, that there is surveillance, supervision, and that we comply with the law, that we are a clean jurisdiction, at least, in that particular sector.

But why is it that the government-of-the day decides not to proclaim those sections? What are those sections of the law that was not proclaimed? Section 16 was not proclaimed. Why? This concerns registration requirements. Section 18 was not proclaimed. It concerns the establishment of a register of real estate agents. Why? Section 19 – mandatory written contracts between real estate agents and their clients – contracts, mandatory *entre les clients* and the estate agents –, why was that not proclaimed? Why was there, therefore, the need, Madam Speaker, to create a situation where there was no need for a mandatory written contract between real estate agents and clients?

Who did they try to protect? What did they try to hide? What were the transactions that were about to take place when they were in power? And they could not, therefore, afford to proclaim that very section! What were they hiding? Section 21 – keeping of accounts and audit provisions. What was so difficult to ensure that accounts and audit provisions were complied with?

Sections 23 and 24 – *c'est la folie* – suspicious transactions reporting and AML/CFT breaches. That is what we are here for. That is what the hon. Minister is working for. That is why the co-chair, the hon. Attorney General, is there working and helping us to achieve. Why was it so difficult? Why did they not at least try to proclaim Sections 23 and 24 pertaining to suspicious transactions reporting and AML/CFT breaches? What were they trying to hide?

I wish they would at least come out and tell us the truth. The hon. Leader of the Opposition representing the rot, the rot, that is, the MSM, has chosen to be absent again. And his partner, shoulder to shoulder with him, is also absent today!

Keep on spying on me, he says. Keep on listening to what I have to say. I shall say I am not happy with what you are doing, but I will sit next to you and I will espouse your positions. This is what he is saying! Is it a coincidence that they choose not to be here today together? So, I say it again: Sections 25 to 32, why were they not proclaimed? Disciplinary framework for professionals' misconduct and review of decision by the authority.

Madam Speaker, Section 44, Offences and Penalties, was not proclaimed. Section 46 the Transitional Provisions for existing practitioners was not proclaimed. If you want to have the secret recipe as to how to create a *bulldog sans dent* – this is the masters of it – is the one who represents the MSM, who had as Prime Minister someone who is guilty of all those offences in my view. Because it is an offence against the nation not to proclaim.

It is an offence against the people of this country to put us in a situation of risk again in the name of protecting who and in the name of hiding what? That is the question. So, what is the point, therefore, of having created the authority? To pay people to sit in there and do nothing?

Madam Speaker, what is the objective of this government? For one thing, it is not to replicate the mess, but to create a situation where we wipe the mess that they have left behind for us. We have to wipe it clean. The Real Estate Authority has to be empowered to investigate. That, they did not want. We have to ensure, and we are doing it. We have to

ensure that the authority can conduct disciplinary proceedings, impose sanctions, control the register and prosecute. They did not want that.

You see, Madam Speaker, the amendments in clause 18, since 2025, we have done everything possible to ensure that the Real Estate Authority becomes operational as soon as possible. Most of the remaining sections of that Act will now be proclaimed once we are done with this Bill and it becomes a law so that registrations can be effected. It will be in action once the relevant sections of the Act are amended as per the miscellaneous provisions.

It will empower the authority to adopt a look through approach, meaning the authority will not only ensure that agents are properly registered, but also that employees of agents who carry out agency work adhere to minimum standards – the very standards that the MSM did not want to hear of.

It is unfortunate that there is no legislation that can enable any government to prosecute those who have caused a crime against the nation because this, is incompetence, but this, is criminal negligence. Furthermore, the Bill will now extend the AML/CFT compliance obligations to State institutions for real estate transactions on a risk sensitive basis.

Madam Speaker, the way forward. We will finally have a proper register of agency including developers and promoters, allowing for proper entry screening to ensure that only individuals with a proper track record may operate within the sector. Can you imagine, Madam Speaker, that some of the sections that were not proclaimed – and I say so, purposefully, knowingly, – were sections between 25 and 32. The Act sets a clear framework to sanction misconduct, dishonesty, gross negligence, misuse of another real estate agent's information, failure to produce record, false statements, misrepresentations of ownership, acting without consent, accepting secret commissions, and acquiring interest on property without disclosure. So, they did not want all of this transparency. They were allergic to it! And this is precisely what we will not do again. This will put them, not only their wrongdoing, belongs to the past but we are, therefore, obliged, duty-bound to ensure that this does not happen again.

Madam Speaker, you see why I am so passionate about this. I will say so.

Madam Speaker: I can see.

Mr Mohamed: Because I am aware as Minister that there are many properties belonging to the State that was given out by the former regime. You know, many people today say, there is almost no State Land available on our coastline, on the beaches. True!

Why? Because the former regime *finn dilapid tou. Inn done. Dal mo done doub. Tou inn done.*

Madam Speaker: I can see creole is getting on.

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: You see, when gave it all out and I know for a fact that many of those properties were developed. The question is how many of those people's friends to whom they gave State Lands to develop in order to become millionaires, billionaires overnight? How many of them have registered at the authority when they could not have done it because it was not proclaimed in the law? How many would have had to have contracts between their clients' agents? How many of those promoters would have had to have written contracts? Then clearly, cannot, and will not, because they were not obliged to have it because the law was not proclaimed. How many billions of rupees have been really made *sur le dos des contribuables*? And how many of those billions have been siphoned off outside the country? That is my question! And then, they tried to bring their heads out from under the stone. They tried to pretend to be cleaner and holier than thou – paragons of virtue.

Madam Speaker, I would like to say that we have been left with a with a Herculean task. It is not easy to clean up the mess. The easy part is making the mess without even thinking of tomorrow because this was their attitude. They did not think that they had think of tomorrow. They just made the mess. That was the easy part.

Now creating confidence in institutions, ensuring that institutions work independently, ensuring that each of those institutions are given the right resources, capacity building, monitoring ability, enforcing ability, supervision ability, all this, it is for us to do. So, the work is for those who believe honestly in change that we will do it. They can go out there and pretend that they are, as I said, they are cleaner and they are the champions of the truth, but in fact, they are exactly the opposite. Now, let me conclude to say.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr Mohamed: I congratulate the hon. Leader of the Opposition for his absence. I congratulate his hon. friend sitting next to him shoulder to shoulder for his absence, but I heartily congratulate the hon. Quirin who is here because he is true to himself and he is present.

(Interruptions)

I, therefore, once again, ask everyone in this House to congratulate the hon. Minister for the excellent piece of work, together with her officers, that she has produced, and the officers of the hon. Attorney General's Office in the drafting of this legislation.

Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: Thank you so much.

Yes, hon. Minister. That was a mouthful. Up to you now!

(6.31 p.m.)

The Minister of Financial Services & Economic Planning (Dr. Ms J. Jeetun): Madam Speaker, let me thank the hon. Members from both sides of the House for their valuable comments and appreciation of this important Bill. Because important it is, Madam Speaker. Important not only in its own right but as a matter of national interest. And this is why I wish to put on record my appreciation to all the hon. Members for their support of this Bill.

Madam Speaker, let it be clear, money laundering, terrorism financing and proliferation financing are not merely regulatory concerns. They are fundamentally matters of national security. Illicit financial flows fuel organised crime, sustain drug trafficking networks, entrench corruption, and in more severe instances facilitate acts of terrorism or proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Madam Speaker, this Bill is comprehensive in scope and transformational in effect. As we conclude our deliberations to that, I will address the concerns raised and set out the safeguards, implementation roadmap and expected outcomes of this legislation placing these measures in both national and international context.

Allow me to reassure the House that this important piece of legislation, amending no less than 23 pieces of legislation, reflects a structured and progressive legislative process aligned with national and international obligations. This Bill is a strategic response to an evolving global and economic environment. Since our removal from the FATF's Increased Monitoring list in October 2021 the FATF standards and methodology have continued to evolve to meet increasingly sophisticated financial crimes and emerging risks, and ever since this Government took place, we have been continuously assessing and updating our exposure to those risks.

The hon. Prime Minister just elaborated the work being done by the 16 competent authorities, by the Core Group, by the National Committee, by the Interministerial Committee, under the oversight of the hon. Prime Minister himself, and the Cabinet.

The whole thing commences with the publication of the National Risk Assessment Report in May 2025 which, let me remind the House, was due since 2022 as the NRA is meant to be published every three years and the last one was published in 2019. In the 2025, NRA report, technical compliance gaps were identified to the FATF standards. Reforms to strengthen the AML/CFT framework in preparation for the ESAAMLG mutual evaluation were also announced as far back as the last Budget 2025/2026. Works have been ongoing since then to ensure that the drafting of this Bill, as well as consultations have been going on. These processes give a clear indication that the work on preparation and readiness of the mutual evaluation never stopped.

I said this, Madam Speaker, because during the past few months, it has been said repeatedly and publicly that Mauritius has been at major risk of going on the grey list and the hon. Prime Minister also referred to that. Not only was this narrative repeated over and over again, bringing or trying to bring our government to disrepute, as if we were sitting and doing nothing but more gravely and more seriously, it has been putting the reputation of our country at risk, creating a fear factor and scaring investors. This has been nothing but irresponsible behaviour.

We must sustainably assess evolving risks to keep our international financial centre safe, secure and reputable. These assessments inform our legislative amendments, which in turn, provide necessary safeguards to our financial system. The 2025 NRA delivers a clear actionable diagnosis. It identified risks or operational realities as recent high-profile investigations and asset seizures have shown, whether through misuse of GBCs, complex trust structures, layering via cross-border transfers or exploitation of cash intensive sectors. The patterns of abuse demand faster, smarter and more integrated responses.

Madam Speaker, this Government has been proactive. Not only have our regulatory authorities strengthened AML/CFT supervision and improved compliance culture among stakeholders but we are also introducing the necessary changes ahead of the mutual evaluation to ensure that no sector under FATF purview remains exposed or under-supervised. These reforms are designed to ensure Mauritius aligns with international standards and is fully prepared for the forthcoming mutual evaluation.

Madam Speaker, allow me now to address specific concerns raised during proceedings. Section 68A, Investigative Powers – concerns were raised about the speed at which the Financial Crimes Commission may request account information by email and the perceived removal of judicial oversight. It is important to emphasise that this measure is not a new unchecked power. The provision is carried forward from the repealed Asset Recovery Act. Before any request is made, the Commission must satisfy a three-part test –

- (i) Reasonable grounds to suspect criminal property;
- (ii) That the information is of substantial value to the investigation, and
- (iii) That the request is in the public interest.

These three statutory thresholds are meaningful safeguards designed to prevent arbitrary use of this power while enabling timely investigations into proceeds of crime.

Section 56, FCC Police Investigation Coordination – questions were asked about potential overlap between the FCC and the Independent Police Complaints Commission and whether cross-investigations erodes independence. The framework already existed but has been strengthened to close gaps and bolster accountability. Cross-investigation protocols are designed precisely to avoid conflicts of interest. The FCC investigates Police officers to prevent Police self-investigation and the Police investigates FCC officers where appropriate. This reciprocal arrangement preserves impartiality, protects integrity and sustains public confidence.

Property of Corresponding Value and Protection of Third Parties – concerns were raised that the definition of “property of corresponding value” might sweep in innocent third parties. The statute explicitly protects *Bonafide* purchases. Paragraphs in the definition exclude property held by *Bonafide* third parties. The law is therefore targeted at knowing participants in financial crimes, not innocent third parties who acquire assets in good faith.

The FCC guidelines ‘shall’ versus ‘may’ – concerns were expressed about the wording of the FCC guidelines using ‘may’ while the statute uses ‘shall’. Let me clarify the matter to the hon. Member on the other side of the House who has raised this concern. The statutory obligation remains binding. Legal persons shall put in place adequate procedures to prevent financial crime. Guidelines, by contrast, are illustrative and discretionary instruments. They outline acceptable means of compliance, reflect international best practice and assist entities in designing risk appropriate controls. The permissive language in guidance preserves flexibility for diverse businesses while the ‘shall’ in statute preserves the unambiguous legal

duty to have effective procedures. Responsibility for sufficiency test rests with the legal person. The guidelines are complementary tools, not substitutes for the statutory duty.

Next, the Declaration of Assets, Valuation of Works of Art and Digital Assets – on valuation concerns for work of assets and digital assets, the Declaration of Assets Unit of the FCC has a mandate to monitor declarations, to detect unexplained wealth, not to certify precise market values. Declarants are required to declare works of art exceeding Rs500,000 which balances proportionality and detection of high value concealment. Where declarations raise red flags, cases will be referred to the FCC Investigation Division which may engage specialist valuers through expressions of interest to establish market value and support further inquiry.

Madam Speaker, concerns were also raised regarding the exemption from penalty payment in cases of voluntary declaration of asset under section 10(3) of the Declaration of Assets Act. I believe there is merit in the concern raised and I shall be coming forward with an amendment to that provision during the committee stage. The relevant provision regarding voluntary disclosure proposal will be amended to include three binding safeguards –

- (i) A strict six-month time limited window for relief after the prescribed deadline;
- (ii) Exclusion of any person already under investigation for offences under the DOA Act from eligibility, and
- (iii) A one-time only application per declarant.

So, these measures preserve the incentive for timely compliance while offering limited control relief to genuine late filers or administrative oversight.

Madam Speaker, with regard to the provision regarding cases to be dealt with and I quote: “*de die in diem*”, I shall be coming forward with an amendment during committee stage to the effect that the Supreme Court and the Intermediate Court shall proceed expeditiously with the trials, if possible, *de die in diem*. In other words, it will be up to the courts to decide whether the hearing will be *de die in diem*.

Regarding the concerns of administrative burden, the risk of overreporting and an increase in cost of compliance, Madam Speaker, I acknowledge the concerns raised regarding administrative burden and the potential complexity that may arise due to enactment of these amendments. I am myself a big champion of striking the right balance between regulatory compliance and ease of doing business. Too much compliance can undermine ease of doing

business. However, let us be clear, the reputation of Mauritius has no price. The long-term benefits of strengthening our position as a credible and internationally recognised financial centre will far outweigh any short-term compliance cost.

This position is consistent with international best practices and recognises the inherently low-risk and private nature of such structures. By adopting a targeted approach, we ensure that regulatory efforts remain focused where the risks are highest, rather than imposing blanket obligations that may unnecessarily burden legitimate and low-risk entities such as family offices. This not only alleviates compliance costs, but also preserves the competitiveness and attractiveness of our jurisdiction for investment.

Madam Speaker: I am sorry, hon. Minister. It looks as if you got quite a lot to go.

Dr. Ms Jeetun: I do, yes. I mean another 10 minutes, maybe.

Madam Speaker: Another 10 minutes! I don't think so. I think if you go through these pages, it will take ...

I hate to stop you, but *c'est un peu inhumain aussi*. Let us say we go until 7 o'clock. Let's see. We will go until 7 o'clock because we are still...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Minister, I am sorry.

Dr. Ms Jeetun: So, let me focus on the amendments that will come at Committee Stage because I have to explain that.

Madam Speaker: Yes, because we still have to go through Committee Stage.

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Yes, let me just do the ...

Madam Speaker: I have a statement, and I also have people who will speak after adjournment. So, I don't know when...

Dr. Ms Jeetun: So, let me focus on explaining why we are proposing some amendments.

Madam Speaker: Yes, because I think most of what you have been saying, you have said it at the beginning when you introduced the Bill, it seems to me.

Yes, come with the amendments!

Dr. Ms Jeetun: So, insurance brokers being licensed under Insurance Act fall within the statutory definition of a financial institution for the purposes of FIAMLA. The general insurances businesses do not fall under the definition of activities of financial institution as defined by FATF. As such, their inclusion in the AML/CFT Framework is derived from the legislation itself. The existing definition does not sufficiently distinguish between life and non-life insurance activities. I shall, therefore, come up with an amendment during Committee Stage to remove these activities from the definition of financial institutions under FIAMLA.

There was also a remark made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition on unchecked power of regulatory authorities under the Bill which, I think, is important that we deal with. Hence, I would like to remind the House that the mentioned authorities are statutory bodies and they are subject to judicial review. So, they have an obligation not to act in accordance to the provision enshrined in empowering legislation, but also reasonably and justly and in accordance with the law of natural justice.

Madam Speaker: Judiciously.

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Madam Speaker, on the Opposition side, there was also a valuable suggestion made regarding motor vehicle dealers and leasing companies. The hon. Prime Minister spoke about it. I just wanted to add that work is going on at our Ministry's level, at the Ministry of Commerce's level and at the inter-ministerial level, there is a committee working on that. We will be coming with amendments and proposals to regulate this sector, which, as we all know, has been or is being used for anti-money laundering.

Allow me to deal with two comments. One was the FATF being a colonial style legacy where countries are coerced into adopting these international rules by developed countries. It is important to emphasise that FATF standards apply universally. They are not directed at developing countries alone. Every jurisdiction, developed or developing, is subject to the same evaluation framework. In fact, many developed countries have, themselves, faced serious scrutiny and periods of enhanced monitoring. There are various examples of countries that have been subjected to that: Iceland, Monaco, British Virgin Islands, etc.

I would also like to respond to one important clarification. There was also a comment made regarding the balance between direct tax and indirect tax. It was said that it is not true that the offshore sector is the biggest tax contributor in Mauritius. That is not true. What I had said in my speech and I always repeat that, and that's actually proven in an economic impact

assessment report done by the University of Mauritius last year, which showed that 65% of corporate tax revenue in Mauritius comes from the financial services sector and 34% of the PAYE revenue comes from the financial services sector.

So, now, one can argue that the balance of direct and indirect taxes is not right in Mauritius. I checked with a few other countries. We are quite aligned with some countries. But I agree and we have been campaigning on that that VAT has too much of a burden in our country. Who pays VAT? It's the citizens, the people of the country. We have campaigned on that that the economic model, the fundamental model of our country is wrong.

Madam Speaker, for example, in Mauritius, 30% of our tax revenues are from direct tax revenue from PAYE and corporate tax, and 53% is through indirect tax. For us, of course, we want more direct tax and less pressure on the consumers, so, less indirect tax.

But how do we do that? We are consumption-driven economy. This is where we need to change the economic model. We need to come with a production-driven economy. We need more enterprises investing, we need more exporting, and we need more jobs so companies can pay taxes and employees can pay taxes. That is how we can increase the direct taxes component and reduce the indirect taxes of VAT tax components.

So, Madam Speaker, let me reassure the House that this legislative package is focused on clear practical goals and guiding principles.

Let me skip that, Madam Speaker, because it is going to repeat what I have said and many speakers have said again. So, in the interest of time, I will skip those.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, I am sure there will be a lot of opportunities for you, in the future, to come back on the very important issues that, obviously, you would like to deal with.

So, today, it is the Bill. We have circulated the amendments. Everybody has the amendments? Okay!

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Okay. So, let me conclude, Madam Speaker, by saying that this Government is being proactive by bringing the necessary changes before the next mutual evaluation so as to ensure that no segment under the purview of the FATF remains exposed or under supervised. I respectfully urge the hon. Members to support this Bill.

By doing so, we will –

- strengthen the integrity of our financial system;

- protect our national security and public institutions;
- preserve investor confidence and our international standing, and
- ensure that Mauritius remains a jurisdiction where legitimate commerce flourishes and criminals are denied refuge.

In closing, let me reiterate our commitments –

- We will implement these reforms swiftly and transparently;
- We will resource and train our institutions;
- We will monitor outcomes and adapt where necessary, and
- We will cooperate fully with international partners to demonstrate measurable effectiveness.

Madam Speaker, with this, 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 ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING, COMBATTING THE FINANCING OF TERRORISM AND COUNTERING PROLIFERATION FINANCING (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL

(No. III of 2026)

Clauses 1 to 3 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 4 (Companies Act amended).

Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill.”

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendment to clause 4

—
“in clause 4, by inserting, after the words “is amended”, the words “, in section 2, in subsection (1),”;

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 5 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 6 (Courts Act amended).

Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill.”

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendments to clause 6

“in clause 6 –

- (i) in paragraph (b), in the proposed new section 41AA, in subsection (3), by deleting the words “Supreme Court proceed with the trial *de die in diem*” and replacing them by the words “Supreme Court shall proceed expeditiously with the trial and, if possible, *de die in diem*,”;
- (ii) in paragraph (d), in the proposed new section 80E, in subsection (3), by deleting the words “Intermediate Court proceed with the trial *de die in diem*” and replacing them by the words “Intermediate Court shall proceed expeditiously with the trial and, if possible, *de die in diem*,”;

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 6, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 7 (Declaration of Assets Act amended).

Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill.”

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendment to clause 7

“in clause 7, in paragraph (f)(ii), by repealing the proposed new subsection (3) and replacing it by the following new subsection –

- (3) Notwithstanding subsection (1), where a person referred to in section 4(1) or (3) or 6(1)(b) fails to submit a declaration within the specified period and thereafter makes a voluntary declaration or makes a declaration not later than 6 months after having been notified by the Commission, he shall not be liable to any penalty, provided that he is not the subject of an investigation under this Act.”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 7, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 8 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 9 (Financial Crimes Commission Act 2023 amended)

Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill.”

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendments to clause 9

“in clause 9, in the proposed new section 68A –

- (i) in subsection (1), by deleting the word “and” at the end of paragraph (b) and replacing it by the word “or”;

- (ii) in subsection (2), by deleting the word “request” and replacing it by the word “requested”;

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 9, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 10 (Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act amended).

Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill.”

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendments to clause 10 –

“in clause 10 –

- (i) in paragraph (b), in the proposed new subsection (5), by deleting the words “which may compromise or influence its operational independence”;
- (ii) in paragraph (d), in the proposed new subsection 10A, in subsection (2), by deleting the words “Subject to subsection (2), a temporarily” and replacing them by the words “Subject to subsection (3), a temporary”;

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 10, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 11 to 24 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

First Schedule

Motion made and question proposed: “that the first schedule stand part of the Bill.”

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendments to First Schedule –

“in the First Schedule, in the proposed Fifth Schedule, by adding the following new items –

- 12.** Insurer conducting General Insurance Business
- 13.** Insurance Broker with respect to General Insurance Business
- 14.** Professional Reinsurer
- 15.** Insurance Broker with respect to Reinsurance Business”

Amendment agreed to.

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

Second Schedule ordered to stand part of the Bill.

The title and enacting clause were agreed to.

The Bill, as amended, was agreed to.

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

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Anti-Money Laundering, Combatting the Financing of Terrorism and Countering Proliferation Financing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. III of 2026) was read a third time and passed.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

(7.04 p.m.)

SITTING OF 24 MARCH 2026 – PNQ – FUEL OIL CONTRACT

The Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection (Mr M. Yeung Sik Yuen): Madam Speaker, with your permission, I would like to make a statement to the House in regard to the issue raised at the Sitting of Tuesday 24 March 2026 by the hon. Leader of the Opposition during my reply to the PNQ, more precisely the contract allocated to the supply of fuel oil used by the CEB.

Given the strict obligations, as per the contract on both the State Trading Corporation and the supplier, to maintain confidentiality over all documents and information exchanged in connection with the contract unless prior written consent obtained, same had to be sought.

I am pleased to inform the House that the supplier's agreement has now been obtained to share the document as it is for transparency purposes. I am therefore tabling a copy of the agreement between the State Trading Corporation and Sahara Energy Resources Ltd. It is important to note that this Government is dedicated to fostering transparency and accountability, a shift from the previous administration approach which did not emphasise the tabling of contracts for public awareness.

The current emphasis on transparency is crucial for maintaining public trust and ensuring that all stake holders are informed of Government actions.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you so much. Yes, hon. Minister of Housing, adjournment.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Mohamed): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 21 April 2026 at 11.30 a.m.

Dr. Boolell rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned!

Adjournment matters!

MATTERS RAISED

(7.06 p.m.)

RODRIGUES – RISING COST OF LIVING – REMEDIAL MEASURES

Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Tonight, I raise a concern about Rodrigues rising cost of living which is worsening due to price increases felt in local market. I address the issue to the hon. Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection. Basic products and items have seen noticeable price hikes, forcing families to drastically adjust the budgets and in some cases, to make tough choices and sacrifices about spending priorities. It is not a question of stock availability but high freight rate.

Madam Speaker, I seize this opportunity to urge the hon. Minister to advocate for Government's compassionate response to the challenges Rodrigues population faces. I humbly ask for remedial measures grounded in the people's needs to be continuously considered and maybe, in the coming budget exercise, knowing that there is the price stabilisation structure, subsidy on some essential goods and maximum price system for some controlled products that should be extended and reviewed.

I believe we have to go the extra mile to alleviate the expenses of Rodriguan consumers, *kou lavi pli ser dan Rodrig anou soulaz pouvwar achat ban families.*

To conclude, Madam Speaker, I urge the hon. Minister to engage with local stockholders to initiate an enquiry to understand in detail the impact of a high cost of living on different aspects of Rodrigues's residents lives especially vulnerable families and our youngsters.

I thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you so much.

The Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection (Mr Yeung Sik Yuen):
Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I wish to inform the House that my Ministry is already working on a new list of products to be subsidised. It will be for Mauritius and Rodrigues.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Beehook!

(7.08 p.m.)

MY.T – PREPAID DATA PACKAGES – VALIDITY PERIOD

Mr R. Beehook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil): Yes, Madam Speaker, I will seek your indulgence for this issue which is addressed to both the hon. Minister of ICT and the hon. Minister of Commerce who is in charge of consumer protection.

Madam Speaker, currently prepaid data package users of MyT buy data packages which has a fixed duration of its validity. It can be daily, weekly or monthly or even more. However, after the balance, the credit is over, the mobile service provider recklessly stops the data package instantly. All of a sudden, a mobile user has no means of communication, he is deprived of his data connection despite being valid.

Consequently, he has no internet connection to log on to any online recharge platforms like Juice, Tag, MyT Money to recharge his or her balance. This is ridiculously unreasonable, Madam Speaker. Therefore, I would request both the hon. Minister of ICT and the hon. Minister of Commerce in charge of consumer protection to make sure that this deceitful practice ends.

Thank you, Madam speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you very much.

The Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation (Dr. A. Ramtohol): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for having raised that issue but if when we are driving a car, petrol gets over the car breaks down immediately. So, I believe that while we are using this mobile device whether, we have a fixed contract or a contract of determined time, there is a moment where it will lapse. There are notifications that are sent.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Dr. Ramtohul: And there is also an SOS service available that will give you additional credit for which you can pay later but having said that, I will confirm this latter statement and revert on this. As far as I remember, Madam Speaker, that service is available because we are very well conscious of the fact that people may need connection at some point in time and at times, it can be in very urgent cases.

So, I will check that second statement and I will revert hon. Member. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes. Thank you very much everybody, enjoy your evening.

At 7.10 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 21 April 2026 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

**PUBLIC SECTOR – MEDICAL & HEALTH PROFESSIONALS
RECRUITMENT – MEDICAL & HEALTH SERVICES COMMISSION**

(No. B/323) 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 recruitment of medical and health professionals in the public sector, he will state whether consideration will be given for the setting up of a Medical and Health Services Commission along the lines of existing service commissions, with a view to strengthening governance and accountability in the said sector.

(Withdrawn)

ABANDONED VEHICLES – REMOVAL – COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

(No. B/325) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the removal of abandoned vehicles lying on public roads, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether consideration will be given for a collaborative approach involving the Police Vehicle and Towing Unit, the Police de l'Environnement, the Regular Police and the National Land Transport Authority therefor.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the term abandoned vehicles means vehicles left by their owners on footpaths or along public roads. Such vehicles, apart from obstructing the free passage of pedestrians, are a risk to the safety of road users.

Pursuant to the Road Traffic (Removal of Vehicles) Regulations 1962, the Police are empowered to require the owner to remove an abandoned vehicle or to cause it to be removed from the road to a designated place.

In accordance with Police Administrative Order No. 6 of 2018, a coordinated and integrated mechanism has been established involving the regular Police, the *Police de l'Environnement*, the Police Vehicle Towing Unit and the National Land Transport Authority to ensure that the removal and disposal of abandoned vehicles are carried out in a coordinated, orderly and legally compliant manner.

I wish to inform the House that since January 2025, a total of 61 abandoned vehicles on public roads have been identified across the island. Of these, 37 vehicles have already been

removed and towed to a designated site for further action. Removal notices have been affixed on the remaining 24 vehicles, requiring owners to remove them within the prescribed delay, failing which they will be removed by the Police and towed to Fort George in accordance with the Road Traffic (Removal of Vehicles) Regulations 1962.

This coordinated approach is being continuously implemented and reinforced with a view to ensuring the timely removal of abandoned vehicles lying on public roads.

**DRUG TRAFFICKING & MONEY LAUNDERING – ARRESTS & VEHICLES
SEIZURES – NOV 2024-APR 2026**

(No. B/326) 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, quads and pleasure crafts seized in connection therewith, indicating the total estimated value thereof.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Acting Director-General of the Financial Crimes Commission that since November 2024 to date, the Commission has arrested 25 persons suspected to have been involved in laundering money derived from proceeds of drug trafficking.

The Commissioner of Police has, on the other hand, informed that since November 2024 to 08 April 2026, 232 suspected drug dealers have been arrested in 217 cases of alleged money laundering from proceeds of drug trafficking.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the Acting Director-General of the Financial Crimes Commission has informed that since November 2024, 608 vehicles have been seized for an estimated value of Rs444,466,812. The vehicles consist of –

- (i) 8 Lorries;
- (ii) 467 Cars;
- (iii) 76 Motorcycles;
- (iv) 3 Quads;
- (v) 5 Bobcats;
- (vi) 49 Pleasure Crafts.

The Commissioner of Police has, on his part, informed that 26 vehicles have been seized, namely 15 cars, three vans, six motorcycles, one scooter and one pleasure craft, and are in the process of being evaluated.

AIR MAURITIUS LTD – STRATEGIC PARTNER – UPDATE

(No. B/327) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to Air Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether Airport Holdings Ltd. is seeking a strategic partner therefor and, if so, where matters stand, indicating the names of any shortlisted partners.

(Withdrawn)

FINANCIAL CRIMES COMMISSION – 45 PRISON OFFICERS REFERRAL – UNEXPLAINED WEALTH

(No. B/328) 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 alleged referral of some 45 prison officers to the Financial Crimes Commission by the then Commissioner of Prisons, Mr D. J., for unexplained wealth and the formal denial thereof issued by the Commission in relation thereto, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether inquiries have been initiated thereinto and, if so, indicate, the outcomes thereof.

(Withdrawn)

FINANCIAL CRIMES COMMISSION – MR A.C.P ARREST – SEIZED ITEMS LIST

(No. B/329) 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 arrest of Mr A. C. P. by the Financial Crimes Commission on or about 03 April 2026, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the list of items seized at his residence, indicating whether any illicit drugs were seized and, if so, give details thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION – ANNUAL REPORT 2025 –
RECOMMENDATIONS**

(No. B/330) 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 Annual Report 2025 of the National Human Rights Commission, he will state whether he has taken cognizance of the recommendations contained therein and whether consideration will be given for the consolidation of the independence of the said Commission and for the alignment thereof with the Paris Principles as recommended therein.

Reply: In accordance with section 11 of the Protection for Human Rights Act, the Annual Report 2025 of the National Human Rights Commission was submitted to the President and tabled in the National Assembly on Tuesday 31 March 2026. The Report is also available online.

The Report comprises, *inter alia*, an overview of the Commission's mandate, its institutional priorities, key achievements and challenges and reform priority areas.

One of the main reform priority areas of the Commission is the modernisation of the legislative framework governing its mandate and powers. In its Annual Report, the Commission has also proposed a comprehensive review of the Protection of Human Rights Act to strengthen institutional independence, clarify appointment and removal safeguards and enhance operational coherence, in pursuit of full alignment with the Paris Principles.

The Paris Principles set out the minimum standards that National Human Rights Institutions must meet in order to be considered credible and to operate effectively. The key pillars of the Paris Principles are pluralism, independence and effectiveness and some of the requirements of the Paris Principles include, amongst others –

- (i) independence from Government, set out in legislation or the Constitution;
- (ii) in order to ensure a stable mandate for the Members of the National Institution, their appointment shall be effected by an Act which shall establish the specific duration of the mandate. This mandate may be renewable, provided that the pluralism of the institution's membership is ensured;

- (iii) adequate powers, so that National Human Rights Institutions can initiate enquiries and investigations, secure evidence and documents, consult Non-Governmental Organisations and State institutions and publicise their reports, findings and recommendations, and
- (iv) adequate resources, so that National Human Rights Institutions have the funding, staffing, infrastructure and institutional capacity to perform their functions and discharge their responsibilities without being subject to financial control which might affect their independence.

In the Annual Report, the National Human Rights Commission has acknowledged the independence of the Commission by virtue of section 3(2) of the Protection of Human Rights Act, which stipulates that “the Commission shall not, in the exercise of its functions, be subject to the direction or control of any other person or authority.”

Furthermore, through the Annual Report 2025, the National Human Rights Commission has set out its commitment to adhere to the Paris Principles.

Presently, the National Human Rights Commission holds an accreditation status ‘A’ from the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), which implies that the Commission is fully compliant with the Paris Principles.

Following third party representations by a Non-Governmental Organisation from Mauritius, regarding certain aspects which may impact on the independence of the Commission, a special review session by the GANHRI Sub-Committee on Accreditation is scheduled at the end of April 2026 in Geneva.

I am informed that there have been discussions between the Attorney General’s Office and the National Human Rights Commission with respect to the legislative amendments to be brought to the Protection of Human Rights Act and a draft Bill has already been prepared to be introduced in Parliament.

CAUDAN ROUNDABOUT ACCIDENT – 40-TONNE CONCRETE MIXER TRUCK – INQUIRY

(No. B/331) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) 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 road

accident which occurred on Tuesday 31 March 2026 at the Caudan Roundabout, involving a 40-tonne concrete mixer truck, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand regarding the inquiry initiated thereinto, indicating whether the said vehicle was operating under a special permit or exemption during restricted hours and, if so, indicate the authority which granted same and the conditions attached thereto.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on Tuesday 31 March 2026 at around 07 15 hours, Police Officers of the Line Barracks Police Station proceeded to the Caudan Roundabout, Northbound, Port Louis, where a road accident involving a 40-tonne concrete mixer truck and three other vehicles had occurred.

Different units of the Police, the SAMU services and the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service attended to the scene of the accident promptly. Four persons had sustained injuries and were conveyed to Dr Jeetoo Hospital. A traffic diversion plan was immediately implemented for both oncoming vehicles from north and south bounds to ease the congested traffic and to restore normal traffic flow.

An enquiry into the circumstances of the accident has been initiated by the Police and statements from four persons involved in the accident have been recorded. The statement from the concrete mixer truck driver is yet to be recorded as he is still under treatment at hospital.

However, according to preliminary information gathered, the concrete mixer truck had departed from Betonix Stone Crusher at Ebene at around 06 30 hours and was proceeding towards the North. Upon reaching the motorway, the driver encountered braking failure and he continued towards Port Louis. At the Caudan Roundabout, the driver lost control of the vehicle thereafter hitting the handrails and collided with two private cars and one private bus. The truck eventually overturned.

There is no provision for the granting of any special permit or exemption for heavy vehicles to operate during 07 00 hours and 09 30 hours on weekdays. In fact, the Police Notice No. 2670, made under Section 181(3) of the Road Traffic Act, stipulates that all goods vehicles having unladen weight exceeding 3.5 tonne are prohibited from using specified roads from 07 00 hours and 09 30 hours on weekdays, as follows –

- (i) Motorway M1 from Phoenix Roundabout to Quay D Roundabout, Northbound;

- (ii) Road A1 from St Jean Roundabout to Place D'Armes Port Louis via Rose Hill and Coromandel, in both directions;
- (iii) Road A14, Rose Hill Trianon Road from Vandermesch Roundabout to M1 at Trianon via Ebene, in both directions;
- (iv) Road B1 from Rose Hill Police Station to M1 at Reduit via Ebene, in both directions, and
- (v) Road B120 from University of Mauritius Roundabout to M1 via State House, in both directions.

Any breach of this provision constitutes an offence under the Road Traffic Act and liable to a fine not exceeding Rs200,000 and imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years.

On 04 April 2026, the Police issued a Communiqué anew on the restrictions on heavy goods vehicle and tractors, reminding the public of the offences to which they are liable.

ELECTORAL REFORMS – PUBLIC CONSULTATION EXERCISE – PROPOSALS

(No. B/332) 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 public consultation exercise in respect of the proposed Electoral Reforms, he will state the number of proposals received as at closing date, indicating –

- (a) whether a special team or committee has been set up to consider same, and
- (b) the timeframe for the preparation of a summary of the main proposals and whether same will be circulated prior to the drafting of any new legislation in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

MPF –POLICE OFFICERS CONDUCT – DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

(No. B/333) 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 Mauritius Police Force (MPF), he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the

Commissioner of Police, information as to whether he is in presence of complaints or reports in relation to the conduct of Police Officers potentially undermining the effective implementation of law and order and, if so, indicate –

- (a) whether internal reviews, investigations or disciplinary proceedings have been initiated in connection therewith, giving details thereof, and
- (b) the measures being taken to ensure that the MPF operates with full impartiality, professionalism and independence.

(Withdrawn)

HON. PAUL RAYMOND BÉRENGER – RESIGNATION – MEETING WITH PM

(No. B/334) 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 resignation of the Honourable Paul Raymond Bérenger, GCSK, as Deputy Prime Minister, he will state whether he met the said Honourable Member in the days prior to the said resignation and, if so, indicate the reasons put forward by the latter therefor.

(Withdrawn)

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN – STATISTICS, INVESTIGATIONS & SUPPORT FRAMEWORK

(No. B/335) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to women, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof reportedly murdered or found dead in suspicious circumstances since 01 January 2025 to date, indicating –

- (a) where matters stand regarding the inquiries initiated thereinto, and
- (b) whether –
 - (i) an online assistance service for crime prevention is available thereto, and
 - (ii) consideration will be given for a counselling facility to be put at the disposal of those at risk.

(Withdrawn)

**SBM HOLDINGS LTD – LOAN WRITE-OFFS (2014-2024) & BOARD
ACCOUNTABILITY**

(No. B/336) 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 SBM Holdings Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) percentage of shareholding of the Government of Mauritius therein, and
- (b) total amount of toxic loans written off over the period 2014 to 2024, indicating the –
 - (i) actions taken to recoup same;
 - (ii) names of the chairperson and head of the Credit Committee during the said period, and
 - (iii) responsibility of the Board of Directors in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

**PUBLIC HOSPITALS – CASES OF ASSAULT – MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS –
INQUIRIES**

(No. B/337) Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the recent reported cases of assault on medical practitioners at the Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital and the Sir Anerood Jugnauth Hospital, he will for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand regarding the inquiries initiated thereinto, indicating –

- (a) whether arrests have been effected in connection therewith and charges lodged, and
- (b) the additional measures being envisaged, in collaboration with the relevant authorities, to enhance the safety and security of healthcare officers.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that two incidents have been reported at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital and one at Sir Anerood Jugnauth (SAJ) Hospital, as follows –

- (i) on 10 March 2026, Dr. (Ms) D.B, Medical Health Officer at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital reported to Rose-Belle Police Station that she was victim of verbal and physical assault by a female patient on 09 March 2026;
- (ii) on 31 March 2026, Dr. M. S, Medical Practitioner at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital reported to Rose-Belle Police Station that he was victim of assault by four men, on 30 March 2026, at his place of work, and
- (iii) on 29 March 2026, Dr. T.S., General Practitioner at SAJ Hospital, reported to the Flacq Police Station that he had been physically and verbally assaulted on the same day by a group of 20 unknown persons.

With regard to part (a) of the Question, concerning the assault on Dr (Ms) D.B. at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital, the alleged assailant, one Mrs V.E.R. aged 52, was not arrested as she is currently bedridden.

With regard to the assault on Dr. M.S. at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital, two persons, namely Mr. J.L.M.E. and Mr J.A.P.L. were arrested on 01 April 2026. They were provisionally charged before Grand Port Court on 02 April 2026 for the offence of “Assaulting an agent of civil authority causing the effusion of blood”. They are both detained at Rose Belle Police Station. They will appear in court on 14 April 2026, that is, today.

Regarding the assault on Dr. T.S. at SAJ Hospital, on 02 April 2026, two persons, namely Mr A.B. and Mr S.M., were arrested and provisionally charged before the Flacq Court for the offence “Assaulting an agent of civil authority”. They were bailed out on 06 April 2026.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that 13 Police Officers are currently deployed at SAJ Hospital, and 9 Police Officers at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital. They are deployed on a 24/7 basis and operate on three shifts.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Ministry of Health and Wellness that private security services are already available in all regional hospitals. The

Ministry is considering the possibility of the deployment of additional security personnel at different strategic points within hospitals.

On 31 March 2026, hon. Anil Bachoo, Minister of Health and Wellness held a press conference whereby he strongly condemned the aggressions against healthcare professionals on duty and pledged for firm legal action against the perpetrators.

I totally concur with the serious concerns expressed by hon. Bachoo. Such irresponsible conducts will not be tolerated and immediate actions will be taken against perpetrators. To this end, the Commissioner of Police in consultation with the Ministry of Health and Wellness, is currently reviewing its deployment plan in hospitals, to have an increased number of Police Officers posted at the five regional hospitals, for enhanced safety of medical, paramedical, staff and patients.

PLAINE CORAIL AIRPORT – NEW RUNWAY CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/338) 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 project for the construction of a new runway at Plaine Corail Airport, in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Airports of Mauritius Co. Ltd., information as to where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

CÔTE D'OR – SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE ESTABLISHMENT – INCENTIVE & ECONOMIC IMPACT

(No. B/339) Mr R. Beehook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the proposed establishment of a Special Economic Zone at Côte d'Or, he will state the –

- (a) proposed incentive package for prospective promoters, developers and operators thereof;
- (b) estimated financial cost thereof to Government, and
- (c) anticipated tangible benefits for the Mauritian economy in terms of foreign direct investment and job creation.

(Withdrawn)

**INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAVEL ROUTES – MIDDLE EAST CRISIS IMPACT –
MAURITIUS AIR CONNECTIVITY**

(No. B/340) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to international air travel routes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Airports of Mauritius Ltd., information as to –

- (a) the impact of the Middle East crisis on the flights operated between Mauritius and Asia, in particular China, and
- (b) whether consideration will be given for positioning Mauritius as an air corridor between Asia and Africa and seeking a strategic partnership for Air Mauritius Ltd. with an airline from the Middle East.

(Withdrawn)

NATIONAL ELECTRONIC LICENSING SYSTEM – AVAILABLE SERVICES

(No. B/341) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the National Electronic Licensing System, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Economic Development Board, information as to the number of services currently available thereon, indicating whether consideration will be given for the provision of additional types of licences thereon.

Reply: I am informed by the Economic Development Board that the National Electronic Licensing System (NELS) is a central digital platform, developed with the support of the European Union, and is operational since 2018.

The system streamlines and digitises the processing of licences, permits, and clearances issued across various public sector agencies. It aims to improve ease of doing business by reducing processing times, enhancing transparency, promoting inter-agency collaboration, and providing a single access point for applicants.

In addition, the platform also facilitates online payments within permit workflows and provides data to support evidence-based policy decisions.

However, since its inception in 2018, only 24 services are operational.

Since this Government took office, I requested the EDB to perform a review exercise of the NELS strategy, technology, human resource requirements and financing for the next 10 years that would allow the NELS platform to be ‘Fit for Future’.

The EDB has now finalised a 10-year Blueprint for the NELS platform covering the period 2025-2035 as well as a 5-year Implementation Action Plan.

As per the Plan, the total number of services should reach 32 by end of this year. These new services that will be hosted on the platform include, among others, –

- (i) the rule-based work permit system to expedite the recruitment of foreign labour and skills;
- (ii) the residence permit;
- (iii) the registration of real estate agents, and
- (iv) the shipping registration.

Furthermore, we want to increase the number of services to 40 by end of 2027.

In addition, the EDB is working at modernising the platform with the application of Artificial Intelligence to accelerate the digitalisation of additional permits and licences.

The NELS will play a major role in the new economic model, which is driven by investment rather than consumption. We will see to it that the EDB accelerates its development.

CHAGOS AGREEMENT– BIOT JUDGMENT CONSEQUENCES

(No. B/342) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Agreement signed between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius concerning the Chagos Archipelago including Diego Garcia, he will state the consequences, if any, of the judgment delivered by the Supreme Court (British Indian Ocean Territory) on 31 March 2026 on the ratification thereof.

(Withdrawn)

RACING DOPING CASE – MR D. S. – INQUIRY & OUTCOME

(No. B/343) 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 case of Mr D. S. tested positive for cocaine following a test carried out on or about 18 October 2025, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to whether the Racing Stewards of the Horse Racing Integrity and Doping Unit has initiated an inquiry thereinto and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD – DEPUTY CEO (MR S.M.) –
APPOINTMENT & CONTRACT RENEWAL**

(No. B/344) 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 –

- (a) his date of appointment and the terms and conditions thereof, and
- (b) the circumstances under which his contract was renewed, indicating the terms and conditions of his new contract.

(Withdrawn)

**SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – PARALLEL RUNWAY CONSTRUCTION –
LAND ACQUISITION**

(No. B/345) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a parallel runway at the Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam International Airport, as provided for in the Airport Master Plan, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Airports of Mauritius Ltd., information as to where matters stand regarding the acquisition of land from the owners in the vicinity of the airport, indicating if the latter have been apprised thereof.

Reply: I wish to refer the hon. Member to my reply to Parliamentary Question B/276 of our Sitting of 08 April 2025, when I informed the House that Airports of Mauritius Co. Ltd was planning to appoint a new Chartered Property Valuer and Land Surveyor to review and update the existing reports of 49 properties at Chat Gaon and the remaining 12 at Solitude village for negotiation thereafter.

On 20 August 2025, the services of the Chartered Property Valuer and Land Surveyor, which were initially retained in 2019, were enlisted by Airports of Mauritius Co. Ltd for this exercise on grounds of continuity of service. A draft report, which was submitted on 02 February 2026, has recommended the adoption of a negotiation approach guided by reinstatement costs which may serve as ceiling value.

The draft report is presently under consideration by Airports of Mauritius Co. Ltd and is expected to be finalised next month. Thereafter, the process will be subject to all necessary clearances, including negotiation with owners.

MAHEBOURG MUSEUM – RENOVATION WORKS – RE-OPENING DATE

(No. B/365) Mr C. Lukeeram (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the Mahebourg Museum, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the expected re-opening date thereof, giving details of the renovation works which have been or will be carried out thereat.

(Withdrawn)

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMS – MAURITIAN CANDIDATES – PERFORMANCE & REMEDIAL MEASURES

(No. B/366) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the performance of Mauritian candidates in the last Cambridge International Examinations, he will state the –

- (a) remedial measures being taken to address same, and
- (b) responsibility of the different authorities, particularly, the Quality Assurance and Inspection Division, in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

GRAND BAY WATERFRONT MASTERPLAN – PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/367) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the Grand Bay Waterfront, he will state whether consideration is being given for the preparation of a Masterplan for the development thereof under Public Private Partnership and, if so, indicate the expected timeframe for the preparation and implementation thereof and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUES & MAURITIUS – FIREFIGHTERS – TRANSFERS

(No. B/368) Ms D. Henriette-Manan (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the transfer of firefighters between the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service and the Rodrigues Fire and Rescue Service since 2022 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of requests therefor received and the number thereof acceded to.

(Withdrawn)

UNEXPLOITED AGRICULTURAL LAND – REASONS – MEASURES PROPOSED

(No. B/370) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to unexploited agricultural land, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the total extent thereof country-wide, indicating the –

- (a) reasons therefor, and
- (b) measures being envisaged to incentivise the cultivation thereof to ensure food self-sufficiency and security.

(Withdrawn)

ANSE RAFFIN, RODRIGUES – UNSTABLE BOULDERS — CAUSES & OUTCOME – INQUIRY

(No. B/371) Ms M. R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the incident whereby unstable boulders rolled onto the coastal road near Anse Raffin, in Rodrigues, on 05 April 2026, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether an inquiry has been initiated into the causes thereof and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the outcome thereof and table copy of the report thereof, if any, and

- (b) whether consideration will be given for the planning of prevention measures for future works, including slope stabilisation and protective works, in close collaboration with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUES – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING – CULTURAL COOPERATION

(No. B/373) Ms R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the proposed signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural Cooperation with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the period 2026–2029, he will state –

- (a) the reasons therefor, and
- (b) how the implementation thereof is expected to ensure equitable opportunities for Rodriguan artists and practitioners in respect of exchanges, training and heritage promotion at local, regional and international levels.

(Withdrawn)

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL KREOL – CONCEPT REVIEW – CULTURAL HERITAGE ENHANCEMENT

(No. B/374) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the Festival International Kreol, he will state whether consideration will be given for a review of the concept and orientation thereof with a view to enhancing its cultural heritage and content, incorporating symposiums and conferences, increasing local and foreign participation and developing same into a major annual tourist attraction.

(Withdrawn)

SKIPPER'S LICENCE – APPLICATIONS RENEWED & REJECTED – PROFILING ASSESSMENT

(No. B/376) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the Skipper's licence, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tourism Authority, information as to –

- (a) the number thereof, category-wise

- (i) issued
 - (ii) renewed, and
 - (iii) applications therefor rejected, over the past five years, and
- (b) whether a profiling assessment is conducted prior to the issue thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**METHADONE PROGRAMME – TECHNICAL JOINT WORKING GROUP –
IMPLEMENTATION TIME FRAME**

(No. B/377) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the methadone programme, he will state where matters stand as to the proposed setting up of a technical joint working group in relation thereto, indicating the –

- (a) terms of reference thereof, and
- (b) implementation time frame therefor.

(Withdrawn)

PENALTY POINTS SYSTEM – IMPLEMENTATION OUTCOME

(No. B/378) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the Penalty Point System effective from January 31, 2026, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to the outcome of the implementation thereof as at to date.

Reply: Notwithstanding the fact that the Penalty Points System is still at an early stage of implementation, the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit and the Police Department have observed several encouraging trends as at 31 January to 31 March 2026 and as well during the first half of April –

- (i) Comparing data for the first quarter of 2025 with those for the same period of 2026 reveal that there has been a notable reduction of 37.5% in fatal road accidents occurring between midnight and 6 a.m., a critical time period traditionally associated with high-risk behaviours such as speeding and driving under the influence of illicit substances. This indicates that the system is already exerting a deterrent effect on drivers during the most dangerous hours when excessive driving practices were being experienced;

- (ii) Among motorcycle riders, which constitute the most vulnerable category of road users, a 25% reduction has been noted in the number of fatalities. Moreover, during the same period, there was no fatality regarding pillion riders while 3 deaths had been recorded last year. These data indicate an improved compliance among these high-risk groups;
- (iii) A significant decrease of 27.3% has been observed in fatalities within the 26 to 50 age group, which represents the core of the driving population. This underlines clearly an early behavioural change among regular road users; and
- (iv) No fatality has also been recorded amongst children under 15 years of age, which again reflects improved adherence to road safety measures from younger and more vulnerable users.

It is, however, concurrently observed that the total number of fatalities recorded during the first quarter of 2026 stands at 38. The number recorded for the same period last year stood at 30. The figures, unfortunately, demonstrate a slight increase. It is important to underline, however, that during the month of January 2026 when the Penalty Points System was not effective, an abnormally high number of fatal road accidents occurred, resulting in 19 deaths. After the coming into operation of the Penalty Points System, the average fatality rate has reduced to 9.5 per month. This again tends to demonstrate the deterrent factor of the Penalty Points System.

Furthermore, the observed shift in the pattern of accidents, particularly the reduction in high-risk time periods and among specific categories of road users, provides early evidence that the Penalty Points System is starting to influence driver behaviour in the intended direction and to yield the desired road safety objectives.

The Penalty Points System has shown its effectiveness in enhancing road safety in other jurisdictions only after a few years of its implementation. This is because the Penalty Points System is designed to produce progressive and sustained effects over time due to the fear factor it instils in drivers and also the fact that it identifies repeat offenders and sanctions them as provided in law. As enforcement continues and public awareness increases, it is expected that the full impact of the measure will become more visible. This is the time required for a real behavioural change to take place.

The assessment made above, though early, gives us good reasons for optimism. In the same spirit, I intend to bring a first quarterly report to Cabinet at the end of April 2026.

SODNAC WELLNESS PARK – STRAY DOGS – MEASURES

(No. B/379) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the persistent presence of stray dogs at the Sodnac Wellness Park and the Farquhar Recreational Park, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare, information as to the measures being envisaged in relation thereto, including ensuring the safety of the persons visiting the said parks and the welfare of the dogs.

(Withdrawn)

PESTICIDES REGULATORY OFFICE – STAFF REDUCTION – REASONS

(No. B/380) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the Pesticides Regulatory Office, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the reasons for the reduction in the number of officers posted thereat.

(Withdrawn)

TWAHA ACADEMY – ALLEGED AGGRESSION & ILL-TREATMENT MINORS CASE – INQUIRY

(No. B/382) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the alleged cases of aggression and ill-treatment of two minors at the Twaha Academy, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Family Support Unit, information as to whether an inquiry has been initiated thereinto and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof and the measures taken in connection therewith.

(Withdrawn)

BLACK RIVER (LA BALISE) BOAT PASSAGE – DESILTING WORKS

(No. B/383) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Black River (La Balise) boat

passage, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of times desilting works were carried out thereat, indicating –

- (a) the date of the last such exercise, and
- (b) whether consideration will be given for the urgent desilting thereof on account of the presence of silting thereat currently causing navigational difficulties to users thereof.

(Withdrawn)

GOODLANDS – LABOUR OFFICE – RELOCATION, EMPLOYEES TRAINING & UPSKILLING

(No. B/384) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to the Labour Office in Goodlands, he will state whether consideration will be given for the relocation thereof and the provision thereat of the required administrative infrastructure and, if so, indicate the scope of services to be provided thereat, including training facilities for the upskilling of employees of the private sector and the proposed timeline therefor.

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUAN ATHLETES – SPORTS FUNDS ALLOCATED

(No. B/386) Ms D. Henriette-Manan (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the participation of athletes from Rodrigues in international competitions, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the amount of funds allocated therefor since January 2025 to date, giving a breakdown thereof by discipline, and
- (b) state whether consideration will be given for the setting up of a mechanism, in collaboration with the National Sports Federations to ensure that funding is made available to the said athletes for their participation in national selections for international competitions.

(Withdrawn)

CONSTITUENCY NO. 12 – DAMAGED ROAD SIGNS – REPAIR & REINSTATEMENT

(No. B/388) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the road signs reportedly

damaged, faded or not clearly visible in Constituency No. 12, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof, indicating whether consideration will be given for the urgent carrying out of repair and reinstatement works thereof and the timeframe set therefor.

(Withdrawn)

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

(No. B/389) 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)

**ALPHA CLEANING GROUP – EXPATRIATE EMPLOYEES’ DEPORTATION –
REASONS & SANCTIONS**

(No. B/392) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to the case of approximately 80 expatriate employees of the Alpha Cleaning Group recently deported or in the process thereof, with no right of re-entry, he will, state the reasons therefor and the sanctions, if any, taken against the said company.

(Withdrawn)

**SUPERMARKETS/HYPERMARKETS – LEVYING CHARGES – REGULATION &
CUSTOMER IMPACT**

(No. B/393) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the practice of supermarkets and hypermarkets levying charges, including *remises de fin d’année* and marketing fees on their suppliers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether –

- (a) same are regulated, and

- (b) the impact thereof on retail prices and customer purchasing power has been assessed and, if so, indicate the findings thereof and measures envisaged to ensure fair trading.

(Withdrawn)

**MOTORWAYS MONITORING & POLICING – SAFE CITY SURVEILLANCE
CAMERAS – POLICE MONITORING**

(No. B/394) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the monitoring and policing of motorways, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) the effectiveness of the Safe City surveillance cameras in ensuring compliance with road traffic laws thereon, and
- (b) whether close monitoring is effected in collaboration with the Commissioner of Police in relation thereto.

Reply (The Prime Minister): I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that in December 2017, the Police signed a contract on a lease basis over a period of 20 years with Mauritius Telecom for the implementation of the Safe City Project. On 19 August 2019, the system came into operation.

The project comprises 2000 Intelligent Video Surveillance (IVS) cameras sites throughout the island, including 34 along motorways, and 75 Intelligent Traffic Surveillance (ITS) cameras sites, including 10 along motorways.

The Safe City Surveillance Camera System is being utilised by the Police for the monitoring and policing of motorways and major roads. Since the implementation of the project, 1,959 cases, including crimes and misdemeanours, have been detected through Safe City Cameras.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I would like to inform the House that, presently, the Road Traffic Act does not provide for enforcement of road traffic offences through the Safe City Surveillance Camera System.

In fact, one of the measures announced in the Budget 2025-2026 is that the use of Safe City Cameras will be extended to improve traffic operations and detect road traffic offences.

I wish to inform the House that a High-Level Committee has been set up, co-chaired by the hon. Minister of Land Transport and the hon. Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation, to spearhead the extension of the Safe City System to cater for traffic-related offences. The committee comprises representatives from my office, the

Police, Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, Central Informatics Bureau and the National Land Transport Authority.

In this context, I am informed that the Ministry of Land Transport, in collaboration with the Police, is working on a draft Traffic Offence Enforcement Regulations 2026.

In addition, the Police, in consultation with Mauritius Telecom, is working on a proposal to provide enhanced additional features on the Safe City System that would allow for the detection of the following key traffic offences, namely –

- (a) speeding;
- (b) non-usage of seat belts;
- (c) use of handheld devices while driving, and
- (d) overtaking on continuous white lines.

Pending the amendment of the relevant legislation and enhancement of the features, footage from the Safe City System continue to be used as evidence in crime-related cases.

As regards part (b) of the question, Police works in close collaboration with the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit and the National Land Transport Authority to ensure compliance with current road traffic laws and regulations. Police also provides technical inputs for any amendment to existing traffic laws and specifications for traffic-related equipment and devices.

MAURITIUS POST LTD – FINANCIAL SITUATION – MEASURES & IMPACT

(No. B/395) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the Mauritius Post Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the current financial situation thereof, indicating the –

- (a) reasons therefor;
- (b) impact thereof on the employees, and
- (c) measures being envisaged to address same.

(Withdrawn)

BROWN SEQUARD HOSPITAL – UNCLAIMED CORPSES – MEASURES ENVISAGED

(No. B/396) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the Brown Sequare Hospital, he will state the current number of unclaimed corpses in the mortuary thereof,

indicating since when same 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)

POST OFFICES – RENOVATION/PERMANENT CLOSURE – ALTERNATIVE MEASURES

(No. B/397) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the post offices, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Post Ltd. and table the list thereof earmarked for renovation or permanent closure and in respect of the latter, indicate the –

- (a) reasons therefor, and
- (b) alternative measures being envisaged for the residents of the localities concerned therewith in relation to the services provided by same.

(Withdrawn)

PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS – BULLYING – POLICY REVISION & MEASURES

(No. A/17) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to bullying in public primary and secondary schools, he will state whether consideration will be given for the –

- (a) revision of the policy currently in force in respect of the expulsion of bullies;
- (b) devising of a national evidence-based prevention policy from academic research and successful measures implemented globally, and
- (c) identification of key measures based on restorative justice to support the rehabilitation of bullies to achieve long-term changes in behavioural patterns, to be provided by skilled counsellors and psychologists in all such reported cases.

Reply: My Ministry is determined to ensure that all public primary and secondary schools provide a safe, secure and supportive environment where students can learn, develop and flourish in a conducive setting, while bullying in schools remains a serious concern that is being addressed through a structured, preventive and restorative approach, supported by psychosocial services and ongoing policy refinement.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the Ministry does not rely solely on punitive measures such as expulsion. Expulsion is applied only as a last resort in very severe cases. The existing policy framework is continuously being reviewed to ensure alignment with inclusive education principles, with a stronger emphasis on behaviour correction, early intervention and rehabilitation rather than exclusion of learners.

In this context, my Ministry, through the National Education Counselling Service (NECS), is reinforcing a range of interventions aimed at prevention and early detection. These include sensitisation campaigns, class talks across primary and secondary schools and targeted awareness sessions on bullying, anger management, emotional regulation and positive behaviour. At the start of each school year, structured programmes are rolled out, particularly in at-risk schools.

As regards part (b) of the question, my Ministry is currently finalising a comprehensive guidance framework for schools, parents and students, which draws upon international best practices and evidence-based approaches.

I wish to inform the House that my Ministry conducted a series of workshops during the months of August and September 2025 at a designated venue, bringing together some 10,000 teaching and non-teaching staff from both primary and secondary schools. These workshops were delivered by qualified professional psychologists and focused on early detection, prevention strategies and effective intervention mechanisms to combat bullying.

This initiative will further consolidate prevention strategies and provide a more standardised national response to bullying.

In parallel, ongoing measures are already being implemented nationwide, including –

- (i) Psychosocial support through psychologists (education) and educational social workers;
- (ii) Counselling interventions at individual and group levels;
- (iii) Home visits and parental engagement;
- (iv) Awareness materials such as posters and bookmarks distributed across Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agaléga;
- (v) Collaboration with external stakeholders such as the Brigade pour la Protection de la Famille and other relevant institutions.

With respect to part (c) of the question, my Ministry has already embedded restorative justice principles within its intervention framework. A structured system of rehabilitation and

support is operational through Student Care and Counselling Desks (SCCD) established in all State Secondary Schools, as well as Counselling Units (*Service d'Écoute*) across 57 schools.

These platforms ensure –

- (i) Immediate support to both victims and perpetrators;
- (ii) Continuous monitoring and follow-up;
- (iii) Individual and group counselling;
- (iv) Parental counselling and involvement;
- (v) Multi-agency case conferences for complex and severe cases, involving stakeholders such as the Ministry of Health and Wellness, Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare, Ombudsperson for Children, and other relevant bodies.

Educational Social Workers and psychologists also work closely with schools through case management, home visits and structured follow-up to support behavioural change and reintegration of learners.

Furthermore, my Ministry has taken firm and proactive measures to address bullying in schools.

The effectiveness of these measures is reflected in the number of cases referred to NECS, which shows a downward trend –

- (i) 184 cases in 2023;
- (ii) 104 cases in 2024;
- (iii) 96 cases in 2025;
- (iv) 22 cases for the period January to March 2026.

The forthcoming national guidance framework will further consolidate these efforts and ensure a more coherent and effective response across all schools.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS – SPORTS & FOOTBALL PITCHES MAINTENANCE – PERMANENT GARDENERS RECRUITMENT

(No. A/20) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the maintenance of sports and football pitches and other spaces in public schools, he will state whether consideration will be given for the recruitment of two gardeners per school on a permanent

basis to ensure the upkeep thereof, in replacement of the services currently provided by Mauri-facilities.

Reply: The maintenance and cleanliness of school environments remain a key priority of my Ministry, as they are essential to ensuring safe, healthy and conducive learning conditions for all students.

Mauri-Facilities is responsible for yard services and toilet cleaning services, including daily cleaning of common areas, school yards, corridors, staircases, verandas, open drains, rubbish bins, and passages around classrooms and specialised rooms, as well as toilet cleaning within school premises. However, certain services fall outside the scope of the Agreement, namely vegetation control services such as grass mowing, lopping of branches, pruning of shrubs, lawn maintenance, and the cleaning and upkeep of sports grounds, football pitches, and certain green and open spaces within the school compound.

The maintenance of sports grounds, football pitches and other open spaces in public schools does not fall under the purview of Mauri-Facilities. At present, such maintenance is carried out through school-based arrangements, including the involvement of Parent-Teacher Associations, which may contract these services as and when required. Additional support is also provided, where necessary, by the relevant local authorities.

It is important to underline that the cleaning of football pitches does not fall within the scheme of duties of a gardener. Gardeners are primarily responsible for the maintenance of ornamental plants and green spaces, including watering, planting, pruning, weeding, mowing of lawns, trimming of hedges, preparation of beds, and the general upkeep of gardens and related equipment.

In view of the fact that the maintenance and cleaning of sports and football pitches do not fall within the scheme of duties of a gardener, the proposed recruitment may not address the intended objective.

As such, the maintenance of such spaces will continue to be addressed through existing arrangements and targeted interventions, for the time being.

My Ministry remains fully committed to maintaining school environments at an acceptable standard. It will continue to monitor and ensure that sports facilities remain safe, functional and conducive to the overall development and well-being of our students.