



EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 07 APRIL 2026

CONTENTS

ANNOUNCEMENT

PAPERS LAID

QUESTIONS (*Oral*)

MOTION

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

BILL (*Public*)

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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MAURITIUS

Eighth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 04 of 2026

Sitting of Tuesday 07 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**SEATING ARRANGEMENT – LETTERS – HON. A. DUVAL & HON. P. BÉRENGER**

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I have an announcement to make today.

I wish to inform the House that I have received two letters, one from the hon. Fourth Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue and Opposition Whip, hon. Adrien Duval, and another one from the hon. First Member for Stanley-Rose Hill, hon. Paul Bérenger, concerning the allocation of seats in the Assembly.

I wish to remind the House that Standing Order 6 of the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly provides that –

“The allocation to Members of seats in the Assembly Chamber shall be made by the Speaker.”

I have further taken note that the contents of these letters have been made public prior to any consideration or ruling by the Chair, which I deeply regret.

In view of the rapid evolution of the situation, I had to respond to questions from the journalists so that the public would not remain confused, but I have referred only to matters related to the seating arrangement.

Hon. Members, as you know, each Member must have a dedicated seat accordingly to our Parliamentary tradition. But until I know exactly what the situation is with regard to hon. Paul Bérenger, hon. Chetan Baboolall and hon. Joanna Bérenger, I will not allocate any seat to them today. They have informed me that they will not attend today’s Sitting. I will await a second letter from the three hon. Members before the next Sitting.

I must emphasise that from the point of view of ethics, communications addressed to the Speaker should be treated with discretion at least until such time as they are formally dealt with or brought before this House.

The Chair’s ability to discharge its functions fairly and impartially depends on the observance of established processes and the confidence that matters referred to it will be handled in an orderly and appropriate manner. Premature disclosure of such correspondence risks undermining that process and may affect the perceived integrity of parliamentary proceedings.

Hon. Members, I wish to stress that maintaining high ethical standards is essential to the proper functioning of this House. Exercising discretion, restraint and respect for parliamentary processes reflects the ethical obligations of all Members and strengthens public confidence in our institutions.

I 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) The Income Tax (Common Reporting Standard) (Amendment) Regulations 2026 (Government Notice No. 36 of 2026)

(b) The Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 37 of 2026)

B. Ministry of Local Government

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Municipal City Council of Port-Louis for the year ended 30 June 2024.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT — INTER-MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE – REPORT & MEASURES ENVISAGED**

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr G. Lesjongard) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Inter-Ministerial Committee set up to look into the economic and social impact of the present conflict in the Middle East, he will state –

- (a) the number of times the said Committee met to date, indicating the outcome thereof;
- (b) whether any report and/or findings have been submitted in relation thereto and, if so, whether consideration will be given to table copy thereof, and
- (c) the measures being contemplated to address the economic situation arising therefrom, indicating the estimated amount of Value Added Tax and excise duties to be collected on petroleum products during this financial year and whether consideration will be given for the reduction of taxes and excise duties on the said products.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, as I have already stated, ever since the war erupted on 28 February of this year, I have been personally monitoring the situation very closely. Government has taken a proactive stance to mitigate its potential impact on our country.

Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, the situation in the Middle East has worsened, resulting in severe energy supply disruption. It is worth recalling that the International Energy Agency has described the situation as and I quote –

“The largest supply disruption in the history of the global oil market, the largest”.

This will also result in a drastic reduction in liquified natural gas and fertilisers. We are all continuously monitoring the situation in the Strait of Hormuz.

Also, inflationary pressures are building up exponentially everywhere in the world. Many countries with far more resources than Mauritius have already declared a state of economic emergency.

Madam Speaker, I may also add that a few days ago, the Heads of the International Energy Agency, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have agreed to form a coordination group to maximise their institutions' response to the energy and economic impacts of the war in the Middle East.

This war is causing, as I said, major disruptions in the supply chains triggering sharp increases in the international prices of oil, gas, but not only oil and gas, also, grain and fertilizer. Freight and maritime insurance costs have surged and there is a renewed volatility in global financial markets. As a result, global growth has slowed.

For a small, open and highly import-dependent economy such as Mauritius, heavily reliant on petroleum imports, tourism and stable sea-borne trade routes, these developments constitute a significant external shock, with potential long-lasting adverse implications not only for inflation and growth but also on the balance of payments and the cost of living.

Madam Speaker, as at today, the price per barrel of Brent Oil is USD 111 compared to USD 72.48 on 27 February before the war broke out. This represents an increase of 53%. Our import bill for petroleum products by the State Trading Corporation in March of this year has increased by 82% due mostly to price increases over the previous month. It is expected that the import bill will rise further by around 21% in the month of April 2026. But this is an estimation, Madam Speaker, because we don't know how far, how worse the war will be.

The increase in global prices of food commodities and agricultural inputs is exerting increasing pressure on the cost of imported food. There are also pressures on the exchange rate of the rupee.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the Crisis Committee had a first meeting on Wednesday 01 April 2026. The Committee has reviewed the work undertaken by the High-Level Committee which I have set up and which is chaired by the Financial Secretary. In addition, the Crisis Committee has proposed a number of measures to mitigate the impact of the conflict on our country.

As regards part (b) of the question, a report has been submitted to me and we will discuss this at the next meeting of the Crisis Committee which is scheduled for tomorrow. We will then propose a number of measures that will be examined and submitted to the next Cabinet meeting for consideration.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (c) of the question, as soon as the situation in the Middle East started deteriorating, several ministries set up a Crisis Unit to consider measures that would have to be taken. This was done, in fact, in different ministries. These include –

- (a) The CEB has taken immediate measures to extend its stock of Heavy Fuel Oil by maximising utilisation of coal by IPPs and reducing its spinning reserves;
- (b) The Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities has re-engineered its energy saving awareness campaign to discourage waste of electricity during peak hours and also outside peak hours;
- (c) The Ministry has accelerated its green energy transition in order to reduce our over reliance on imported fossil fuel. Under this Government, a number of Renewable Energy projects and schemes have been reviewed for increased bankability and effectiveness. New schemes have been introduced to cater for the needs of different categories of consumers, namely domestic, industrial and commercial. Some 405 Megawatts are expected to be generated from the Renewable Energy projects within the next two to three years;
- (d) The Ministry has also sent a circular to all Ministries/Departments on 6 April 2026 instructing them to implement and reinforce energy saving measures and to fix a target for a marked reduction of electricity consumption;
- (e) Drafting instructions have been given to the Attorney-General's Office for the introduction of regulations this month to impose restrictions on usage of grid power for superfluous activities that are not required for safety and security, for a specified time period;
- (f) The Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection has secured supply of petroleum products up to July 2026, and
- (g) The Ministry has also secured the supply of fuel oil up to May of next year.

I would like to point out, Madam Speaker, that even before the war broke out, I raised the issue of security of supply of petroleum products with Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. That was during my State Visit in September 2025. I took up this issue again, at the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi in February of this year.

I am pleased to inform the House that a Government-to-Government Agreement will be signed this week for the supply of petroleum products.

As I have already stated in this House, had it not been for the irresponsibility of the previous Government when they decided to unilaterally put an end to the contract with Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited, our security of supply would have been guaranteed today!

Mangalore Refinery was asked and we were told it is no more interested in supplying petroleum products to Mauritius in view of the irresponsible action of the previous Government in 2014.

Madam Speaker, also, remember the Betamax case! Let me refer to what the STC itself stated in the High Court of Karnataka on 04 December 2017. I quote –

“Mauritius has limited petroleum reserves and the same being an essential commodity. In the event the petroleum does not reach Mauritius within the stipulated time - that is, with Pacific Diamond, I think this Saturday - through the said vessel, it shall lead to paucity of petroleum to the entire petroleum industry and cause failure of the economy and the commercial activities in the State of Mauritius will come to a standstill.”

This, Madam Speaker, in the court of law by the STC, is a direct indictment of the then Government’s decision to terminate the contract with Mangalore Refinery and also, to cancel the contract with the Red Eagle.

Madam Speaker, for this financial year, the amount of Value Added Tax is estimated to be Rs3.9 billion on Mogas and Gas Oil. As regards the excise duty, an amount of Rs4 billion is expected to be collected.

Madam Speaker, in times of severe crisis, especially when existential issues such as energy and food security are at stake, there is absolutely no place for political demagoguery. This situation calls for strong leadership grounded not in ad hoc measures, but in coherent, forward-looking policies that protect our population, especially the most vulnerable, and reinforce our national resilience.

Thank you.

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

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I take note and I believe the population also will take note that it is more than one month after the beginning of the conflict that the hon. Prime Minister will

chair tomorrow his first inter-ministerial committee. And you will agree, Madam Speaker, that Government has wasted a lot of time.

Can the hon. Prime Minister today inform the House of the specific social measures which are being envisaged to mitigate the social impact of the conflict on the citizens of this country, with a view to supporting their purchasing power? Can we have an indication today, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: First of all, let me rebut what the hon. Leader of the Opposition just said. I said in my answer that as soon as the war broke out, within a few days, we set up, in each ministry concerned, a Crisis Unit to consider measures that should be taken and I mentioned the measures: the CEB, the Ministry of Commerce and all this. I mentioned; I said all this.

There was a first meeting for the Crisis Committee. I have a report, but I am not circulating the report because this is not for circulation. We are going to have another meeting tomorrow. Then, we will decide what are the measures that will be proposed to Cabinet on Friday.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Second question!

Mr Lesjongard: No, I made reference in my earlier supplementary question to the hon. Prime Minister himself.

Madam Speaker: Yes, I think...

Mr Lesjongard: Not to the other committees.

Madam Speaker: It does not matter!

Mr Lesjongard: He is the head of this country, Madam Speaker.

The Prime Minister: Yes, I am answering as head of the...

Madam Speaker: He has answered!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, during my last PNQ to...

Madam Speaker: May I?

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

Madam Speaker: One moment! One moment! May I chair?

The hon. Prime Minister replied! Now, you carry on with the second question.

Mr Lesjongard: I wanted to clarify what I said.

Madam Speaker: Yes, but he replied!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, during my last PNQ addressed to the hon. Prime Minister on the same issue, I raised two pertinent...

Mr Etwareea: Question! Question!

Mr Lesjongard: ...questions. One was the reintroduction of the CSG allowance...

Madam Speaker: One moment! Will you please sit down?

Hon. Etwareea, are you going to, again, stop the hon. Leader of the Opposition? When you spoke last time, nobody stopped you! So, I do not want to hear anything while it is his time. He has 30 minutes; he can ask questions. We may not agree or disagree.

Please, carry on!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Like I said, I raised two pertinent issues – one was with regard to the CSG allowance; the reintroduction of the CSG allowance, and the other one was a temporary – I mentioned it – top-up for workers earning less than Rs20,000, which was turned down by the hon. Prime Minister.

Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that a press article dated today – it is in the newspaper today – makes mention of price increases on all commodities, which the hon. Minister of Commerce said he was monitoring?

Now, may we know from Government, what Government is proposing to help those categories of workers, when we know, Madam Speaker, that the monthly expenses of a family today are around Rs50,000?

Madam Speaker: Yes!

The Prime Minister: Perhaps the hon. Leader of the Opposition should be reminded that they bankrupted the country! We are paying for the bankruptcy that they did!

(Interruptions)

And now you want me to top up? In which world are you living?

Mr Lesjongard: *Les dimoun mor dan pei !*

Madam Speaker: Third!

Mr Lesjongard: Now, with regard to petroleum products, that is, Mogas and Gas Oil, I understand, Madam Speaker, that the State Trading Corporation has to pay an additional USD30 million per shipment. For the months of March and April, the country is expecting three shipments.

Will the hon. Prime Minister inform the House where the STC will get the necessary funds in USD to pay for those three shipments?

The Prime Minister: First of all, you should have asked that question to the hon. Minister concerned!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: *Chut!*

The Prime Minister: Because I do not know the exact price.

But you are contradicting yourself! You are saying: ‘Give relief’ and at the time: ‘Where do you find the money to pay?’

Mr Lesjongard: ...how to deal...

Madam Speaker: Do not...

The Prime Minister: You are contradicting yourself!

Madam Speaker: Do not speak from a sitting position, please!

Mr Lesjongard: We are not in government. They are in government, Madam Speaker!

Madam Speaker: Yes, but...

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister, if the conflict is extended, let us say – because the situation is worsening now – until the month of June, Government will have to find an additional USD90 million or more for three more consignments, bringing to a total of USD180 million.

May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether Government has done an analysis on how foreign currency reserves will be adversely impacted by these additional payments, and in turn, reduce our import cover, Madam Speaker?

The Prime Minister: This is precisely why I said: Why did the previous government cancel the contract with Mangalore? This would not have happened!

Mr Lesjongard: We are not in power!

The Prime Minister: This would not have happened!

Do you know what you did? You have paid commissions to agents who then chaired the commission...

Mr Lesjongard: My question was not about that, Madam Speaker!

The Prime Minister: ... with the different ministers who were involved! This is how they governed the country! This is why they cancelled Mangalore, because Mangalore was Government-to-Government; nothing to do with...

(Interruptions)

Mr Guinness: *Kourtier!*

An hon. Member: MSM!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister...

Mr Jhummun: Betamax!

(Interruptions)

Mr Assirvaden: *Covid to pe kokin! Aster to defann piblik!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, Government has secured supply, that is, petroleum products for the months of March and April. Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm to the House that supplies for the months of May and June have been secured, if the Strait of Hormuz remains closed for the whole month of April amid growing competition with other countries to access alternate sources, Madam Speaker?

The Prime Minister: But I have just explained, Madam Speaker, ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: You have to wait for the answer!

The Prime Minister: Even before the war started, on my official visit to India, I asked Prime Minister Modi whether he would try to use his best officers to, again, have a deal with India for the petroleum products. As I have said, they contacted Mangalore Petroleum Ltd.

They refused because they said that they have been burnt in Mauritius once; they are not going to do it again. They refused because of the irresponsible action of the previous government!

An hon. Member: MSM!

The Prime Minister: MSM! This is why! Otherwise, we would not have been in this situation now! Now, he is quoting different prices. But we would not have been! Now, I, ...

(Interruptions)

Sorry, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: No, it is just that the question; it seems to me...

The Prime Minister: Yes?

Madam Speaker: There is so much noise. It is difficult to understand. But it seems to me that this particular question was on food security?

The Prime Minister: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Was that it?

Hon. Members: Petrol! Petrol!

Madam Speaker: You say it again. Say it again!

Mr Lesjongard: Energy security and petroleum products.

Hon. Members: Petrol! Petrol!

Madam Speaker: Energy security and petroleum products. So, we are still on the same issue? We are still on the same issue. Okay!

Mr Lesjongard: I repeat it again, Madam Speaker, for the House to note.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please, please, let me hear!

Mr Lesjongard: That the contract for Mangalore Refinery was not cancelled, Madam Speaker!

Hon. Members: Aah!

The Prime Minister: It disappeared by itself!

Mr Jhummun: *Betamax kisanla ti fer?*

The Prime Minister: It disappeared by itself then!

Mr Jhummun: *Betamax! Betamax!*

The Prime Minister: How did it stop? Tell us!

Mr Lesjongard: That is a different thing!

The Prime Minister: Tell us how did it stop!

Mr Lesjongard: With regard, Madam Speaker, ...

The Prime Minister: Tell us!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, with regard to heavy fuel oil, that is, fuel which is used for the production of electricity, the hon. Minister of Commerce promised two weeks ago to table the contract between STC and Sahara Energy Ltd. And he has not done so until now.

Madam Speaker: Question!

Mr Lesjongard: Will the hon. Prime Minister see to it that all contracts and payments done are tabled today? Otherwise, it will look as if Government wants to hide something from the population!

Ms Anquetil: Incroyable ! Quel culot !

The Prime Minister: I did not quite understand. You want me to ensure that the contracts are actually; we pay whatever?

Mr Lesjongard: No, not ensure. Instruct the Minister to table!

The Prime Minister: I do not have to instruct him! He knows what he has to do!

(Interruptions)

I do not have instruct him. He knows what he has to do.

(Interruptions)

But let me say, Madam Speaker, I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition maybe...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: I cannot hear the hon. Prime Minister! What is the point of shouting off your heads if I cannot hear either the hon. Leader of the Opposition or the hon. Prime Minister? We are going to close in 10 minutes.

Please, for the next 10 minutes, refrain from all this! Please, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: As I said to the hon. Leader of the Opposition and to the House, that even before the war broke out, I asked the hon. Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, if we could again start Government-to-Government agreement for petroleum products.

As I said, he agreed. We spoke to Mangalore, who refused and then, he has spoken to Indian Oil, who has agreed. And I said tomorrow, not tomorrow, I think the day after, Thursday, we are signing the agreement for petroleum products.

Unfortunately, while Mangalore could also provide us with heavy fuel, Indian Oil cannot.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

The Prime Minister: Unfortunately, because they broke the contract. But this, we are looking to see whether there are other possibilities. But as I said – I think, I did say – we have enough until May of next year in our reserve.

Also, I should add, Madam Speaker – since we are talking about energy and you are saying about all these and you are trying to create panic – under the previous Government, did you know that our share of renewable energy had reached 17%? It was 24% when I left the government.

Ms Anquetil: Incroyable !

The Prime Minister: They actually reduced it and now, they are giving us lessons.

Ms Anquetil: Donneurs de leçon !

Madam Speaker: No statements!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, I will come to my supplementary question.

Madam Speaker: Question!

Mr Lesjongard: It is not about what about the hon. Prime Minister replied. My question was about the contract between STC and Sahara Energy Ltd. The hon. Minister

responsible stated that he will table the contract. Up to now, he has not tabled that contract. Will Government table that contract, Madam Speaker?

The Prime Minister: I should ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition how many private contracts have they tabled in the House?

Ms Anquetil: Exactement ! Bien donné !

Madam Speaker: Anyway, you will be able to ask the hon. Minister himself.

Mr Lesjongard: Now, with regard to LPG cylinders, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House, why there has not been any increase in the price of LPG gas for commercial purposes but only for domestic purposes, that is, the 12 Kg and 6.5 Kg cylinders, when we know that the revenue from commercial gas cylinders is used for cross-subsidisation?

The Prime Minister: This is a question that should have been addressed to hon. Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection, but I can tell him. We have to look at the whole of the economy. We are not going to grind the economic to a standstill just because there is a war in the Middle East. We have to look at the interests of the country. We are examining this; I must tell the hon. Leader of the Opposition that we are examining these. You will learn about it after the Cabinet Meeting on Friday.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr Lesjongard: Of course, you have to correct that otherwise, people will believe that you are protecting *des gros businesses*...

Mr Mohamed: There is nothing to correct!

Madam Speaker: Do not make statements.

(Interruptions)

Chut !

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, the recent increase of 10% on Diesel has greatly impacted the SMEs. Will the hon. Prime Minister inform the House what measures the committee chaired by the Ministry of Finance...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Beechok!

Mr Lesjongard: ... is considering to alleviate the considerable burden that the SMEs are facing, Madam Speaker?

The Prime Minister: But this is exactly what I said early on. We have to look at the economy as a whole and not just the population. We have to look at the SMEs, we have to look at the businesses, what they are able to do, otherwise we would grind the economy to standstill.

We are taking measures, which we will announce on Friday.

Madam Speaker: Your friend is asking for a question. Do you have more?

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, it is public knowledge that bakers are asking for an increase in the price of bread, that is, *pain maison*.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr Lesjongard: And the hon. Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection is not agreeable to that request. Will the hon. Prime Minister inform the House what is his stand concerning this request and whether the price of bread, that is, *pain maison* will be increased in the days to come.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I should say that the price of bread has not been increased, from what I understand, for the last 10 years. For the last 10 years, there has not been any increase. Everything else is increasing but not the price of bread. So, they are asking – it is a legitimate demand – that their prices be increased otherwise, they cannot run their business. And this is what we are considering among the measures that we will take. But I want to say that for 10 years, it has not been increased.

Madam Speaker: *Il faut faire son pain soi-même hein !*

You have one more? One last! One moment, one last, then hon. A. Duval then and you.

Mr Lesjongard: No, let him have...

Madam Speaker: Okay, up to you.

Mr A. Duval: May I ask hon. Prime Minister two weeks ago during the last PNQ, I had asked with regard to the estimates on how much the inflation of fuel and Mogas prices will be passed on to consumers.

Now, that the hon. Prime Minister has, is signing a deal tomorrow, can he now give us the estimates of how much is going to be passed on to the consumer and whether, he will make good on his campaign promise to abolish VAT which is being taxed on top of the excise duty on every litre of diesel and fuel in Mauritius?

The Prime Minister: Nobody knew in Mauritius how you wrecked the economy. We did not know! When we made proposals, we did not know! It is when we did the State of the Economy that we learnt what damage this previous government has done to this country.

Therefore, I also said in my answer, if I remember, that our import bill for petroleum product has increased by 82%. So, now what are you telling me? To reduce the cost? We cannot.

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, may I clarify?

Madam Speaker: No!

Mr A. Duval: He has not replied. The question is what is the estimates...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I do not think the hon. Prime Minister can reply more to your question.

Mr A. Duval: Yes! It was in the main question!

Madam Speaker: Time is going. You have another one you said. Let him say another one.

Mr Mohamed: You cannot insist.

Mr A. Duval: I can.

Mr Mohamed: I'll grant one...

Madam Speaker: Oh, oh! Oh, oh, oh!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, Jet fuel has doubled since the beginning of the conflict increasing from 400 USD to 875 USD per metric ton, forcing airlines to cut capacity, add fuels surcharges and raising airfares from 10 to 40%. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House, what are the projections for the tourism sector for this year and what specific measures have been put in place to support the tourism sector, Madam Speaker?

The Prime Minister: First of all, let me say, Madam Speaker, just inform the House, if he does not know, that everywhere, all tickets, aeroplane tickets have been increased dramatically. In fact, if you look at the percentage, Air Mauritius has still not increased by as much as some countries which have more resources than us, have increased. So, this is inevitable.

Mr Lesjongard: That I know.

The Prime Minister: So, what do you want me to do now? To reduce the price of...

Mr Lesjongard: How are you going to support the tourism sector?

The Prime Minister: We cannot! I do not control the price of oil. What do you want me to do? To start pumping oil?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Don't!

Mr Jhummun: *Zot inn fini pei zis pou gagn kass !*

An hon. Member: *Ki to le! Ki to pe le? Mont pri la?*

Madam Speaker: No ping-pong. No ping-pong!

Yes, Hon. Lobine!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: *Print money, bez comision, sa zot for sa.*

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Madam Speaker, may I ask hon. Prime Minister whether consideration will be given to temporarily reduce Tax, VAT and excise duties on petroleum products as it is being done by several countries around the world, temporarily?

The Prime Minister: Several countries were not in this bankrupt situation. The answer is: No!

Madam Speaker: Okay!

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister with regard to airfare, is the hon. Prime Minister aware that now, airfare of Air Mauritius to go, for example, to Paris, is up to Rs150,000 for economy, twice as much as what Emirates is proposing or other airlines. Therefore, it is clear that Air Mauritius is taking advantage.

Madam Speaker: Do not argue!

Mr A. Duval: Does he agree that Air Mauritius should reduce its profit margin right now?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, he is comparing Air Mauritius to Emirates. There cannot be any comparison with Emirates. You cannot compare Air Mauritius to Emirates.

Mr A. Duval: ... just a bit more...

Madam Speaker: Do not argue!

The Prime Minister: How can you compare Air Mauritius to Emirates? That is my question.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Okay! Time is up. We are going to go to PMQT now.

Yes, hon. Members, Table has been advised that PQ B/251 will be replied...

An hon. Member: ... *ki to 'nn fer la. Atan !*

Madam Speaker: Bon, je peux parler ? Je vais rester tranquille jusqu'à ce que j'aie la parole.

Okay! PQ B/251 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs. I am now calling on hon. Ramkalawon!

FIFA WORLD CUP 2026 – MATCHES BROADCASTING – ARRANGEMENTS

(No. B/233) Mr C. Ramkalawon (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the forthcoming FIFA World Cup 2026, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to the arrangements being made, if any, for the broadcast of the matches thereof on the channels of the Corporation.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Director General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that the broadcast and sub-licensing rights for the FIFA World Cup of 2026 across the African region, including Sub-Saharan Africa, are held by New World Televisions SA, which is a company based in Togo.

The two main broadcasting rights which are most commonly commercialised to broadcasters are free-to-air broadcasting rights and pay TV broadcasting rights. The free-to-air broadcasting rights for the FIFA World Cup of 2026 are meant only for public broadcasters whereby the public can access the channels without paying any subscription fee. The pay TV broadcasting rights are meant for subscription television operators only.

On 02 December 2025, an agreement was signed between the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation and the New World Televisions SA – which as I said, is a company based in Togo – in respect of the FIFA World Cup of 2026. Under this agreement, the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation has secured the rights to broadcast 34 free-to-air matches out of the 104 matches scheduled for the tournament, as included in the package allocated to Sub-Saharan Africa. This package comprises the opening ceremony, the closing ceremony, some of the matches and the final. These matches will be broadcast on the MBC 11 Sports Channel.

The full FIFA World Cup 2026 package will be made available on the MBC Play App. This is a digital streaming platform, developed to deliver television and multimedia content directly to viewers over the internet upon a payment of a subscription fee of Rs300. I wish to point out that, for the FIFA World Cup of 2022, the MBC Play App was available on smart phones only. However, this year, the current MBC Play App is being upgraded and will be compatible on both smart TVs and smart phones.

Madam Speaker: Smart TVs and phones, okay. Hon. Ramkalawon, okay? Hon. Beehook, yes!

**SILVER BANK LIMITED – AUDITED ACCOUNTS COPY – DEPOSITS QUANTUM
– CONSERVATOR’S REPORT**

(No. B/234) 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 Silver Bank Limited, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius –

- (a) copy of the audited accounts thereof, including copy of the balance sheet and table same;
- (b) information as to –
 - (i) the quantum of deposits held thereat by public bodies/institutions;

- (ii) whether an inquiry has been initiated into the circumstances surrounding the granting of the banking licence and the deposits by the public bodies/institutions, and
- (c) whether the Conservator appointed therefor has submitted its report and, if so, table copy thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that, in accordance with the Banking Act 2004, banks have up to three months from the end of their financial year to submit their audited accounts, and I am further informed that the latest available audited accounts of Silver Bank Limited are for the financial year ending 31 December 2021. I am tabling a copy of the audited accounts.

Madam Speaker, Silver Bank has not submitted its audited accounts to the Bank of Mauritius for the financial years 2022 and 2023. In fact, Silver Bank was unable to appoint any external auditor. The reason being that the auditors were unwilling to conduct the assignment for Silver Bank in the light of the previous serious adverse information regarding Prateek Gupta in the Trafigura case whereby freezing orders were issued both on Prateek Gupta and his wife Ginni Gupta, who is the main ultimate beneficial owner of the bank.

The House will recall, Madam Speaker, that it was at its meeting held on 11 June 2021 that the Board of the Bank of Mauritius approved the acquisition of the shares of BanyanTree Bank by the shareholders of Silver Bank. The Board of the Directors of the Bank of Mauritius were then chaired by the then former Governor of the bank, that is, Mr Harvesh Kumar Seegolam.

The Banking Act 2004 provides that no single shareholder should hold more than 10% of the shares in a bank, except with the prior approval of the Bank of Mauritius. Given that the BanyanTree Bank Ltd was under conservatorship, the approval of a 75% shareholding to a single shareholder, 75%, in this case it was Ginni Gupta, who, may I inform the House, had no banking experience at all, but this was granted by the Board. 75% to somebody who has no experience in banking, Madam Speaker. This was nothing short of a scandalous and very suspicious transaction while also endangering the existing and future depositors.

When we look at the pattern of events, there was clearly an axis of evil which existed from the very inception of Silver Bank in our jurisdiction. The House would not be surprised to note that one of the close associates of Mr Gupta, one Mr Prasad Rao Bopamah was even

picked up from the tarmac at SSR International Airport with a total VIP treatment, red carpet treatment upon the instructions of the former Minister of Finance.

(Interruptions)

It looks like this.

An hon. Member: *Savat Dodo!*

The Prime Minister: *Du jamais vu dans les annales de notre pays !* This is how the previous MSM regime was operating – Mafia style! I hope people remember all this when the time of elections comes, which will not be now, of course.

Madam Speaker, in February 2024, Silver Bank was placed under conservatorship by the Bank of Mauritius, just like its predecessor, the BanyanTree Bank. At that time, the actions taken by the Bank of Mauritius included the issue of several cautionary letters, requiring for additional capital, and the imposition of restrictions on the granting of loans. Silver Bank completely ignored those instructions from Bank of Mauritius. Once Silver Bank was placed in conservatorship, several potential investors expressed an interest to acquire it. However, only one prospective investor submitted an application in May 2024 to acquire significant interest in Silver Bank.

The investor's business plan was rejected in December 2024 because the proposed equity injection was inadequate. In April 2025, a second offer for the acquisition was made by a local investment vehicle set up in Mauritius. The Bank of Mauritius has been engaging with the prospective applicant since then, including on the requisite information for the completion of the application. In the interest of depositors and creditors, the Bank of Mauritius granted several extensions to each successive deadline in December 2025, in January and February 2026 to allow the applicant to complete his application. He was asking for extra time all the time, that he be given more time, more time, more time.

As at 30 March 2026, the Bank of Mauritius had not received a complete application. It is noteworthy that documents relating to proof and source of funds had not been submitted as at date. The Board of the Bank of Mauritius met on 30 March 2026 to discuss the way forward on Silver Bank. Based on all the available facts and information and taking into account the financial situation of Silver Bank, the Board decided to terminate the conservatorship of Silver Bank and appoint a receiver.

Another shocking element of this Silver Bank saga, Madam Speaker, was the confession made by one internal auditor of Silver Bank that he uncovered loans of about Rs7.7 billion which were granted to companies related to no other than Prateek Gupta. Furthermore, this auditor stated Rs18 million were transferred to Prateek Gupta or to entities belonging to him from Silver Bank. They allowed the transfer.

This is a classic case, Madam Speaker, of institutional conspiracy of the highest order, with both internal and external connivances, to defraud depositors' money. Needless to say, that the Internal Auditor – because it was MSM Government – he drew the attention, he was suspended. He was the guilty party to have drawn the attention of the bank. So, he was suspended when in fact, his courage should have been commended. No doubt, we will see more things like this as the investigation unfolds.

Madam Speaker, as regard to part b (i) of the question, I am informed that public bodies and institutions had invested a total amount of Rs3.55 billion in Silver Bank.

An hon. Member: Or made to invest!

The Prime Minister: Yes, I am going to say that. As at 28 February 2026, the remaining deposits held by public bodies and institutions at the Silver Bank, amounted to around Rs907 million and they are as follows –

- (a) Rs523 million by the COVID-19 Projects Development Fund – Rs523 million;
- (b) Rs158 million by the National Insurance Co. Ltd and Rs132 million by the NIC General Insurance Co. Ltd, both subsidiaries of the National Property Fund Ltd;
- (c) Rs58 million by the Municipal Council of Curepipe, and
- (d) Rs36 million by the Sugar Insurance Fund Board.

Madam Speaker, as I have already stated in this august Assembly, the deposits made by these public bodies and the institutions were purposely done to create a misleading enhancement of Silver Bank's balance sheet. Purposely done! The significant investment made in a bank with no proven track record – no proven track record! – speaks for itself that the decision has been driven by intervention from the highest authorities. And we know! In fact, from the former Minister of Finance and the former Financial Secretary. It is ironic to recall, Madam Speaker, that these same authorities – same authorities – had issued a Circular way back in 2019 instructing government-related entities to place their surplus cash in

Treasury Certificates, which carry far lower risk. You can guess, Madam Speaker, why the former Minister of Finance revised that decision and ensured that these public bodies and institutions place their money with a bank with no proven track record, and hence, putting their investments at risk. When you think of this also that this guy was given VIP treatment at the airport!

As for part (b) (ii) of the question, I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that, in January 2025, only after there was a change in government, the Conservator made a statement to the Police with regard to what appeared to be a conspiracy to defraud Silver Bank in favour of Mrs Ginni Gupta or companies beneficially owned or related to her and/or Mr Prateek Gupta.

Subsequent to this statement, the Commissioner of Police referred the matter to the Financial Crimes Commission (FCC).

Two suspects have been arrested for the offence of “*Conspiracy to commit Money Laundering*” in breach of Section 4 of the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2002. INTERPOL has also been requested to place Mr Gupta on Red Notice in relation to the investigation in Mauritius.

Further actions by the FCC include –

- (a) Disclosure order made on 19 parties who have applied and obtained, in relation to material financial reports, which has been forensically analysed, which has shown a total sum of Rs7.9 billion has been siphoned and transferred to several entities in multiple jurisdictions linked, again, to Mr Gupta;
- (b) 39 loan files secured from Silver Bank following search warrants issued under Section 64 of FCC Act 2023;
- (c) 43 witness statements recorded;
- (d) 11 defence statements from suspects;
- (e) 2 search warrants under Section 60 issued on premises of suspects – I prefer not to mention their names – who were later arrested for the offence of “conspiracy to commit money laundering” in breach of Section 4 of the FIAMLA 2002;

- (f) Informal cooperation for funds which have already been traced and transferred to foreign jurisdictions and to locate other foreign suspects who have already left Mauritius;
- (g) An Attachment Order of USD 53,000 currently in force up to March 2027 on entities linked to Prateek Gupta;
- (h) 8 Mutual Legal Assistance applications are in process with Seychelles, UK, Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa, British Virgin Island, USA and UAE.

Concerning part (c) of the question, I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that the Conservator submitted his report on a regular basis. The latest report was submitted in March 2026. However, as per the Bank of Mauritius Act and the Data Protection Act, these reports cannot be made public until maybe the investigation is over.

I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that the Conservator, Mr Arvin Gokhool, was maintained as Conservator as he was already in discussion with a potential buyer of Silver Bank. The Bank felt that replacing him midway in the process would have set the process backward and cause further delays with additional financial implications with the coming of a new Conservator.

Madam Speaker, I am also informed by the Bank of Mauritius that, in the very first report of the Conservator submitted in March 2024, he estimated that non-performing loans amounted to Rs8.1 billion out of a total loan portfolio of Rs8.3 billion. Rs8.3 billion was given; Rs8.1 dubious! It is unthinkable that such a high level of toxicity of a loan portfolio could have been tolerated by both the Silver Bank and the Central Bank, which turned a blind eye to this monumentous mismanagement, if not defrauding people.

As at date, only a sheer amount of around Rs209 million has been recovered since the placement of Silver Bank under conservatorship.

Madam Speaker, these figures point to not only a clear pattern of gross mismanagement, but also a deliberate fraud, deliberately misleading the Mauritian public, raising concerns to the control mechanism that governed the operations of Silver Bank and the Bank of Mauritius at the time.

We have, without any reservation, condemned the conduct of that bank in the past. It is yet another catastrophic legacy of the previous government, and we now have to deal with it.

Today, allow me to reassert our determination and to state unequivocally and forcefully that we will not allow our reputation as a well-regulated international financial sector to be the least tarnished.

Madam Speaker, it is precisely for this reason that we are reinforcing our legislative framework through the introduction of the AML/CFT/CPF Bill, which is being discussed at the moment, to further strengthen the fight against money laundering.

Ms Anquetil: Scandaleux!

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Prime Minister.

Yes, hon. Beechook!

Mr Bhagwan: *Ali Baba sa!*

An hon. Member: *Ali Baba depase sa!*

Mr Beechook: I thank the hon. Prime Minister for his reply.

Madam Speaker, this financial disaster would not have been possible without the egregious...

Madam Speaker: No statements!

Mr Beechook: ...violation and collapse...

Madam Speaker: No statements!

Mr Beechook: ...of the regulatory framework.

Madam Speaker: Question! Question!

Mr Beechook: Therefore, I would ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will initiate a full-fledged commission of enquiry so that the public gets to know the in and out of this mega financial crime, and also, the culprits be dragged to court? Thank you.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, there is no commission of enquiry now. It is public enquiries. But this is why we are bringing drastic change in the organisation of the Police and the FCC.

With this new Bill that will come to the House, we will then have people who know to trace audit trails. We do not have the ability at the moment. This is why they are getting away with it. We will put in place people who know how to do these works, and – to use your word – we will drag each and every one of them to court.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hon. Prime Minister mentioned only Rs209 million were recovered.

Madam Speaker: Question! Question!

Mr Juman: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister how much did the conservatorship cost?

The Prime Minister: In fact, the result – only Rs209 million has been recouped. Yes, only that, so far.

Mr Juman: The fees?

The Prime Minister: I am sorry?

Mr Juman: How much did the conservatorship cost?

Madam Speaker: No, no, don't speak from a sitting position!

The Prime Minister: Oh, the fees!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Juman!

The Prime Minister: I expected this question to come from somebody.

The fees of the same person, whom they kept – the Bank of Mauritius decided to keep him –, and reduced his fees by half. I can give you the total amount later.

Ms Anquetil: Incroyable!

Madam Speaker: Members should not speak from a sitting position. We cannot even hear! I cannot hear very well!

Also, no more statements before questions! Let me say: it is so easy to use the words “who”, “when”, “how” or “whether”. Then, you put whatever you want! Then, it is a question! *Leçon de grammaire!*

Mr Jhummun: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Dr. Aumeer: Petite Bescherelle!

Mr Jhummun: We can see here a very good example of *deux poids, deux mesures* when we compare the case of the Bramer Bank and the Silver Bank.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhummun, I...

Mr Jhummun: Why was the previous government so prompt in the case of the Bramer Bank and so slack when it comes to the Silver Bank? Thank you.

The Prime Minister: It is a very good question!

For Bramer Bank, they cooked up a story of Ponzi Scheme. And then, much later, after everything was done, after the former Prime Minister, former Minister Bhadain and all the people close to them took the money from the bank, then they closed the bank. The public? Never mind the public! They can lose their money! But they, who already have a lot of money, will not lose their money. It was *deux poids, deux mesures!* This was done on purpose!

Dr. Boolell: Insider dealing!

The Prime Minister: Yes! And we are going to sit on this again.

(Interruptions)

Ms Anquetil: Scandaleux!

Madam Speaker: Okay! Yes, Mr Beehook! Your last...

Mr Beehook: I am still choosing my words: whether, how, when...

Madam Speaker: Yes, please!

Mr Beehook: How far...

Madam Speaker: Very good!

Mr Beehook: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister what quantum of the depositors' money can we expect to recover and give back to them in this particular scam?

The Prime Minister: It is a very difficult question.

Madam Speaker: Yes, it is a tall order for him.

Mr Jhummun: Looking for them!

The Prime Minister: They have stolen the money wherever they placed them, I don't know. So, we are going to have to do the audit trail to know.

Madam Speaker: Thank you so much. Mr Beejan!

**CONSTITUENCY NO. 6 – MODIFIED MOTORCYCLE EXHAUSTS –
CONTRAVENTIONS (01 MARCH-05 APRIL 2026)**

(No. B/235) **Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to modified motorcycle exhausts, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of contraventions booked by each police station in Constituency No. 6, Grand' Baie and Poudre D'or in relation thereto, since 01 March 2026 to date, indicating the number thereof relating to noise pollution.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, Regulation 83(3) of the Road Traffic (Construction and Use of Vehicles) Regulations 2010 provides that no person shall modify the exhaust pipe of a motor vehicle likely to cause excessive or unusual noise or to alter the silencer causing greater noise.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that Constituency No. 6, Grand Baie and Poudre d'Or is covered by five Police Stations. Since 01 March 2026 to 05 April 2026, sixteen contraventions relating to alterations of silencers to motorcycles exhausts have been issued as follows –

- (i) six cases by the Goodlands Police Station;

- (ii) three cases by the Poudre d'Or Police Station;
- (iii) three cases by the Plaine des Papayes Police Station;
- (iv) three cases by the Grand Gaube Police Station, and
- (v) one case by the Grand Baie Police Station.

With a view, Madam Speaker, to strengthening deterrence and curbing down noise pollution from modified exhaust systems, the Fourth Schedule of the Road Traffic Act has been amended in 2025 to increase the fine related to modified exhaust systems by motor vehicles under Regulation 83(3) from Rs2,000 to Rs10,000 now.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes! One question!

Mr Beejan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Whether, given that deterrence of modified motorcycle exhaust offences and no wearing of helmet while riding motorcycle require sustained enforcement capacity during both day time and night time hours, will the hon. Prime Minister consider directing the Commissioner of Police to allocate additional police officers to each police station so that these police officers can conduct regular monitoring, respond quickly to public complain and maintain a visible deterrent presence with adequate equipment? Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: We will, but there is an exercise of recruiting more police officers at the time.

Madam Speaker: Next time, you come straight to the question, please!

Yes, Mr Rookny!

Mr Rookny: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the hon. Prime Minister advise if he is satisfied with the work of the enforcement work being done by the police in respect of the motorcycle activities as mentioned by hon. Beejan?

The Prime Minister: One can never be totally satisfied but we do with what we have.

Madam Speaker: Okay! Next question, Mr A. Duval!

**HON. PAUL RAYMOND BÉRENGER – FORMER DPM - RESIGNATION –
SUBSEQUENT RESIGNATIONS**

(No. B/236) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the recent resignation of Honourable Paul Raymond Bérenger, GCSK, as Deputy Prime Minister, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the other resignations that have followed in relation to –

- (a) Mauritius Missions abroad;
- (b) parastatal bodies;
- (c) advisory positions;
- (d) State-owned enterprises, and
- (e) State institutions.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed that, as at 03 April 2026, there have been 31 resignations following the resignation of hon. Paul Raymond Bérenger, GCSK as Deputy Prime Minister.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that there has not been any resignation from our overseas missions.

In regard to part (b) of the question, there have been 18 resignations in Parastatal Bodies. These resignations are –

- On 23 March 2026, I will give the names –
 - (i) Mr Ashwen Naidu as Member of the Mauritius Film Development Corporation;
 - (ii) Mr Khesaw Kumar Jhummun as Legal Advisor, for the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund;
 - (iii) Mr Shaad Chellapermal as Chairperson of the National Youth Council, and
 - (iv) Mr Manorgaren Thirpathee as Board Member of the Mauritius Institute of Education.

- On the 24 of March –
 - (i) Ms Daniella Bastien as part time Chairperson of the Outer Islands Development Corporation;
 - (ii) Mr Lionel Jonathan Lajoie as Member of the Conservatoire National de Musique Francois Mitterrand Trust Fund;
 - (iii) Mr Iqbal Calcateea as Chairperson of the Mauritius Sports Council, and
 - (iv) Dr Kailsah B. Sobha as Member of the Mauritius Institute of Education.
- On 25 March 2026 –
 - (i) Mr Critanand Atmah as Member of the Mauritius Marathi Cultural Centre Trust;
 - (ii) Ms Gabriella Batour as Member of the National Heritage Fund;
 - (iii) Mrs Maire Corina Catherine Christ as Chairperson of National Adoption Council, and
 - (iv) Mrs Brigitte Roussety as Independent Member of the National Women’s Council.
- Now, on 30 March 2026, three persons have resigned from four Parastatal Bodies, namely –
 - (i) Mr Selvanaden Mootosamy as Chairperson of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund and Board Member of the National Children’s Council;
 - (ii) Mrs Nandini Meenackshi Miniandee as Member of the National Women’s Sports Commission, and
 - (iii) Ms Zara Noa Lennon, as Member of the National Women’s Sports Commission.
- Madam Speaker, there have been two further resignations on 01 and 02 April 2026, namely –
 - (i) Mrs Beebee Sherah Banu Goolfee Noormamode as Independent Member of the National Women’s Council, and

- (ii) Mr George David Grenade, as Member of the Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports.

Madam Speaker, as regard to part (c) of the question, there have been six resignations in advisory positions in ministries, namely –

- (i) Ambassador Vijay Singh Makhan as Special Adviser in Diplomatic and International Trade to the former Deputy Prime Minister on the 20 March 2026;
- (ii) Mr Kishore Kumar Pertab as Senior Adviser on Policy and Strategic Matters to the former Deputy Prime Minister on 20 March 2026;
- (iii) Ms Daniella Bastien as Senior Adviser on Communication and Strategic Matters to the former Deputy Prime Minister;
- (iv) Mr Nabil Moolna as Adviser to the Attorney General;
- (v) Mr Shafick Saalih Ahmad as Senior Adviser to the former Deputy Prime Minister on 23 March 2026, and
- (vi) Mr Hishaam Ali Ibrahim as Senior Adviser on Environmental, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change Matters to the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change on 23 March 2026.

It's a long list, yes!

Madam Speaker: *Chut !*

The Prime Minister: As regards part (d) of the question, three resignations have occurred in State-owned Enterprises, namely –

- (i) Mr Med Doba as Board Member of the State Informatics Ltd on 23 March 2026;
- (ii) Mr Ganesha Singaravelloo as Director, State Investment Corporation Ltd on 24 March 2026, and
- (iii) Mr Critanand Atmah as Chairperson, Mauritius Housing Company Ltd on 25 March 2026.

In regard to part (e) of the question, four resignations have occurred in State Institutions, namely –

- (i) Mr Kishore Pertab as Director of Economic Development Board on 23 March 2026;
- (ii) Mr Vishwanaden Singaravelloo as Co-opted Council Member of the National Productivity & Competitiveness Council on 24 March 2026;
- (iii) Mr Gerard Michel Olivier as Member of the Sports Arbitration Tribunal on 24 March 2026, and
- (iv) Mr Louis Giovanni Bède Catherine, as Member of the Price Observatory Committee whose letter was received on 30 March of this year.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr A. Duval: The hon. Prime Minister forgot to add the name Mr José Arunasalom who resigned on 24 March as well and who was present in Rose Hill.

Madam Speaker: That is not a question! You are forever angry because I am not stopping others.

Mr A. Duval: No, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: I have stopped many people today. Don't make statements!

Mr A. Duval: Yes! The question is, Madam Speaker: is the hon. Prime Minister agreeable that he should, if he hasn't done so, secure the allegiance of key people who are still in post and that were close to the former Deputy Prime Minister? I will not give names; you will know it better than I, but have these persons now sworn allegiance to Government, to yourself or are they still faithful to the former...

Madam Speaker: I don't think there is a need to answer that.

Mr A. Duval: There is!

Key people in key institutions!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Do you want to answer that?

The Prime Minister: I can't really answer that question but I know what he is trying to say.

Mr A. Duval: So, they have? Have they sworn allegiance to...

Madam Speaker: Don't speak...

(Interruptions)

I am not sure we are still in the Chamber today.

(Interruptions)

Somebody is trying to speak. Yes, Mr Beehook!

Mr Beehook: Yes, Madam Speaker. Unless I have missed it, has Ambassador Perrier from Mozambique resigned or is she still in post?

Madam Speaker: No, Mr Beehook, I can tell you; I remember. Nobody from abroad resigned.

Mr A. Duval: No, but he can answer.

Ms Anquetil : Non, il ne le sait pas.

The Prime Minister: Yes, nobody including her.

Madam Speaker: No, but he must listen to the reply. Is that right? Nobody from abroad resigned?

The Prime Minister: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Okay, where were we?

Mr A. Duval, have you finished with your question?

Yes. Okay, now we have got Mr Quirin.

IRÉVA VILLAS PROJECT – SCAM ALLEGATIONS – INQUIRIES

(No. B/237) 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 inquiries initiated into the scam allegations in relation to the Iréva Villas Project of Areva Immobilier Ltd. and Venezis Property by real estate promoters Mr A. C. and Mr A. C. P., he

will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police and the Financial Crimes Commission, information as to where matters stand.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I presume the hon. Member is referring to two brothers, I think they are twins, bearing the same initials, that is, A.C.P.

I wish to refer him to my reply to Parliamentary Question B/1039 of the Sitting of 25 November 2025 wherein I had indicated that one Mr B.R. had, on 28 March 2023, made a declaration to the Central CID as a precautionary measure against Mr. Arvin. C.P., just to distinguish them. He was the Director of Areva Immobilier Ltd to the effect that he had signed a contract for the purchase of a villa forming part of the 'Iréva Villas Project' for the amount of Rs8.2 million and had paid Rs5 million. Later on, Mr A.C.P. requested him to pay an additional Rs2.2 million out of the remaining balance of Rs3.2 million. He refused to pay and dropped the proposal to purchase the villa.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that Police had started an enquiry into the case and have recorded statements from six persons. On 13 May 2025, upon completion of the enquiry, the Central CID forwarded the case file to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice. Thereafter, the Director of Public Prosecutions requested for several clarifications, which were attended by the Police.

On 29 December 2025, the DPP returned the case file to the Police requesting to enquire into the outcome of civil cases entered by Mr B.R. against Mr A.C.P. and vice versa. The case was fixed for merits before the Supreme Court on 10 March 2026.

On 01 April 2026, the Office of the DPP requested police to provide an update on the outcome of the civil cases entered by Mr. B.R. against Mr. A.C.P., who is the Director of Areva Immobilier Ltd and vice versa, before the Supreme Court.

On 03 April 2026, the Registrar of the Supreme Court informed the Police that Mr. B.R. and Areva Immobilier Ltd had on 10 March 2026 agreed before the Supreme Court that Areva Immobilier Ltd would pay to Mr. B.R. the sum of Rs5.7 million in full and final settlement before a Notary Public by 30 June of this year. Both parties jointly moved that the agreement be made a judgment of the Court and the motion was granted.

Following these developments, the police will refer the case back to the Office of the DPP for advice.

On 25 February 2025, police had received a second complaint in connection with the Iréva Villas project made by one Mr V.P. who had made full payment for the purchase of one villa which had not yet been delivered. The police have initiated an investigation and so far, statements from six persons have been recorded.

I am informed, Madam Speaker, by the Financial Crimes Commission that, in light of several complaints made by victims against Venezis Property, owned by Mr A.C.P. and Areva Immobilier Ltd, owned by the other Mr A.C.P., investigations for money laundering had been initiated against these companies.

The Financial Crimes Commission had in March 2025 and July 2025, following several complaints made by victims, initiated two investigations for money laundering with predicate offence of swindling occurring as from year 2022 against Mr A.C., owner of Venezis Property and Mr A.C.P., owner of Areva Immobilier Ltd.

Eleven victims were interviewed by the Commission and 21 statements have been recorded. One person, namely Mr A.C. was arrested. Amount allegedly defraud is about Rs50 million.

All deeds for the transactions bear the seals of public notaries Mr K.R. and Mr D.R. These two public notaries were also interrogated and the last one being on 02 April 2026.

The Financial Crimes Commission is awaiting information from financial institutions to proceed further.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr Quirin: Merci, madame la présidente. L'honorable Premier ministre sait-t-il qu'il y a des cas où les acquéreurs ont déboursé presque la totalité de la somme au promoteur alors qu'il s'avère après évaluation que moins de 50% des travaux ont été complétés ?

Dans ce contexte, peut-il informer la Chambre où on en est avec les amendements à la loi pour protéger les acquéreurs comme il avait lui-même promis dans sa réponse à ma question B/1039 en novembre dernier ?

The Prime Minister: Yes, we are following all this, Madam Speaker. The amendments will be brought later because we have other priorities, but they will be brought.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Time is up!

Now, the Table has advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/240, B/242, B/244, B/245, B/247, B/248, B/249, B/250, B/252, B/253, B/254, and B/255.

Now, PQ B/262 will be replied by hon. Minister of Local Government, PQ B/257 will be replied by hon. Minister of Housing and Lands, PQ B/296 and B/309 will be replied by Minister of Tourism.

I think it might be wiser to break at this stage rather than start.

You want one question? Alright! I see, you decide.

Yes, Dr. Ms. Daureeawo. Your question. Only one question.

ROAD CONGESTION – SURVEY – REASONS & STRATEGY ADOPTED

(No. B/257) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to road congestion, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to whether a study has been carried out to identify the reasons thereof and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof and the road decongestion strategy put in place.

Mr Guinness: Madam Speaker, road congestion remains a persistent challenge. As the House is aware, Mauritius has inherited a colonial era road network which was designed to satisfy the transport needs of that time and is not adapted to meet modern engineering standards or to cater for the current traffic volumes. The network comprises motorways, main roads, A and B roads and secondary roads.

Over the years, the road network has been progressively upgraded to international standards, which includes the development of new motorway infrastructure with four to six lanes. Our current road network now spans over 3000 km with approximately 1300 km being classified roads.

Notwithstanding these improvements, there has been a significant increase in the number of vehicles on our roads. This high concentration of vehicles has contributed to congestion across the island.

I am informed that with a view to addressing road congestion, the Road Development Authority is implementing a series of measures which include –

1. The construction of link roads and bypasses;
2. Junction improvements, and

3. The provision of additional lanes across motorways.

Moreover, to alleviate congestion at specific locations, the RDA is currently implementing short term measures including the following –

1. Slip lane at Nalletamby and St- Paul Roads;
2. Works along the A20-B70 Link Road at La Brasserie;
3. Slip lane at Côte d'Or along Motorway M3;
4. Proposed slip lane at Ripailles along Motorway M3;
5. Proposed strengthening works along Motorway M1, and
6. Proposed construction of flyovers at Camp Fouquereaux and La Vigie.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed by the RDA that with a view to supporting sustainable development of the island by providing safe and fast connectivity to all parts of the country as well as addressing traffic congestion, the RDA has been preparing a New Strategic Road Network Masterplan in consultation with relevant stakeholders. This forward-looking Masterplan aims to address both current and future traffic demands and will guide the development of the transport infrastructure over the coming decades.

The Masterplan encompasses major projects such as Motorway M4, Ring Road Phases II and III, the Dubreuil-Melrose Link Road, the Calebasses-Arsenal-Solitude Link Road, the Tamarin Bypass and the Motorway M5 from the airport to Chemin Grenier amongst others.

Madam Speaker, the Congestion Management Strategy goes beyond building new roads infrastructure and encompasses a wider set of transport measures. Achieving sustainable mobility requires actions such as better traffic management and stronger public transport systems.

This masterplan aims to modernise connectivity, address road congestion and support sustainable growth. Upon finalisation, the approval of government will be sought for the implementation of the new Strategic Road Network Masterplan, which is expected to shape our long-term mobility landscape.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: Can the hon. Minister provide the timeline for implementation of the masterplan?

Mr Guinness: We are working on the masterplan, and I think it will go to the Cabinet in the near future. But the implementation will take time. As you know, all road infrastructure projects involve heavy investment. And we know in which economic situation the country is faced with right now.

But, at least, for the M4 Project, with the help/aid of the Indian Government, we are going to start it in the coming months. Probably by July or August, we will start with the project from Forbach to Bel Air.

Madam Speaker: Yes, do you have one more?

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: Yes, one more.

Can the hon. Minister provide data or information on the improvement in the traffic flow resulting from the effectiveness of strategies already in place?

Mr Guinness: I have said in my answer that while we are working on road projects, at the same time, we are also working on mitigation measures, short quick-wins projects, where we can solve lay-bys and get slip lanes. We are working on these small projects which can be a quick-win. For example, on the highway, at Ripailles, we have a slip lane. At Nalletamby, near Meteo, we will be having a slip lane. These will, at least, mitigate the congestion problem.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. François!

Mr François: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Minister whether the RDA signed any MoU with the Regional Assembly as regards to technical expertise collaboration for road development to avoid future congestion and to look into sharing of knowledge in Rodrigues?

Mr Guinness: Yes, we had an MoU. I recall when I was there in August, last year, we signed the MoU with the Regional Assembly and the RDA. Just to inform you, the project of the bridge at Mourouk will be undertaken. We have transferred it to the RDA so that it does that project.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Hon. Dr. Ms Daureeawoo! Then, hon. Dr. Prayag. Then, we break.

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: Could the hon. Minister state what budgetary allocations have been made for the said project?

Mr Gunness: You mean for the M4? If for the M4, it is a budgetary provision of Rs10.8 billion. It will be provided by the Indian Government in the form of grant and line of credit.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. Prayag!

Dr. Prayag: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Could the hon. Minister please consider to classify roads that were under the purview of the local government in the past, which are more congested than before, and take them under his Ministry, under the RDA, so that we can at least have bigger amount of budgeting for those roads?

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister!

Mr Gunness: Yes. Every year, we are taking a few roads from non-classified to classified. You have one from your constituency, Beau Plateau Road, I think, which will become a classified road. We are also working on a plan so that the RDA becomes the highway authority. But this will require the approval of government, Cabinet and everything so that the RDA can become the authority which looks after all the road networks. Actually, non-classified roads are taken care by the local authorities, and classified roads by RDA and some by NDU. So, we have to put some order in that.

Madam Speaker: Thank you very much, everyone.

Now, I suspend the Sitting for one and a half hour. We will come back at 2.30 p.m.

At 1.00 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

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

MINOR F. A. – HOSPITALISATION – MEDICAL CONDITIONS

(No. B/258) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to minor F. A., admitted to the Brown Sequard Hospital and subsequently transferred to the Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Child Development Unit, information as to the –

- (a) name of the shelter of which he was an inmate;
- (b) reasons for the hospitalization, and
- (c) medical conditions thereof.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madam Speaker, minor F. A. was an inmate of SOS Children's Village Bambous. He absconded and was found safe on 17 October 2025. On 23 November 2025, he was admitted at Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that the minor had been displaying a pattern of behavioral concerns and absconding tendencies. He first absconded from a Residential Care Institution of Cap Malhereux on 05 May 2024 and was found safe the following day.

He was conveyed to the Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital where he was admitted. Subsequently, the maternal grandmother in the presence of the minor's godmother expressed her willingness to accommodate the minor at her residence. On 13 June 2024, the minor was discharged from Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital to the care of the maternal grandmother after all the psychological assessment and necessary enquiry were effected.

On 14 August 2024, minor F. A was admitted to Dr A.G. Jeetoo Hospital as he started to display signs of anxiety, hallucination and aggressiveness and it was difficult for the grandmother to handle him.

On 03 October 2024, the minor was placed at Residential Care Institution of Cap Malhereux. On 07 October 2024, the minor absconded from the Residential Care Institution and an OB was entered, bearing will OB Number 3687/24.

On 13 November 2024, officers of my Ministry were informed by the biological mother of the minor that the minor might have been seen loitering in the region of Cité la Cure. On the same day, the minor was found safe and was conveyed to Dr A.G. Jeetoo Hospital.

On 13 January 2025, the minor was placed at Residential Care Institution of Cap Malhereux. However, on 16 January 2025, the minor was admitted to SSR National Hospital for medical issues.

On 10 February 2025, the minor was accommodated at SOS Children's Village of Bambous Residential Care Institution. On 23 November 2025, the minor was admitted to the Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre for behavioral issues and was medically discharged on 01 December 2025.

As regard part (b) of the question, on 16 March 2026, following ingestion of metal bolts, minor was transferred from BSH to Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital for appropriate medical care.

Concerning part (c) of the question, I am informed by the Ministry of Health and Wellness that the minor's health is stable. As at today, the minor has not yet been medically discharged.

Madam Speaker, on 17 and 25 March 2026, visits were conducted at Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital by officers of my Ministry for assessment purposes as well as to provide the minor support and counselling and enquiring about his health conditions.

This case is being followed up and regular contacts are being maintained with the medical staff of the hospital.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes!

Ms Savabaddy: *Thank you, Madam Speaker.* Je remercie l'honorable ministre pour la réponse. L'honorable ministre peut-elle nous dire jusqu'à quand va perdurer ce système d'hospitalisation qui rend prisonnier des enfants innocents qui les détruit petit à petit entre *shelters*, BSH et hôpital ?

Madame la présidente, mais il ne s'agit pas là de réparer un tuyau ou d'asphaltage d'une rue mais il s'agit de la vie d'un être humain et d'un innocent. Merci.

Madam Speaker: Cela, c'était un *statement* !

Ms Navarre-Marie: C'est ça, je n'ai pas très bien compris la question, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: La question c'est quand est-ce que ce calvaire va s'arrêter ?

Ms Savabaddy: Je reformule la question.

Madam Speaker: Non, ce n'est pas nécessaire. C'était clair. C'est la deuxième partie qui n'était pas nécessaire.

Ms Savabaddy: J'ai une deuxième question.

Madam Speaker: Non, mais ! Allez ! Reformulez votre première question.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madame la présidente, laissez-moi informer la Chambre que cette question d'hospitalisation de longue durée des enfants nous préoccupe également. C'est pourquoi nous avons jugé bon de mettre sur pieds un comité coprésidé par mon collègue, l'*Attorney General* et moi-même pour revoir toute la question d'hospitalisation des enfants et surtout les enfants avec des comportements difficiles.

Dans ce comité, nous avons plusieurs *stakeholders*, nous avons les membres du SLO, nous avons le DPP qui est présent. Nous avons également deux membres de cette Assemblée, en occurrence la *Chief Whip*, l'honorable Ms Anquetil et l'honorable Dr. Ms Thannoo qui font partie de ce comité.

Il y a également les *Probation Officers* pour revoir toute la situation concernant l'hospitalisation des enfants à l'hôpital Dr. A.G. Jeetoo, dans les hôpitaux régionaux de même que l'hôpital Brown Sequard.

Je sais également que mon collègue, l'honorable ministre de la Santé a déjà proposé à un de ses comité qu'un *ward*, un *dedicated ward* soit aménagé dans un *ward* à l'hôpital de Flacq pour, justement, que les enfants en difficultés puissent être admis.

Je comprends l'inquiétude des honorables membres. Moi aussi, je suis inquiète parce que ces enfants-là ne peuvent pas aller à l'école. C'est une question que nous avons prise avec mon collègue, l'honorable ministre de l'Éducation, qui est en train de voir comment est-ce que ces enfants-là puissent continuer leur scolarité tout en étant à l'hôpital.

Madam Speaker: Yes, second question.

Ms Savabaddy: L'honorable ministre conviendra-t-elle avec moi que c'est un énième échec de la *CDU* et des *shelters* du ministère. Qu'est-ce qui sera fait pour changer cette situation ? Madame la ministre, je suis tout à fait d'accord avec votre question – on parle du changement. Cela fait presque un an et demi depuis que nous sommes au pouvoir. Je pense qu'il est normal que nous soyons impatients.

Madam Speaker : Ne maltraitez pas le micro quand même.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madame la présidente, je ne comprends pas pourquoi l'honorable membre parle d'échec parce que quand on parle de cet enfant qui est dans cette question-là – la question qui a été posée par vous-même. L'enfant est toujours sous la charge de l'hôpital parce que l'enfant n'a pas eu sa décharge.

Dès que l'enfant aie sa décharge de l'hôpital, bien sûr qu'on fera le nécessaire pour lui trouver soit une famille d'accueil ou alors un *shelter* ou bien pourquoi ne pas réintégrer l'enfant dans sa famille biologique du moment qu'on est satisfait que l'environnement soit approprié.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Hon. Chief Whip and then hon. Ramkalawon.

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. La ministre peut-elle indiquer à la Chambre si un officier de son ministère pourrait, en attendant les recommandations – on sait que cela va prendre du temps et tout – être au chevet de ce mineur pendant le reste de son hospitalisation étant donné que ce mineur est sous la responsabilité de son ministère ?

Madam Speaker: Au chevet de...

Ms Anquetil: Merci !

Madam Speaker: Vous comprenez...

Ms Anquetil: Pendant l'hospitalisation. L'enfant est à l'hôpital.

Madam Speaker: Tout le temps ? Non, au chevet cela veut dire quoi ? Dites-lui avant.

Ms Anquetil: Au chevet, bon, c'est une expression française.

Madam Speaker: Oui ?

Ms Anquetil: Qui veut dire *attended*. Un enfant *attended* par un officier de son ministère.

Madam Speaker: 24 heures sur 24 ?

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madame la présidente, il y a déjà les infirmiers, les infirmières qui s'occupent de tous les enfants à l'hôpital. Mais, il y a les officiers du ministère qui rendent visite de temps à autre aux enfants hospitalisés.

Madam Speaker: Non, mais je n'ai pas compris, excusez-moi. Je ne vais pas faire comme le 09 décembre, ne vous inquiétez pas. Je n'ai pas compris le 'au chevet'. Cela implique quoi ? Je sais ce que cela veut dire au chevet. Au chevet cela veut dire s'asseoir avec tout le temps, 24 heures sur 24.

Ms Anquetil: C'est un enfant...

Madam Speaker: C'est cela ? Donc vous, vous êtes en train de dire cela et la ministre répond qu'il n'y a pas des gens du ministère, mais...

Ms Navarre-Marie: Il y a déjà les infirmiers, les infirmières qui s'occupent des enfants 24 sur 24 à l'hôpital, mais il y a les officiers du ministère qui rendent visite pendant les heures de visite à ces enfants-là.

Ms Savabaddy: Madame la présidente, une dernière question !

Madam Speaker: Non, non, j'ai déjà alloué une question à l'honorable Ramkalawon.

Ms Savabaddy: Après?

Madam Speaker: Bien sûr !

Mr Ramkalawon: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would just like to ask the Minister whether she can reinforce the Monitoring Committee, that is, those officers who visit the hospital because during my visit on Sunday itself, doctors stated that for days, one kid has not been visited by any officer, please? Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Voilà ! Okay?

Ms Navarre-Marie: Merci, M. l'honorable membre. M. le député, je vais m'en enquérir et voir de quoi il en est exactement.

Madam Speaker: Yes?

Ms Savabaddy: Une toute dernière question, merci, M. la présidente. De ce que vient tout juste de dire la ministre, que les enfants sont sous surveillance 24 sur 24 à l'hôpital, comment se fait-il que ce jeune homme de 16 ans, F. A., admis à l'hôpital, ait avalé un morceau de métal ? Merci.

Madam Speaker: D'abord, est-ce que vous êtes au courant ?

An hon. Member: Il avait avalé un morceau de métal.

Madam Speaker: Avaler un morceau de métal, oui ?

Ms Savabaddy: Il est surveillé 24 sur 24.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Non, mais ce n'était pas à l'hôpital qu'il a pris ce...

Ms Savabaddy: À BSH pour aller à Jeetoo après.

Madam Speaker: Laissez la ministre répondre.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Comment ?

Ms Savabaddy: C'est à BSH qu'il a avalé ce morceau de métal, puis il a été transféré à l'hôpital Jeetoo où il se retrouve actuellement. Merci.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Je pense que cette question-là aurait dû être adressée au ministre de la Santé.

Ms Savabaddy: Mais l'enfant est sous votre ministère !

Ms Navarre-Marie: Brown Sequard !

Ms Savabaddy: Mais un enfant... *Pa kav koze ? Enn zenfan ki dan CDU...*

Madam Speaker: On ne parle pas ! Madame la ministre, essayez de répondre à la question. C'est quelque chose d'important. Essayez de répondre !

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madame la présidente, cet enfant est sous la charge de l'hôpital Brown Sequard. Donc, c'est l'hôpital, donc l'officier du ministère ne peut pas être 24 heures sur 24 à encadrer cet enfant-là. Il y a déjà le corps médical qui s'occupe de l'enfant. Les officiers du ministère entrent en jeu pendant les heures de visite !

Madam Speaker: Okay, moi je ne dis plus rien. Moi évidemment j'ai mes idées. Fini ?

Okay, on reviendra là-dessus peut-être à une autre occasion. Okay, hon. Caserne, yes?

COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT UNIT – PROMOTION & DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES – BENEFICIARIES – FUNDS DISBURSED

(No. B/259) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the Cooperatives Sector, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Cooperative Development Unit, information as to the schemes available for the promotion and development thereof, indicating the list of beneficiaries thereunder and the quantum of funds disbursed in each case.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for his question.

Madam Speaker, the cooperatives sector remains an important pillar of our economic fabric. It promotes collective entrepreneurship, supports livelihoods and contributes to economic activity in areas such as agriculture, agro-processing, retail and services.

Madam Speaker, the Cooperatives Division provides a number of schemes to promote and support the development of cooperative societies. These schemes are geared towards increasing productive capacity, supporting modernisation, encouraging sustainable practices and improving the operational efficiency of cooperatives. The schemes available for the Financial Year 2024-2025 were as follows –

- The Boost to Local Production Scheme;
- The Livestock Farming Scheme;
- The Seedlings Production Scheme;
- The Zero Budget Natural Farming Scheme;

- The Digitalisation Scheme, and
- The Waste Recycling Scheme.

These schemes are aligned with Government's objective of strengthening local production, supporting food security, improving access to quality planting materials, promoting livestock farming, encouraging environmentally sustainable activities, and helping cooperative societies adopt more efficient and modern operating practices.

Madam Speaker, since I assumed office, I have led particular emphasis on stronger oversight, better discipline in the management of public funds and stricter compliance in the disbursement process. In line with the recommendation of the National Audit Office's report for the financial years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, my Ministry has put in place reinforced control mechanisms. A Project Steering Committee chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Cooperatives Division has been set up. A Monitoring Committee chaired by the Ag. Secretary for Cooperative Development has also been set up to oversee compliance with the terms and conditions of the schemes before any disbursement is effected. In addition, a Technical Evaluation Committee has been set up to assess the eligibility of applications prior to the release of funds.

Madam Speaker, for the Financial Year 2024-2025, following the recommendation of the Technical Evaluation Committee, disbursements were effected to 18 beneficiary cooperative societies under the Boost to Local Production Scheme, the Livestock Farming Scheme and Digitalisation Scheme amounting to Rs3.5 million, Rs600,000 and Rs123,000 respectively. Regarding the remaining schemes, namely; the Seedling Production Scheme and the Waste Recycling Scheme, appropriate clearances have not been received by the cooperative societies for the requested development. Hence, no disbursement has been effected.

For the Financial Year 2025-2026, the Cooperatives Division is implementing –

- the Boost to Local Production Scheme;
- the Seedling Production Scheme;
- the Livestock Farming Scheme;
- the Zero Budget Natural Farming Scheme;
- the Digitalisation Scheme, and

- as a new measure, the Energy Efficiency Scheme for Cooperative Societies.

The schemes were launched on 27 November 2025. The initial closing date of 13 January 2026 was extended to 30 January 2026. A total of 53 applications was received. As at date, the Technical Evaluation Committee has met on two occasions to assess the applications. The evaluation exercise is ongoing, disbursements will be effected once the project is implemented by the Cooperatives Society and the latter applies for refund to my Ministry. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes? Okay, hon. Chief Whip!

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING – COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

(No. B/260) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning whether, in regard to transitional housing, he will state whether his Ministry has put in place a comprehensive national policy framework to govern same and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, why not.

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the hon. Member for the question which once again gives me the opportunity to explain this issue about *maison de transition* and I must admit, it seems as though it has caught the attention of many and for good reasons. There was clearly *un vide* and this is precisely what we are endeavouring to correct. *Et il est un fait que je me suis senti interpellé depuis un long moment* by the fact that many people found themselves without homes, without a roof over their heads for various reasons.

So, fate has it now that I am in a position that at least, even though I had taken note of this, I am now in a position to change it, and this is precisely what I have started to do. And I do not want to miss that opportunity to make use of this office for such a positive deed.

I have already apprised Cabinet of my intention to come forward with the implementation of these *maisons de transition*, and it will, basically, consist of modular expandable housing units made out of metal structures. Some people even refer to them as expandable container homes. They will be built on plots of land, State land, where utility services are available.

I have mentioned this in this august Assembly at the Sitting of 31 March 2026. This project concerns two other Ministries: the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity and that of Gender Equality and Family Welfare. I clearly would like to

underline, once again, that I propose to meet with my two colleagues in order to coming forward with the policy framework. Concurrently, the Ministry of Finance is also being kept in the picture.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes!

Ms Anquetil: Merci, Madame la présidente.

Can the Minister outline the main challenges that could be encountered in implementing transitional housing initiatives? Thank you.

Mr Mohamed: I think this is a very good question. There are quite a few challenges, I must admit. I mean, the first thing that comes to mind, obviously, is money. That is one of the first challenges that all of us have to face when it comes to any such project.

However, there are priorities in life, and one of the priorities of this government is to have roofs over people's head, for those who do not have a roof. So, obviously, this is a priority. Now, we have to ensure that it is a project that sees the light of day.

Another challenge that we face is also to find the appropriate plot of land. To find that appropriate plot of land, there is an exercise that is being carried out by officers of my Ministry and that of NHDC. The objective of that exercise is to identify the appropriate sites geotechnically, close to amenities and to transport. We do not want to be faced with problems such as no water, no waste, etc. So, therefore, it would be a situation where it is a plug and play, where the house is put there and the solution is there for everyone to utilise.

But the third issue which we do have as well is that who are those who will have access to those homes. That is the reason why I will be working closely with my two colleagues from the two other Ministries in order to come up with a policy framework. Some have suggested that all people should be allowed to have access to those homes.

As I said, Madam Speaker, this is a *maison de transition*, and what I understand it to be it, is it is an emergency home for an emergency situation. So, therefore, I would not want to use the right term, which is "a halfway home". The halfway home is more specifically for those who come out from prison at a certain point in time or need a temporary home as a halfway measure, etc. This is specifically used for probation issues. I know what I am talking about. So, I do not want to use that term.

I would say that those are homes that would be used temporarily, for a certain time, and the authorities, ministries and agencies, will have to accompany those people who are qualified to be there, to go to a permanent home. So, this is going to be a transition. There are many challenges.

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. Puis-je savoir du ministre si les victimes de violence domestique, ainsi que les ex-détenus, pourront bénéficier de ce dispositif du logement transitoire ? Merci.

Mr Mohamed: It is an interesting point. I do not want to pronounce myself on this at this particular juncture. It will be for my colleagues, together with my Ministry, and finally for the Cabinet to decide who will be those who will have access to those homes.

Now, if it were in ideal world, then, everyone should have access to all facilities. But we have to ensure we use best practice of various other jurisdictions, that is, what is done in the OECD countries, in countries that neighbour Mauritius, such as South Africa, or what is done in Australia and in other countries. We will use best practice.

But then, again, I would love to be able to go faster because, right now, it is only a theory. We would like to see it implemented. We have found two plots of land, one in Palma and one in Constituency No. 4.

Ms Anquetil: In Palma?

Mr Mohamed: Yes.

Ms Savabaddy: St. Croix!

Mr Mohamed: Yes. It is not because we have those two hon. Members who are from there. It is just a coincidence. It just happens to be the case, apart from the fact that they have been ensuring that we find solutions. Those are the two plots of land that have been found, and we are finalising the analysis of the suitability. But it looks like it could be there.

Madam Speaker: Yes, your last question!

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

Will the hon. Minister state whether budgetary provisions will be made for transitional housing in the next financial year?

En tout cas, bravo au ministre pour cette belle initiative réfléchie, qui permettra aux personnes vulnérables de retrouver stabilité et dignité. Merci.

Mr Mohamed: If only I knew! Let me say one thing. There are projects that are urgent. There are those that are less urgent than others. So, obviously, I will have to go and submit before those responsible to ensure that we get the necessary budget. But this is a very important project. I will also be calling upon the private sector if ever there is a *défaillance* in that effect. We will find solutions.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes!

Mr Seeburn: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can I ask the hon. Minister if he can enlighten the House on whether this transitional housing would also be extended to other constituencies, in particular Constituency No. 11, being given that the housing project in Constituency No. 11 has now come to a hold? Thank you.

Madam Speaker: I thought it was quite clear.

Mr Mohamed: When I am talking about one project of transitional home, I am not talking about a hundred houses. I am not talking about huge number of houses. We are talking about maybe the possibility of having, at least, 15-20 houses in a locality. So, the intention is, yes, to be able to have this bank of houses for transitional purposes in many areas of Mauritius. If we could start with those two places and then gradually move to other areas of Mauritius, that would be the best-case scenario.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Seeburn.

GRAND SABLE FOOTBALL GROUND – LIGHTING FACILITIES – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/261) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the project for the installation of lighting facilities at the football ground of Grand Sable, he will, for the benefit of the

House, obtain from the District Council of Grand Port, information as to the expected date of implementation thereof.

Mr Wochit: Madam Speaker, I am informed that the football ground at Grand Sable is presently not equipped with lighting facilities.

Following my reply to PQ B/764 on 27 July 2025, the District Council of Grand Port was requested to submit a detailed funding application, estimated at approximately Rs4 million, for the implementation of the project.

I am informed that while the project has been proposed under successive budget exercises, namely 2024-2025 and 2025-2026, it could not be implemented due to other priorities and non-availability of funds.

At present, no specific provisions are available under the district council's approved budget for the execution of the project. However, the project has already been included in the list of proposed Capital Projects under the Small Community Projects Programme for the financial year 2026-2027.

Madam Speaker, I wish to further inform the House that under the existing framework of cooperation, a sum has been earmarked per constituency under the Indian Grant Assistance for Small Community Projects. This mechanism provides an appropriate and dedicated avenue through which priority community-based infrastructure projects, including the installation of lighting facilities at Grand Sable Football Ground may be financed and implemented.

In this context, the hon. Member may wish to liaise with his two colleagues of his Constituency and ensure that this specific project is duly prioritised and formally included within the list of projects submitted under the Indian Grant Programme so that the necessary funding can be secured and mobilised in a timely manner.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes!

Mr Seeburn: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Minister also consider providing financial assistance in the forthcoming budget with regards to the football pitch along the coastal region including football pitch at Bambous Virieux and Bois des

Amourettes being given that we are relentlessly campaigning to attract the youth to engage into sport facilities while combatting the drug proliferation problem in Mauritius?

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister!

Mr Woochit: Yes, Madam Speaker. Following the PQ B/764 which was put on 22 July 2025, this request has already been examined and has already been proposed in the next Financial Year 2026-2027. I have to say that it depends on the priorities and subject to availability of funds, again.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Mr Beejan!

ANSE LA RAIE PUBLIC BEACH – TRAFFIC CONGESTION – ROAD WIDENING

(No. B/262) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the Anse la Raie public beach near the Youth Centre, he will state whether consideration will be given for the widening of the existing lateral road and construction of an alternative road leading thereto to avert traffic congestion thereat, especially, during the Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations.

The Minister of Local Government (Mr R. Woochit): Madam Speaker, with your permission, I shall reply to PQ B/262.

I wish to inform the House that the existing lateral access road leading to Anse la Raie public beach measures approximately 475 metres in length and 6 metres in width. With regard to the proposed widening on this road, I am informed that such an undertaking would require the acquisition of a minimum strip of approximately two metres along the existing alignment. The road is presently bounded by six plots of land on either side, comprising two state land portion, one privately owned plot, several plots with unidentified ownership. In this context, any land acquisition process would be complexed, time consuming and subject to statutory procedures.

Madam Speaker, I wish to emphasise that no formal request petition or representation has been received at the level of the Village Council, the District Council or my Ministry from residents, land owners or elected councillors regarding the enlargement of this access route according to the Chief Executive of the Council.

As regards financial implications, the estimated cost of the project including land acquisition, road construction and associated infrastructure such as road marking, lighting is around Rs17 million.

However, the District Council currently has a provision of only Rs3.4 million earmarked for general road rehabilitation works across its villages and is, therefore, not in a position to undertake such a project at this stage. At present, no specific provision exists under the District Council approved budget for the execution of this project.

Madam Speaker, with respect to the construction of an alternative access road to alleviate traffic congestion, particularly during festive period, I am informed that a detailed land survey and feasibility access would first need to be carried out to determine the most appropriate alignment. This would equally entail additional land acquisition and significant financial resources.

Madam Speaker, notwithstanding these constraints Government remain committed to improving public access infrastructure. In this regard, I wish to inform the House that following the request of the hon. Member, the project has already been included in the list of proposed capital project under the small community project programme for the Financial Year 2026-2027 and will be considered accordingly subject to priority and availability of fund.

Moreover, I am informed that the National Development Unit has funding for road rehabilitation programme and the project may, where appropriate, be referred for consideration under this scheme as well. Accordingly, implementation of the project will be subject to availability of fund, completion of required surveys and compliance with all procedures including land acquisition.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Beejan!

Mr Beejan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the hon. Minister arrange for a site visit with all stakeholders, including Mauri-Facilities, so that we can ensure well in advance that clearing and lopping works are carried out in a timely manner? Thank you.

Mr Wochit: Yes, Madam Speaker. I am agreeable. My Ministry will liaise with all the District Councils and Mauri-Facilities. But I think that the District Council is enough because with the recent recruitment that we have, we can do it in house, with in-house labour.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, the hon. François!

**RODRIGUES – MULTI-USE GAMES AREA INFRASTRUCTURE –
CONSTRUCTION & COST**

(No. B/263) Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Multi-Use Games Area infrastructure, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Sports Council, information as to –

- (a) the number thereof constructed in Rodrigues Island to date, indicating the total cost thereof, and
- (b) whether consideration will be given for the construction of two additional ones in the central and eastern regions of Rodrigues.

Mr Nagalingum: Madam Speaker, the Multi-Use Games Area is a community based-fund and fitness programme initiated by the Mauritius Telecom Foundation with the objective of promoting healthy living through physical activity and education for all segment of the population. This was part of each Corporate Social Responsibility activities. There are 13 such facilities and these have progressively been handed over to the Mauritius Sports Council for the management and operation.

The final handing over for the 13 MUGAs has just been completed on the 18 March 2026. As regard Rodrigues, I am informed by the MTF that the sport infrastructure similar to the MUGA concept has been constructed by the latter at Baie du Nord in May 2025, for a total cost of around Rs9.5 million. It is known as Baie du Nord Sports Complex and is managed by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

As regard to part (b) of the question, there is no plan for the construction of two MUGAs by my Ministry in the central and eastern region of Rodrigues. The possibility of having two additional facilities in Rodrigues as part of the MTF-CSR activities rests with the latter and the RRA may engage with them to secure such facilities.

Madam Speaker: Yes! Alright, good!

Ms Anquetil!

CONSTITUENCY NO. 18 – WASTEWATER CONNECTIONS

(No. B/264) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to wastewater connections in Constituency No. 18, Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to where matters stand.

Mr Assirvaden: Madame la présidente, la WMA m'informe que les projets de tout-à-l'égout de la circonscription no. 18 concernent principalement les communes de Belle Rose, Quatre Bornes, La Source, Palma et Bassin, qui font partie du vaste projet d'assainissement des Plaines Wilhems. Ce grand projet a été lancé en 2000 afin de protéger la principale nappe phréatique de la région de Plaines Wilhems contre la pollution par les eaux usées issues des activités domestiques et industrielles.

Dans le cadre de ce projet, les habitants de Belle Rose et de Quatre Bornes ont été raccordés au réseau d'égouts public dans le cadre des deux contrats d'assainissement suivants

—

- (i) Projet d'assainissement de Plaines Wilhems - Lot 2 (Quatre Bornes Centre, Sodnac et Belle Rose), et
- (ii) Projet d'assainissement de Plaines Wilhems - Lot 1A (West Rose Hill, South West Quatre Bornes et Central Quatre Bornes).

Madame la présidente, la WMA m'informe que le projet d'assainissement de lot 2 de Plaines Wilhems a été mené avec la pose de 99,4 km de tuyaux d'égout, le remplacement de 47,4 km de tuyaux d'eau et le raccordement d'environ 10,000 foyers au réseau d'égouts public.

La WMA m'informe également que, dans le cadre du lot 1A, 102 km de tuyaux d'égout ont été installés et qu'environ 6,800 maisons ont été raccordées au réseau public. De plus, 40 km de canalisations CWA ont été remplacées.

Madame la présidente, suite à la fermeture de ce contrat des Plaines Wilhems en 2018, la WMA a procédé, au cours des dernières années, à la réalisation progressive des travaux d'assainissement restants, dans le cadre des contrats distincts. À ce jour, 4,37 km d'égouts ont été construits et environ 978 maisons ont été raccordées au réseau public grâce à trois projets

menés sur la Route Bassin, La Source et Quatre Bornes. Je peux communiquer bien sûr la liste des rues concernées à l'honorable membre si elle le souhaite.

La WMA a annoncé qu'un appel d'offres est en cours auprès du CPB pour un projet d'assainissement à Palma et à Quatre Bornes, comprenant la construction de 6 km de tuyaux et de raccordement de 500 maisons/habitations. La date limite de dépôt des candidatures était le 1^{er} avril 2026.

De plus, la WMA propose de mettre en place un accord cadre, un *scheme*, comme on dit dans le jargon, pour réaliser les raccordements restant aux égout domestique dans les différentes régions concernées, sur différentes périodes financières en fonction des fonds disponible.

Madam Speaker : Good, yes.

Ms Anquetil : Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. Au nom des habitants de Palma, le Dr. Boolell et moi-même, nous remercions le ministre pour sa réponse. L'honorable ministre peut-il indiquer à la Chambre qui est tenu responsable des retards de la mauvaise mise en œuvre des raccordements aux réseaux d'assainissements à Belle-Rose/Quatre Bornes ? Merci.

Mr Assirvaden : Je ne sais pas, Madame la présidente, si j'ai ces renseignements mais ce que je peux communiquer à la Chambre, c'est que les travaux de traitement des eaux usées ainsi que le remplacement des tuyaux pour la circonscription numéro 18 étaient initialement prévus dans le cadre d'un projet de tout-à-l'égout financé par la banque Européenne d'investissement et le Exim Bank de China.

Les travaux de lot 2 ont été achevés en 2014. Toutefois, il faut bien le dire, j'espère que je répondrai à cette question-là, toutefois suite à une décision gouvernementale en avril 2015, les travaux ont été interrompus dans le cadre du contrat de lot 1A financé par BEI, qui n'aboutit qu'à un achèvement partiel des ondes concernés. Il a donc été décidé de terminer les travaux restants par étape, donc cela a été arrêté en 2015 par l'ancien gouvernement.

A ce jour, la première phase des travaux d'assainissement de route Bassin a été achevé et avec 225 maisons raccordées. Qui est responsable ? Bien, c'est l'ancien qui m'a précédé.

Je peux aussi dire que le contrat le plus récent attribué à Sotravic dans ce cas de ce projet et les eaux usées à la Source Quatre-Bornes et ces environs relevant de la circonscription numéro 13, a pris du retard. Initialement prévu pour le 10 février 2025,

l'année dernière, ce contrat a été retardé principalement en raison de l'incapacité de l'entrepreneur à mobiliser les ressources nécessaires.

Donc, voilà ce que je peux dire à la Chambre.

Ms Anquetil : Une dernière, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker : Yes.

Ms Anquetil : Le ministre peut-il indiquer à la Chambre si les installations de traitement des eaux usées sont soumises à des normes nationales et internationales strictes en matière de protection de l'environnement assorti d'obligation précise quant à la qualité de rejets ? Je vous remercie.

Mr Assirvaden : Encore une fois car même, ces sont des questions assez techniques, Madame la présidente. Mais je peux dire que les tout-à-l'égout de Belle-Rose/ Quatre Bornes sont acheminés vers la station de St-Martin. Donc, nous avons quatre grosses stations de traitement ; St-Martin, Montagne Jacquot, Grand Baie et Baie du Tombeau. Donc, les effluents traités sont rejetés en mer à Pointe Moyenne. Ils sont traités de façon tertiaire. La qualité est conforme à la recommandation 2003 relative aux normes des rejets effluents en mer en vertu de la loi de 2024 sur la protection de l'environnement.

La WMA est responsable de l'exploitation et l'entretien de quatre grandes stations d'épuration dont l'exploitation et l'entretien de la station de St-Martin qui est sous-traité à un opérateur privé, Sotravic.

Madam Speaker: Ms Collet.

FREE INTERNET SCHEME – SRM BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/265) Ms R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the Free Internet Scheme, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of beneficiaries on the Social Register having benefitted from the provision of free installation and monthly fibre internet service thereunder, indicating the measures being taken, in collaboration with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and other relevant institutions, to bridge the digital divide among vulnerable households.

Mr Subron: Madam Speaker, this government is committed to the implementation of measures for the modernisation and digital transformation of the nation. To this end, Rs85 million has been earmarked for the next 3 years for the provision of free internet connection

to around 7000 households, that is, around 27,000 persons on the Social Register of Mauritius (SRM) of the Republic Mauritius.

The primary objective behind this most important budgetary measure of 2025-2026 is to bridge the digital divide and ensure that these vulnerable households are digitally connected.

Madam Speaker, in my reply to a PQ on the subject, on 02 December 2025, I informed the House that an online platform was being developed to facilitate the implementation of this measure. I am pleased to inform that the National Empowerment Foundation (NEF) has, as from 04 February 2026, issued 6,140 Notices to its beneficiaries – 3,530 in Mauritius and 2,610 in Rodrigues, to invite them to avail of *Internet Gratis* from anyone of the three Internet Service Providers (ISPs) of their choice. My Ministry has similarly issued 471 notices to those households eligible under the SRM who have opted not to sign the social contract with NEF. Needful is being done to issue notices to around 500 newly eligible households.

Madame Speaker, I am pleased to inform that, in two months, as at 06 April 2026, *Internet Gratis* connection has successfully been provided to around 5,191 households, representing 70% of the households under the SRM. As per reports, 2,415 households (90%) of households in Rodrigues under SRM have been connected as at 06 April 2026. In regards to Rodrigues, the *Internet Gratis* project was implemented by the NEF, National Empowerment Foundation Division of Rodrigues, falling under my Ministry.

Madam Speaker, reference has been made in the media to a past Scheme known as “Free Broadband Internet”. I would like to remind Members that this Scheme was introduced in Financial Year 2019-2020 and abruptly put to an end in June 2022 by the previous government. *An 2022, li paret ki laptop ti eklate*, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the implementation of this budget measure is successfully enabling vulnerable families in the Republic of Mauritius, including our citizens in Rodrigues, to be digitally connected and avail of internet facilities. These households are henceforth benefiting from free internet connection for their self-development and empowerment while adopting a constructive approach towards learning and developing skills for employability in the digital economy.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes.

Mr François: On a technical point of view, may I know from the hon. Minister whether, the free internet is a one-point connection per house or is it per family registered under the SRM? Probably there are two or three families in one household or

Mr Subron: The project is providing homebased internet connection to the household.

Mr François: To the household.

Madam Speaker: Ms Collet, you are okay.

Ms Collet: I am okay. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Alright, Mr Caserne.

ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION REDUCTION – PUBLIC OFFICES/SPACES

(No. B/266) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to electricity, he will state whether consideration is being given for measures to be taken to encourage the reduction in the consumption thereof in public offices and spaces, wherever possible, in the light of the challenges currently being faced by the Central Electricity Board for the production thereof.

Mr Assirvaden : Madame la présidente, comme la Chambre le sait, le conflit au Moyen-Orient a gravement perturbé la chaîne d'approvisionnement en pétrole et en gaz. La State Trading Corporation, s'approvisionnant en fioul lourd (Heavy Fuel Oil) pour CEB pour la production d'électricité, cette dernière doit faire face à la hausse des primes liées au récent changement d'itinéraire des navires transportant du carburant, comme l'a expliqué ce matin le Premier ministre lors de la PNQ.

Ainsi, la valeur d'une cargaison d'environ 33,500 tonnes de fioul lourd, livrée à Port-Louis la semaine dernière, a coûté R 489 millions en plus que dans des circonstances normales, soit une augmentation de 68 % sur la facture de la CEB. À ce rythme et avec une fréquence moyenne d'une telle cargaison par mois, le coût pour la CEB devient extrêmement important, sinon intenable.

Depuis le début de la guerre, la *Central Electricity Board* a pris un certain nombre de mesures pour gérer ses niveaux de stocks de fioul lourd, le *heavy fuel oil*, telles que –

- (a) L'optimisation de l'utilisation du charbon. Donc, on brûle plus de charbons pour économiser l'huile lourde. Donc, sur 20 jours, nous avons pu avoir huit jours supplémentaires de *heavy fuel oil* ;
- (b) Nous avons eu le report de la maintenance des centrales à charbon. Les centrales à charbon, des *IPPs*, ont des périodes de maintenance que nous avons repoussées pour que nous puissions utiliser le maximum de charbons et moins d'huile lourde parce qu'à l'heure actuelle, ça coûte plus cher que le charbon ;
- (c) Nous avons aussi eu une réduction de notre réserve tournante, c'est-à-dire la *spinning reserve* de ce que nous avons. Vous savez, la CEB, en temps normal, a un *spinning reserve*, c'est comme on dit dans une voiture, une veilleuse. En principe, nous gardons 35 mégawatts de *spinning reserve*. Donc, la machine peut augmenter sa capacité de 35 mégawatts en quelques secondes.

Donc, nous gardons cette réserve de 35 mégawatts qui coûte, bien sûr. On brûle à ce moment-là de l'huile lourde pour pouvoir garder la réserve.

Ce que nous avons fait, c'est que nous avons réduit la réserve de 35 mégawatts à 20-25 mégawatts pour brûler moins d'huile lourde. Mais le risque est là. Si une machine de plus de 30 mégawatts tombe en panne à tout moment, on se retrouve à ce moment-là dans un *partial* délestage. Donc, c'est un risque que nous prenons actuellement. Mais c'est un risque calculé.

Par ailleurs, Madame la présidente, la campagne de sensibilisation à la conservation et aux économies d'énergie, qui a débuté en octobre de l'année dernière, a été maintenue et est en cours de renforcement. J'ai donné des instructions pour qu'on recommence cette campagne de conscientisation, d'efficacité énergétique et de sobriété énergétique.

Mon ministère, en collaboration avec EEMO, qui est sous mon ministère, et la CEB, a mis en place une campagne de sensibilisation à l'économie d'énergie visant à réduire la consommation, notamment aux heures de pointe. Cette campagne est diffusée sur la MBC, à la radio, sur les réseaux sociaux, dans le métro et dans les établissements scolaires. Le public est invité à adopter des pratiques de consommation d'énergie responsables et à éviter les gaspillages.

Demain, l'honorable Premier ministre présidera une réunion concernant la crise énergétique. Nous allons faire des propositions pour réglementer et appliquer des pénalités si nécessaire pour celles et ceux qui gaspillent l'électricité/l'énergie.

Face aux défis actuels, la campagne de sensibilisation est accélérée et ne se limitera pas à la consommation d'électricité aux heures de pointe, mais en général.

Madame la présidente, je tiens à préciser que l'EEMO prévoit des interventions ciblées depuis quelque temps à destination de grands consommateurs d'énergie. On a, à Maurice, les compagnies, des sociétés, des activités énergivores qui prennent beaucoup d'électricité. Donc, nous allons cibler ces organismes, que ce soit privé ou public.

Ainsi, les grands consommateurs d'énergie et le secteur public et privé seront tenus de soumettre à mon ministère et l'EEMO – donc, demain on va soumettre ce plan-là – un plan d'action formel détaillant la mise en œuvre des recommandations issues de leur audit énergétique. L'EEMO travaillera en collaboration avec le ministère de l'Environnement afin d'orienter les cellules vertes déjà mises en place au sein de l'organisme public. Quant au secteur privé, des lignes directrices détaillées ont été émises.

Madame la présidente, mon ministère et l'EEMO travaillent à l'élaboration d'un règlement d'application de la loi de 2011 sur l'efficacité énergétique afin de permettre l'imposition des restrictions temporaires sur la consommation d'électricité pour les usages non essentiels et non liés à la sécurité. Cette mesure de précaution contribuera à gérer l'approvisionnement en fioul lourd, *heavy fuel oil*, et à prolonger la durée de vie des stocks disponibles en limitant la consommation d'électricité.

Car, vous réalisez, une cargaison nous coûte R 489 millions en plus. Le 16 de ce mois-ci, une nouvelle cargaison arrive, ce sera encore une fois, au minimum, R 489 millions supplémentaires. Vous réalisez, en espace de 14 jours, un milliard de roupies supplémentaires ! Donc, une cargaison nous coûte autour de R 1.2 milliards. Deux cargaisons, ce sera R 2.4 milliards. C'est intenable ! Pour cette raison, nous allons faire des propositions demain au comité.

On a aussi huit mesures que nous avons préconisées et que je peux déposer à la Chambre.

Madame la présidente, je saisis cette occasion pour lancer un appel au public, aux ménages, aux entreprises privées et publiques, aux collectivités locales, aux industries, aux centres commerciaux, aux hôtels et plus généralement à toutes les parties prenantes, afin qu'ils utilisent l'électricité efficacement et sans gaspillage pour des activités superflues.

On se retrouve, Madame la présidente, dans une situation de crise énergétique. Le prix continue à augmenter. Avant de venir à l'Assemblée nationale, je regardais un reportage où le

président Trump disait que ce soir, l'Iran ne va plus exister. La carte du monde va changer. Donc, vous réalisez, là, où on prenait notre *heavy fuel oil* à Fujairah, ils n'arrivent plus à fournir. On a dû bouger pour aller à Singapour avec les conséquences que nous voyons, R 500 millions par cargaison.

Donc, cette commodité va devenir de plus en plus rare. C'est pour cette raison qu'hier, j'ai annoncé, et le Premier ministre l'a repris aujourd'hui, des propositions concrètes pour combattre, à la longue, dans les trois ans à venir, la dépendance sur les produits pétroliers. Cela va prendre le temps qu'il faut, mais nous avons amorcé quelque chose.

Madam Speaker: *Merci. Yes!*

Mr Caserne: Je remercie l'honorable ministre pour sa réponse. Puis-je demander à l'honorable ministre s'il existe déjà un mécanisme ou si un mécanisme sera mis en place justement pour jauger ou pour définir, pour voir l'efficacité des mesures annoncées, que ce soit à travers des campagnes de sensibilisation ou autre, pour assurer l'efficacité des mesures qui sont en train d'être prises au niveau du ministère ? Merci.

Mr Assirvaden: C'est sûr. La question est pertinente et c'est une très bonne question. Oui, c'est vrai, l'EEMO et MARENA, deux institutions qui tombent directement sous mon ministère, travaillent à ce que nous ayons en temps réel l'efficacité des mesures de la campagne d'efficacité énergétique que nous menons depuis quelque temps. Donc, à travers la radio, les explications, les émissions de radio. Depuis la dernière campagne, nous avons pu économiser entre 3 et 6 mégawatts.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ms Collet!

Mr Assirvaden: Donc, entre 3 et 6 mégawatts. Pardon ?

Madam Speaker: Je croyais que vous aviez fini. Non, allez-y !

Mr Assirvaden: Vous êtes sûre ? Je peux, oui. Alors, entre 3 et 6 mégawatts d'économie. Un soir, on était dans le rouge. L'année dernière, on était dans le rouge et avec la petite campagne d'information et de conscientisation, ça a descendu à 8 à 9 mégawatts.

Pour l'instant, on ne peut pas dire combien de millions de roupies nous allons économiser parce qu'on n'économise pas, malheureusement, avec le prix qu'il y a actuellement. Mais il y a un mécanisme de suivi.

Madam Speaker: Maintenant, Ms Collet !

Ms Collet: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Minister confirm to the House whether the measures his Ministry has envisaged will be applicable to Rodrigues island, including the set of regulations?

Mr Assirvaden: Oui.

Ms Collet: In toto?

Mr Assirvaden: In toto.

Ms Collet: In collaboration with the RRA?

Mr Assirvaden: In collaboration with the RRA.

Ms Collet: Thank you, Sir.

Madam Speaker: It is like a song.

Now, the next question is for hon. Jugurnauth.

I am sorry. I am sorry, I think we will remain in Rodrigues. Yes, hon. François!

PUBLIC OFFICERS – ALLOWANCES & OVERTIME PAYMENT – DELAYS & REMEDIAL MEASURES

(No. B/267) Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms whether, in regard to the recurrent delays in the payment of allowances, including night shift allowance, overtime and extra duty allowances payable to public officers in accordance with the recommendations of the Pay Research Bureau Report and the provisions of the Human Resource Manual, he will state whether consideration is being given for appropriate measures to be introduced to ensure the timely settlement of all overdue and accrued amounts payable.

The Minister of Local Government (Mr R. Wochit): Madam Speaker, with your permission, I will reply to PQ B/267 since I am replacing the substantive Minister.

I wish to inform the House that in accordance with existing procedures, officers who are qualified for payment of the nightshift, extra duty or overtime allowances, have to submit their claims duly certified by their head of sections at the beginning of every month with respect to claims for the preceding months before payment may be effected.

As at date, there are no delays in the payment of nightshift or extra duty allowances in respect of which claims have already been submitted. However, I am informed that there has

been delays in the payment of overtime allowances in some Ministries, Department such as the Minister of Health and Wellness and the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service in view of late submissions of claims by eligible officers as well as budgetary provisions for overtime for the Financial Year 2025/2026 having been exhausted. I am informed that additional fundings have been requested from the Minister of Finance.

Madam Speaker, it has been observed that over the years, overtime costs have been increasing drastically despite the provision of additional human resources. In this context, the Ministry is presently working on new measures in consultation with the Ministries and Departments concerned in the issue of excessive overtime and allowances for control purposes. These new measures aim to bringing efficiency gains from diligent use of human and financial resources.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr François: Madam Speaker, may I put just one supplementary? I know the hon. Minister is not the substantive Minister. Is the hon. Minister aware of the grievance of some public officers in Rodrigues since their last payment of allowances/overtime were effected since October last year and today, 5 months after, there is a lot of *colère parmi les fonctionnaires*?

How can these grievances be remedied?

Mr Wochit: Madam Speaker!

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Wochit: Madam Speaker, I can only take the request.

Madam Speaker: Yes. I am all ears.

Mr Wochit: I can only take the request and send it to the substantive Minister.

Mr François: *Pou apez koler ban fonksioner !*

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Okay. Now, is that okay? No more questions?

Now, hon. Jugurnauth!

**BEL OMBRE, ST MARTIN, AVENUE PELICANS – STATE LAND RESIDENTS –
REGULARISATION**

(No. B/268) **Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to Avenue Pelicans, in St Martin, Bel Ombre, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether –

- (a) same is State Land;
- (b) new constructions are being allowed thereat and, if not, why not, and
- (c) consideration will be given for the regularisation of the situation of residents whose houses stand thereat.

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, I understand that the hon. Member is referring to the land in the vicinity of Avenue Pelicans at St Martin in Bel Ombre. With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed of these lands are not state land.

With regard to parts (b) and (c), the issues raised namely, the construction of new buildings and the regularisation of the situation of residents whose houses stand thereat, relate to the granting of Building and Land Use permits which falls within the purview of the District Council of Savanne.

I am accordingly informed by the District Council of Savanne that there are long standing structures on site that have existed for over 20 years in addition to some 10 dwellings.

The issue is that none of those occupiers possess the necessary title deeds and, consequently, no new development has been permitted thereat. Development in this area could potentially be regularised, provided that a legal title is held in the first instance, and that all development activities comply with planning norms and existing legislations. But as the hon. Member would agree, that is not for me to decide, but for the relevant authorities to pronounce in these decisions.

Madam Speaker: Yes, are you alright hon. Jugurnauth?

Are you happy? Okay!

Hon. First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart, Dr. Prayag!

**PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR – OUTSTANDING OVERTIME ALLOWANCES –
SETTLEMENT TIMELINE**

(No. B/269) **Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the public health sector, he will state the quantum of outstanding overtime allowances as at to date, indicating the –

- (a) categories of officers concerned therewith, and
- (b) timeline for the full settlement thereof.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, according to International Labour Organisation, overtime is generally defined as working time performed in excess of the normal statutory working hours during a day or a week.

Madam Speaker, insofar as my Ministry is concerned, the question of overtime is directly associated to the fact that there is an obligation to ensure continuity of Health Services for the population on a 24-hour basis.

This includes round-the-clock hospital care services, extended service hours that Community Health Centres and Area Health Centres and the delivery of new and specialised services such as diabetic foot care, renal transplant follow-up including dialysis, cardiac care and geriatric services.

In addition, there is a chronic shortage of staff at the level for the various reasons such as attrition, retirement, migration of skilled personnel and the dearth of qualified professionals in several specialised fields.

To ensure continuity of services with the population, my Ministry often has no other alternative than to have recourse to overtime work.

Moreover, in view of its mandate, my Ministry is required to carry out urgent and sustained field interventions, often, beyond normal working hours in order to ensure timely and effective response to public health emergencies which inevitably results in overtime costs.

Madam Speaker, following my assumption of office, I took note that there were several outstanding bills amounting to more than Rs2.2 billion including –

1. COVID-19 vaccines: Rs575 million;
2. Medical disposables: Rs440 million;

3. Overseas treatment: Rs500 million;
4. Provision and Stores: Rs148 million;
5. Cleaning services of premises, Rs95 million;
6. Maintenance of plant and equipment, Rs70 million;
7. Fuel and oil, Rs47 million, and
8. Overtime allowances which were about Rs688 million.

However, further investigations carried out at the level of my Ministry and have institutions have revealed that the figures can be far higher. In fact, in many cases, claims have not been settled since as far back as 2015.

In some cases, for example, for claims from overseas hospitals, appropriate records are also not available making settlement of claims extremely difficult. I am also informed that many officers who had worked overtime did not submit claims as payment were not being made.

Hence, the exact amount outstanding is still unknown. The House may wish to recall but an amount of Rs500 million was voted through Estimates of Supplementary Expenditure in April 2025 to cater for additional expenses relating to overtime.

However, these funds were not sufficient to cover all the outstanding claims. Madam Speaker, in my reply to Private Notice Question on New Cancer Hospital, on 08 April 2025, I had informed the House that my Ministry has inherited a debt burden of Rs2.2 billion from the previous government.

Again, in my intervention on Budget Speech 25 June 2025, I had emphasised that healthcare workers of various grades had not been paid duly earned overtime for several months or even years.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that presently, there is an outstanding amount of some Rs532 million in respect of overtime allowances relating mainly to hospitals services, clinical care, field public health operations, ambulance and transport services, laboratory and imaging services, health surveillance activities, maintenance and general services as well administrative and support services across regional health institutions and specialised units of the Ministry.

For instance, outstanding overtime payable to the staff of my Ministry –

- (i) medical staff – Rs80.6 million;
- (ii) attendant hospital services – Rs24.5 million;
- (iii) nurses – Rs5.5 million.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, the grades concerned cover the following categories –

- (a) Ambulance staff including ambulance attendants and ambulance drivers;
- (b) Hospital services staff including attendant/senior attendant, ward assistant, laundry, linen room and mortuary staff;
- (c) Nursing staff and healthcare assistants;
- (d) Medical staff, including Medical and Senior Medical Health Officers, and Community Physicians;
- (e) Health Surveillance and field public health staff including Insecticide Sprayers, Rodents Control Attendant, Field Supervisors, and Health Surveillance Officers;
- (f) Drivers, Lorry Loaders and transport facilitation staff;
- (g) Health Records, Laboratory, Imaging and technical support staff;
- (h) Catering, Maintenance, Trades and General Service staff, and
- (i) Support and administrative staff, General Services, Finance, Procurement and Human Resources Section.

I also wish to point out that my Ministry continue to receive additional claims for overtime performed during previous years which have not yet been submitted nor consolidated.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed that over the past 3 years, overtime expenditure has remained consistently high due to the operational demands placed on the health sector.

Madam Speaker as regard part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the claims for overtime are being paid and will continue to be paid as and when savings can be identified within the current financial year.

In addition, my Ministry is working closely with the Ministry of Finance for reallocation of funds from savings under other estimates.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, hon. Dr. Prayag? Are you happy?

Dr. Prayag: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is difficult to be happy. I wish to thank the hon. Minister for this explicit answer which also replies to the...

Madam Speaker: Come with your question.

Dr. Prayag: No, it is the same question of the hon. Member from Rodrigues also. In view of the growing financial strain being experienced by healthcare workers, their families, difficulties in meeting their educational needs, their household needs, their health needs, I feel that healthcare workers are being penalised in this situation and we agree that it is because of the previous regime...

Madam Speaker: Please! Hon. Dr., please come with a question.

Dr. Prayag: Is the hon. Minister envisaging any expedited or special mechanism through the Ministry of Finance to ensure prompt settlement of these outstanding overtime allowances?

Mr Bachoo: I have made it very clear in one sentence. He has never been a Minister, if he had been so, he would have known. A Minister has got only one power, that we make a request to the Ministry of Finance for the reallocation of funds. It means if funds which are available in other departments have not been utilised, I make a request to the Ministry of Finance to allow us to use that money in order to pay whatever we owe to those people.

Madam Speaker: But his role is to keep you all on your toes!

Ms Savabaddy: Right, Madam Speaker!

Madam Speaker: Right!

Mr Bachoo: I thank him for that.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. François?

Mr François: Hon. Minister, does the quantum you just mentioned include the Rs25 million backlog of payment at the Commission for Health in Rodrigues with an accumulation of around Rs20 million monthly? Or, it is just separate; it is not included?

Mr Bachoo: No, no. You see, I have given a global picture. At the same time, I have categorised all the different groups where we are owing. That is all.

Madam Speaker: Yes, alright.

Mr François: Including Rodrigues?

Mr Bachoo: Rodrigues as well.

Madam Speaker: Another question! Another question!

Dr. Prayag: Is the hon. Minister aware that there are staff who have passed away while waiting for their overtime and now their relatives are looking for these salaries?

Mr Bachoo: I hope this burden will not be put upon us. We are doing our duty without fear or favour and we are doing it for the welfare of each and everybody. So, this must be very much clear and those who have looted the country, those who have bled the country white must be held responsible for that.

Madam Speaker: Okay, I think we have gone through this question. Now, let us ask hon. Ms Henriette-Manan!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ms Henriette-Manan is going to speak, please!

RODRIGUES – LABOUR DISPUTES – EMPLOYERS DOMICILED IN MAURITIUS – LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS

(No. B/270) Ms D. Henriette-Manan (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to labour disputes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Rodrigues Labour Office, information as to the number thereof registered since 2023 to date in respect of which employers involved therein but domiciled in Mauritius could not be sued before the Industrial Court in Rodrigues, indicating the measures taken by his Ministry regarding same, including whether consideration is being given for proposed amendments to be brought to the relevant legislation to ensure that the place of performance of work remains the primary criterion for territorial jurisdiction.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, allow me to thank the hon. Third Member from Rodrigues for raising this issue which is causing a considerable inconvenience to workers in Rodrigues who have to sue their employers who are domiciled in Mauritius.

The Rodrigues Labour Office is under the purview of the Commission for Tourism, Employment, Labour and Industrial Relations, Information Technology and Telecommunication of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. However, I am informed that since

2023, 66 cases have been registered at my Ministry for employers domiciled in the island of Mauritius for enquiry and possible Court action which involves employees from Rodrigues. Out of those 66 cases, 48 cases in respect of which inquiry has been completed have been referred back to Rodrigues Labour Office for necessary action. 10 cases are still under inquiry at the level of my Ministry. Three cases concern reinstatement, of which, two were referred to the Employment Relations Tribunal where an agreement was reached between the parties and both workers were reinstated. As far as the third case for reinstatement is concerned, although the termination of work was justified, the parties agreed to reach an out-of-court settlement through an *Ex-Gratia* payment.

In regard to the five remaining cases, four workers have withdrawn their complaints among others due to cost implication relating to attendance at the Industrial Court in Mauritius while the last remaining case has been referred back to Rodrigues Labour Office for further inquiry prior to lodging a case before the Industrial Court of Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, as regards the issue of territorial jurisdiction to lodge a case, I am informed that prior to October 2020, it had been the practice for officers of the Rodrigues Labour Office to lodge cases against defaulting employers, including those domiciled in Mauritius before the Industrial Court (Rodrigues Division), so before the Industrial Court in Rodrigues.

However, following a ruling delivered on 26 October 2020 in the matter of Jean Johnson Begue and Miss Arielle Dulcy Andre against Mauritours Ltd by the Industrial Court (Rodrigues Division), the Court held that the Court of Rodrigues is not competent to hear cases where a defendant employer is domiciled in Mauritius. Mr Begue had on 10 November 2020 written to the Chief Justice of Mauritius, requesting a review of the said ruling. However, on 24 November 2020, Mr Begue was informed that the Reviewing Authority had found no valid reason to review the decision and his application was set aside. Since then, all cases where employers are domiciled in the island of Mauritius have to be lodged before the Industrial Court in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, as there is considerable inconvenience for a labour dispute involving a worker residing in Rodrigues Island and his employer domiciled in Mauritius to be resolved before the Industrial Court in Mauritius, my Ministry is taking up the matter with the Attorney General's Office with a view to finding an appropriate solution.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes?

Ms Henriette-Manan: Merci beaucoup pour la réponse, honorable ministre. Je voudrais quand même vous demander, dans les cas où le tribunal industriel de Rodrigues n'a pas juridiction et où le travailleur est contraint d'intenter une action à Maurice, l'honorable ministre peut-il indiquer si une aide financière ou une assistance juridique sera fournie à ces travailleurs, afin de couvrir les frais de déplacement et d'hébergement ou s'il se voit effectivement refuser l'accès à la justice en raison des contraintes géographiques et financières ? Merci.

Mr Uteem: Madame la présidente, pour l'instant il n'y pas d'assistance financière qu'est offerte aux travailleurs rodriguais qui doivent à Maurice, faire le déplacement pour loger leur affaire en cour. Comme je vous dis, on est en train d'étudier avec le bureau de l'*Attorney General*, avec bien sûr le concours du *Chief Justice*, si on ne pourrait pas faire entendre les cas par la cour industrielle à Rodrigues elle-même. On pourrait aussi éventuellement envisager une situation où la cour puisse ordonner à l'employeur – s'il est trouvé coupable – d'indemniser les frais de déplacement du travailleur rodriguais. Mais, tout cela est à l'étude entre mon ministère et le bureau de l'*Attorney General*.

Madam Speaker: Yes, okay. *Il y a d'autres solutions.*

Mr François: Well replied.

Madam Speaker: *Il y a d'autres solutions.* Hon. Seeburn!

CONSTITUENCY NO. 11 – ROAD SAFETY – IMPROVEMENT

(No. B/271) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to road safety, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, information as to the actions taken, if any, in response to requests from residents of Constituency No. 11 for the enhancement thereof in the highly residential areas thereof, including the installation of speed tables or other traffic calming measures, indicating whether site surveys, feasibility studies or traffic assessments have been carried out and, if so, give details thereof, including implementation timelines and interim measures being envisaged, if any.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit that several requests have been received from residents of Constituency No. 11 regarding improvement of road safety, especially in the highly inhabited areas. The requests pertain mainly to the following –

- painting of yellow lines for parking prohibitions;
- painting of yellow boxes;
- setting of pedestrian crossings;
- implementation of traffic calming measures such as road humps;
- limitation of speed by placing traffic signs, and
- provision of handrails and footpaths among others.

These projects do not warrant feasibility studies as such as they are fundamentally of small scale. As per normal practice, surveys are conducted and consultative meetings are held with key stakeholders to assess the need for specific projects and determine the most appropriate sites where the improvement works have to be undertaken.

Accordingly, upon receipt of the request, the TMRSU coordinates with key stakeholders, and the feasibility of the proposed measures or projects are jointly agreed upon. Where warranted, recommendations are made and approved, and projects are implemented within a reasonable timeframe, subject to the availability of funds. In cases where the requested measures cannot be implemented due to traffic constraints and other technical reasons, the TMRSU explores alternative solutions to enhance road safety.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed by the TMRSU that since 2025, the following measures have been recommended and are currently being implemented in Constituency No. 11 –

- (i) painting of single and double yellow lines at 10 locations;
- (ii) implementation of pedestrian crossings at two locations;
- (iii) implementation of raised tables at three locations;
- (iv) implementation of traffic signs and road markings at five locations, and
- (v) painting of yellow boxes at two locations.

For the information of the hon. Member, I am tabling details of the works and locations concerned.

Madam Speaker, works involving the painting of yellow lines, traffic signs, road markings and pedestrian crossings are ongoing and are being implemented by the in-house team of the TMRSU.

As regards the supply of traffic signs, including the replenishment of stock, I am given to understand that the contract has recently been awarded. Works for the construction of raised tables will be implemented through the framework agreement contracts, which have been recently awarded as well.

I would like to underline that this framework agreement was being considered at the level of the CPB, where it sustained an inordinate delay in its finalisation. This is the main reason why the implementation of traffic calming measures could not be carried out earlier. I explained, last week, the issues we faced for the finalisation of that framework agreement.

I wish to assure that the traffic calming measures which have remained pending, including the installation of speed tables will, henceforth, be implemented across the island, including Constituency No. 11, within the least possible delay. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is there a supplementary? Yes!

Mr Seeburn: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is in a position to request for financial assistance in the forthcoming budget so that the projects that have been identified by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit are implemented, as they are measures of safety concerns for the inhabitants?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, of course, this is being done, not only for Constituency No. 11, but across the island. It is an ongoing exercise, now that we are two months away from the budget presentation.

An hon. Member: Next question!

Madam Speaker: *Yes!* Merci. C'est bien quand tout le monde est réveillé ! C'est bien !

INFLATIONARY PRESSURES – ASSISTANCE SCHEMES/SUBSIDIES

(No. B/272) **Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the prevailing inflationary pressures, he will state whether consideration will be given for the

introduction of an assistance scheme through the Stabilisation Fund targeted at supporting the most vulnerable segments of the population and, if so, give details thereof.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Madam Speaker, Government is fully cognisant of the impact of prevailing inflationary pressures on households, particularly on the most vulnerable segments of the population.

Since March 2025, the retail prices of additional commodities were put under price control, maximum mark-up regime. These include 25% of mark-up which was introduced on canned vegetables and 34% on frozen packed vegetables to increase the purchasing power of consumers, especially for low to middle income families. A price control list was extended for new products such as canned sausages, canned poultry, like Luncheon Meat, canned tuna, canned prawns, shrimps, butter and margarine.

During the Budget 2025-2026, the Government has removed VAT on essential commodities such as infant foods, canned vegetables and frozen packed vegetables. Furthermore, Government has put in place a Price Stabilisation Fund of Rs10 billion over a period of 5 years, representing an annual amount of Rs2 billion. This fund is specially designed to cushion customers against increases in the prices of essential goods.

On 26 August 2025, Government introduced a fixed quantum subsidy mechanism under the Price Stabilisation Fund on key essential commodities, namely –

- (i) Rs50 per kg on milk powder;
- (ii) Rs15 per litre on edible oil;
- (iii) Rs55 per 900g on infant milk powder;
- (iv) Rs25 per pack of 50 baby diapers, and
- (v) Rs10 per 250g on processed cheese.

This programme has subsequently been expanded as follows –

- (i) on 15 January 2026, to include a subsidy of 50 cents per unit on adult diapers, and
- (ii) on 01 February 2026, to include a subsidy of Rs10 per can on canned mackerel and pilchards as well as Rs50 per box on essential medicines, namely

antihypertensive, cardiovascular and anti-diabetic products, covering some 829 medicines available on the market.

Madam Speaker, I wish to underline that this measure is not merely a policy announcement, but it is fully operational. At the end of February 2026, an amount of approximately Rs641 million for the essential commodities mentioned has already been disbursed under the Price Stabilisation Fund. This figure is expected to reach around Rs900 million by June 2026. The total projected disbursement is around Rs1.6 billion for the FINANCIAL YEAR 2025-2026. In addition, an amount of Rs331 million is being provided to support bakeries for the latter to maintain the price of scheduled bread at Rs2.60.

These measures are yielding measurable and tangible results. For instance, the subsidy mechanism has contributed to the following –

- (a) a reduction of approximately 24.2% in the retail price of milk powder;
- (b) a decrease of around 5.8% in the price of edible oil;
- (c) reductions ranging between 5-6% for other essential commodities, and
- (d) price decreases of up to 42% for certain essential medicines.

In fact, it has been found that the prices of some subsidised commodities are even now lower than those prevailing prior to November 2024. This clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of assistance provided by the Government.

Government is also providing direct financial assistance to vulnerable groups through social aid schemes, including monthly income support, food assistance and targeted allowances for single mothers, children and persons with disabilities.

Madam Speaker, as demonstrated, Government has already implemented a comprehensive assistance framework through the Price Stabilisation Fund which directly addresses the impact of inflation on the most vulnerable segments of the population. Nevertheless, Government continues to closely monitor developments and remains prepared to further calibrate and expand targeted support measures where necessary, in a manner that is both effective and fiscally sustainable. It is to be noted that this is a main item which is being looked into by the crisis committee.

Madam Speaker: Alright. Hon. Ramkalawon asked first. Then, you.

Mr Ramkalawon: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the Minister organise, through his Ministry, strict control on edible oil, especially because of the low supply? Some suppliers are actually hiding some stocks.

Madam Speaker: Hoarding!

Mr Ramkalawon: Yes, exactly! Thank you.

Madam Speaker: That's the term.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Madam Speaker, I believe that there is full stock of edible oil. But if there is any issue, please, contact us on the Hotline 185.

Mr Juman: Merci, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: Plus fort!

Mr Juman: Puis-je savoir de l'honorable ministre, depuis la mise en pratique du maximum mark-up en novembre 2024, on est en train de parler de 700 millions de roupies, – je vous explique, donnez-moi le temps – pourcentage concrètement aujourd'hui, est-ce qu'on peut avoir une liste comparative entre novembre 2024 et aujourd'hui, de certains produits, produits de base ? Si vous n'avez pas, vous pouvez déposer à la table de l'Assemblée ?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: En fait, j'ai deux listes avec moi. J'ai une liste des prix avec subsides, donc –

- (i) il y a le lait Farmland, par exemple, aujourd'hui c'est en vente à R 256.62. Quand on le compare avec en novembre 2024, c'était à R 274.90.

Madam Speaker: Ne nous lisez pas tout !

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Donc, je peux donner quelques exemples.

Madam Speaker: Allez, trois !

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Oui, trois exemples, côté subsides. Donc, –

- (ii) Bega *processed cheese*, R 82.49 aujourd'hui et en novembre 2024, c'était à R 95.29.

- (iii) Et puis, de l'huile Moroil R 71.49 aujourd'hui, et c'était en novembre 2024, c'était à R 79.70.

J'ai aussi quelques items, ici, sur les produits maximum mark-up. Je vais aussi donner trois items. Donc, –

- (i) McCain Tradition Fries R 134.21 aujourd'hui, le prix maximum, et en novembre 2024, c'était à R 183, soit 36.5 % en moins.
- (ii) Watties Garden Peas (900g) R 190.54 aujourd'hui, et c'était, en novembre 2024, R 236, soit 38 % aujourd'hui en moins.
- (iii) Un dernier point, Belinda Red Kidney Beans R 29.73 aujourd'hui, et en novembre 2024, c'était à R 46, soit 54 % en moins.

Et aussi, je vais prendre la peine de déposer à la Chambre. Merci.

Madam Speaker : Oui, je crois que c'est bien. Merci beaucoup, M. le ministre. Heureusement qu'on a bien mangé, ça ne nous donne pas faim.

Okay, any more? Mr Juman, have you finished?

Okay, next question, B/273, has been withdrawn.

So, now I am asking for B/274, Dr. Aumeer!

HIGHLANDS – INCINERATOR – FIRE CERTIFICATE

(No. B/273) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the incinerator at Highlands, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether a fire certificate has been issued in respect thereof and, if so, indicate the date of coming into operation thereof and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

LEASING COMPANIES (REGISTERED) – INTERNATIONAL & FATF STANDARDS – REPORTED FAILED COMPLIANCE

(No. B/274) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port-Louis South & Port-Louis Central) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning whether, in regard to the leasing companies, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Services Commission, information as to the current number thereof registered therewith and operating in Mauritius, indicating whether any one of these companies has reportedly failed to comply with international standards, including the core components of the Financial Action Task Force standards.

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Financial Services Commission that there are currently 12 leasing companies licensed and operating in Mauritius. 9 of these are domestic while 3 are global business licence holders.

Madam Speaker, the FSC carries out on-site inspections for its licensees, including leasing companies using a risk-based approach derived from the National Risk Assessment. Entities falling within very high-risk clusters and carrying out very high-risk ratings are inspected annually while inspection cycles become longer as the level of risk decreases at either the cluster or entity level ranging from every two to seven years. Such entities remain subject to ongoing off-site monitoring and supervisory oversight to ensure continued compliance with AML/CFT requirements.

Leasing activities were rated as medium risk based on the 2019 NRA Report. Based on this risk rating, the FSC deployed its risk based on-site inspection plan for the sector. During period 2020 to 2024, the FSC conducted six on-site inspections. Following the publication of the NRA Report 2025, that is, last year, whereby the leasing sector was rated at medium high risk – so, a more elevated risk – the FSC carried out three inspections of leasing companies in 2025. Out of the nine leasing companies that have been subject to inspections between 2020 and 2025, three companies were identified as having short comings to a varying extent in their AML/CFT systems and controls. Out of these three companies, one leasing company was identified as having serious deficiencies in its AML/CFT controls and was placed under close monitoring by the FSC.

As at August 2025, Madam Speaker, the deficiencies identified were still not adequately remedied. Subsequently, that leasing company was placed under investigation which is still on-going.

Madam Speaker, at this stage, I have been informed that information relating to the investigation is being treated with confidentiality at the level of the Financial Services Commission.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister. Any questions?

Yes, Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, hon. Minister. Madam Speaker, may I ask the hon. Minister whether she has any information in regard to certain leasing companies based in Mauritius who are being used as smoke screen for those who have been recently arrested by the Financial Crimes Commission with regard to money laundering and drug trafficking in the acquisition of super luxury cars and pleasure crafts?

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am not aware of the details of any specific case because FSC does not give confidential case by case information. However, what I can say is that there is this one case where the clients of that company are being investigated and there have been collaborations between FSC and FCC, which is ongoing at the moment.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, hon. Minister. May I, therefore, request the hon. Minister whether her Ministry can conduct an in-depth inquiry, particularly on two leasing companies which I am going to share the information with you afterwards, which are heavily, at 80%, involved in the acquisition of these super luxury cars and pleasure crafts by particularly one of them whereby no strict KYC has been done in regards to those who were looking for leasing facilities?

Dr. Ms Jeetun: I look forward to receiving that information and I have also highlighted to the FSC, in view of the recent cases since last year, that we have read in the press, to increase the on-site inspections of leasing companies which looks like are being used as washing machines for, you know, dirty money basically. But I look forward to receiving that which I will then transmit to the FSC. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Okay! Is that okay everyone?

Dr. Aumeer: Yes!

Madam Speaker: Alright. Now, so there are so many questions that have been withdrawn. Maybe I shall do this for the moment and tell you. The Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn - B/273, B/280, B/287, B/290, B/296, B/300, B/301, B/303, B/306, B/307, B/309, and B/315. But we still have a little bit of time to finish.

Now, hon. Jugurnauth, yes!

**TERRACINE, SOUILLAC – NEW HOUSING ESTATE – DRAIN WORKS –
COST**

(No. B/275) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the drain works being effected at the new housing estate at Terracine, Souillac, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) scope of works and cost thereof;
- (b) name of the contractor, and
- (c) expected completion date thereof.

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Mohamed): Madam Speaker, with your permission, I shall reply to Parliamentary Question B/275.

With regard to part (a), I am informed by the NSLD that the scope of works consists mainly of –

- upgrading an existing earthen cut-off drain located upstream of the NSLD site up to its discharge point in Rivière Savanne;
- realigning part of the existing drain;
- constructing two new culverts at road crossings along the B9 Road and an existing track road;
- concrete lining of the existing arch bridge near Domaine Cascade, and
- ancillary works, including the relocation of existing services and reinstatement of affected areas.

The cost of the project is estimated at Rs128.5 million.

As regards part (b), I am further informed by the NSLD that the contract has been awarded to Transinvest Construction Ltd.

With regard to part (c), the works are expected to be completed by 28 December 2026.

Madam Speaker: Alright, next question.

Dr. Ms Daureeawo.

SMALL & MEDIUM ENTERPRISES – LOAN FACILITIES

(No. B/276) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the small and medium enterprises, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from SME Mauritius Ltd., information as to the number thereof registered therewith as at date, indicating –

- (a) the total amount of loans granted thereto over the period 2020 to 2024;
- (b) whether an assessment has been carried out in respect of the obstacles faced by same, and
- (c) the measures being envisaged to support same in overcoming trade barriers and expanding internationally.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, the registration of small and medium enterprises at my Ministry is governed by the provisions of the SME Act 2017. According to the First Schedule of the Act, SMEs are categorised as microenterprise where the annual turnover does not exceed Rs10 million, small enterprises where the annual turnover exceeds Rs10 million but does not exceed Rs30 million, medium enterprise where the annual turnover exceeds Rs30 million but does not exceed Rs100 million and mid-market enterprise where the turnover exceeds Rs100 million but does not exceed Rs250 million.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that SMEs are not registered by SME Mauritius Ltd, which is a government-owned private company falling under the purview of my Ministry but rather by the SME Registration Unit of my Ministry. I am informed that as at date, there are 23,429 SMEs registered with my Ministry.

Regarding part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that neither SME Mauritius Ltd nor my Ministry provide any kind of loan to SMEs. In fact, SME can avail loan facilities from the DBM, the MauBank, the Industrial Finance Corporation of Mauritius

(IFCM) as well as from commercial banks. As regards my Ministry, SME Mauritius provides grants to SMEs under various schemes namely the Business Transformation Scheme, Technology and Innovation Scheme, Market Readiness Scheme, Greening Support Scheme and Agri-Business Scheme.

Madam Speaker, regarding part (b) of the question, I am informed that assessments of obstacles faced by business enterprises have been made by several government institutions as follows –

- The SME division of my Ministry continuously carries out assessment of the difficulties faced by the SMEs through regular site visits and consultations with SME;
- SME Mauritius also carries out consultation with SMEs to identify their operational challenges with a view to formulating targeted trainings and schemes in order to address these obstacles;
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade and the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce, jointly manage the Trade Obstacles Alert Mechanism since 2015. The platform provides a proactive framework to identify and address trade obstacles encountered by the business community in course of import and export operations;
- The Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry also conducts regular meetings under specific commissions and committees, for instance, its commerce industry and services and economic commission take stock of issues and obstacles for its members;

Madam Speaker, regarding part (c) of the question, I am informed that Mauritius has signed a number of trade agreements with friendly countries namely, the European Union, the UK, China and India, which provide for duty free and quota free access for our locally manufactured products with a view to overcoming of trade barriers.

The trade agreements are mainly the Eastern and Southern Africa European Union Economic Partnership Agreement, Eastern and Southern Africa United Kingdom Economic Partnership Agreement, Mauritius China-Trade Agreement, Mauritius-India Comprehensive Corporation and Partnership Agreement which is called CECPA, and Mauritius-United Arab Emirates Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. Mauritius is also member of

Regional Trade Blocks such as the SADC, the COMESA and African Continental Free Trade Area.

However, I wish to inform the House that FTAs signed with friendly countries not only benefit Mauritian entrepreneurs but, in some cases, they tend to be more advantageous to the foreign countries exporting to Mauritius. This has even led to situations like dumping of very cheap low-quality goods from overseas markets.

Madam Speaker, regarding measures to support our local enterprises to international, I am informed that a number of export schemes are available and managed by the EDB to boost the competitiveness of export manufacturing enterprises namely the Trade and Marketing Scheme, Freight Rebate Scheme, Export Credit Guarantee Insurance Scheme and Participation in International Fairs SME Refund Scheme.

Furthermore, my Ministry through SME Mauritius Ltd, provides support to SMEs under various grant schemes aimed at assisting enterprises in product development, certification, export readiness among others.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister. Yes, Dr. Ms Daureeawo.

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Could the hon. Minister consider an impact evaluation or assessment to show how public funds have delivered real growth?

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, of course this can be done.

Madam Speaker: Good. Dr. Prayag.

CONSTITUENCY NO. 7 – AMITIÉ FOOTBALL GROUND – STATUS

(No. B/277) Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Amitié Football Ground in Constituency No. 7, Piton and Rivière du Rempart, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the current status thereof.

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that a plot of land measuring 8,881 metre square situated at Amitié, has been duly acquired by government and vested in the District Council of Rivière du Rempart in October 2025 for the purpose of constructing a football ground together with the necessary amenities.

Following the vesting, the site has already been cleared in December 2025 and a site visit was carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Lands to confirm boundary points and facilitate reparatory works.

Madam Speaker, the estimated cost of the project is approximately Rs40 million. However, due to budgetary constraints, implementation could not proceed during the current financial year. The District Council of Rivière du Rempart has included this capital project as a priority in its proposal for the Financial Year 2026-2027. Implementation will therefore proceed once the necessary financial provision is secured subject to prioritisation by the Ministry of Finance and the completion of all required administrative and technical clearances.

In the meantime, I have requested the District Council to ensure that the site is maintained in a clean condition.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. I think we will do a last one with Mr Apollon.

That's the last question.

MAHEBOURG WATERFRONT – STEEL JETTY – PROPOSED REPLACEMENT – ESTIMATED COST

(No. B/278) **Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the proposed replacement of the steel jetty situated at the Mahebourg Waterfront, he will state where matters stand, indicating the –

- (a) estimated cost, and
- (b) expected start and completion dates thereof.

Mr Wochit: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that as already raised under Parliamentary Question B/601, Government is fully apprised of the deteriorated conditions of the steel jetty at the Mahebourg Waterfront, which has been closed for safety reasons and for the urgent needs for its replacement to ensure public safety while supporting tourism and local economic activities.

A document detailing the different structural options, currently under consideration for the replacement of the jetty, is being tabled for the benefit of the House. These include

various design configuration and materials option suitable for the marine environment. Among these, a reinforced concrete structure is one of the leading options under consideration given its durability, reduced maintenance and long-term cost effectiveness.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed that the estimated cost for the replacement project is approximately Rs25 million based on preliminary technical assessment carried out by the District Council of Grand Port. In this regard, provision has been made in the forthcoming financial estimate for an interim allocation of Rs25 million to enable the project to proceed to its preparatory phase in the next financial year.

This will cover among others, the appointment of consultants for a detailed design, structure and drawings, the carried out of engineering studies and feasibility assessment and the undertaking of the Environment Impact Assessment and other statutory process as maybe required.

These preparatory works will be subject to the approval of the Ministry of Finance and to the necessary clearances from the Ministry of Environment and other authorities.

As regards to part (b) of the question, Madam Speaker, the project is presently at its preparatory stage. The commencement of physical works will depend on the finalisation of the selected structures option, completion of all the technical studies and the obtaining of the required statutory approvals. Subject to these approvals and financial clearances, implementation will proceed thereafter in a structured and timely manner. It would be premature at this stage to commit a firm start and completion date.

In the meantime, Madam Speaker, I wish to reassure the House that appropriate safety measures remain in place at the Mahebourg Waterfront to ensure public safety pending the implementation of the project.

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

Mr Apollon: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you, hon. Minister. I thank you for your answer. Can I make a request for a site visit at the Mahebourg Waterfront to see this eyesore which is being posted every week on social media so that we can give the renovation a priority for the next budget?

Mr Wochit: Of course, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Of course.

Mr Wochit: We can do a site visit at the convenience of the hon. Member.

Madam Speaker: The presence of all concerned.

Mr Woochit: No problem.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. So sweetly said.

Time is up!

The Table has been advised that the following PQs, over and above those I have already mentioned, have been withdrawn: B/251, B/279, B/280, B/282, B/283, B/286, B/288, B/289, B/291, B/292, B/294, B/295, B/298, B/299, B/302, B/304, B/305, B/311, B/312, B/314, B/313, and B/317 have been withdrawn.

Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that all the business on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

Mr Mohamed seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister of Education!

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

FORMER DPM STATEMENT – CLARIFICATION REGARDING MR K.C. & MINISTRY ENQUIRY

(4.28 p.m.)

The Minister of Education and Human Resource (Dr. M. Gungapersad): Madam Speaker, with your permission, I have to make a statement about a matter raised by the former Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) concerning a conversation that I had with him regarding one Mr K.C.

I wish to dispel all doubts that may, unfortunately, linger after that statement of the former DPM. In fact, it is the former DPM who called me, and, amongst others, he asked me questions relating to an enquiry which had to be initiated at the level of my Ministry regarding a particular school, but which had not started for reasons beyond my control.

I also related an incident when the said Mr K.C. had brought someone to my office, at MITD Pheonix, regarding the same and I had asked them to leave as it was inappropriate for me to speak to them given that an enquiry had been initiated. The conversation which had hardly started was cut short by myself as soon as I realised that the person brought to see me wanted to speak about the school which was subject of the enquiry.

I thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Minister!

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. Minister Assirvaden!

(4.29 p.m.)

The Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr P. Assirvaden): Merci, Madame la présidente. Je ne serai pas long.

Madame la présidente, je suis heureux de commenter ces amendements présentés par ma collègue sur *The Anti-Money Laundering, Combatting the Financing of Terrorism and Countering Proliferation Financing Bill*.

Madame la présidente, sûrement, les Mauriciennes et les Mauriciens, qui nous écoutent concernant ces amendements, se posent la question : quelle est l'utilité d'emmener ces amendements en 2026 ? Est-ce que ces amendements sont des priorités ? C'est la priorité des priorités de ce gouvernement dans ce contexte où on est. Moi aussi je me suis posé la

question quand ma collègue a emmené les amendements au cabinet et je me suis fait un devoir d'aller lire.

Ce n'est pas vraiment dans ma ligne d'action en tant que ministre, mais je me suis fait un devoir d'aller lire ce qui a été proposé par ma collègue. La conclusion qui est sortie assez rapidement, c'est que ce projet de loi est pertinent à l'heure actuelle. Nécessaire, pertinent, et d'une importance capitale. Car cela s'inscrit dans une volonté claire : améliorer de manière substantielle l'efficacité de notre pays dans la lutte contre la criminalité financière sous toutes ses formes, qu'il s'agisse de blanchiment d'argent, de financement du terrorisme ou encore des mécanismes de financement liés à la prolifération.

Aussi, en lisant, en essayant de comprendre – quand même, c'est technique. Il y a une technicité dans ces amendements –, il s'agit également de permettre à nos institutions d'agir avec davantage de rapidité, de précision, d'efficacité face à des pratiques de plus en plus sophistiquées.

En général, pour les Mauriciennes et les Mauriciens qui se posent la question : pourquoi ces amendements ? Pourquoi en sommes-nous arrivés là en avril 2026 ? La réponse, partielle du moins, est que nous faisons face à l'héritage d'une décennie marquée par un scandale financier de tout genre sous le régime du MSM !

Ms Anquetil: Tout à fait !

Mr Assirvaden: Avec comme Premier ministre Pravind Kumar Jugnauth.

Ms Anquetil: Madame !

Mr Assirvaden: Une décennie durant laquelle les dérives se sont accumulées, où les garde-fous institutionnels ont été contournés comme des bouchons de champagne, sautés, où des pratiques inacceptables ont pris racine.

Dr. Boolell: *To pe donn li valer, koup ar bouchon champagne!*

Mr Assirvaden: Le blanchiment d'argent ne relevait plus de l'exception, il y a 10 ans de cette décennie. Il tendait à devenir un véritable pilier du monde opératoire de l'ancien régime. C'est précisément pour rompre avec cette logique que nous devons aujourd'hui agir avec détermination.

Madame la présidente, j'ai vu que l'amendement à la *Banking Act* et au FIU, les sections 26, 50, 53A, 69, vont être proposés pour être amendés. Je ne sais pas en ce qui

concerne mes collègues, mais il y a quelque temps de cela, depuis notre arrivée au pouvoir, j'ai entendu parler du *reward money*.

Ce *reward money*, à mon avis, Madame la présidente, est l'un des dossiers qui a profondément marqué l'opinion des Mauriciennes et Mauriciens, en général. Marqué l'opinion publique. Pour beaucoup de Mauriciens qui m'écoutent ce soir, ce dossier est devenu le symbole même de la dilapidation des fonds publics sous le MSM. J'entends certaines personnes dire – enfin – ils ont la nostalgie du temps du MSM !

Ms Anquetil: *Ayo bondie !*

Mr Assirvaden: C'est la dilapidation des fonds ! Mais au même moment, c'est la nature même du système qui interpelle, car ceux qui étaient concernés un moment donné, Madame la présidente, qui étaient touchés, c'était le cœur même de nos institutions. Quand des unités comme la *Special Striking Team*, le *Special Intelligence Cell*, the *Counter Terrorism Unit*, the *Force Crime Intelligence Unit* étaient touchées, la population était choquée ! Pour ne pas dire scandalisée !

Quand nous avons vu des retraits en espèces ; allez à la banque et essayez de faire un retrait de R 300 000. Allez à la banque, les Mauriciens qui m'écoutent ce soir, allez à la banque, essayez de mettre R 50 000 que vous avez eus en cadeau de vos enfants de l'étranger, la banque vous demande the *source of fund*. La banque vous demande de remplir une fiche pour mettre R 200 000 en cash.

Et ici, entre le 18 octobre 2024 et le 07 novembre 2024, pas moins de R 14 millions ont été retirés du compte d'un ACP de police sous l'ancien régime MSM alors que le Premier ministre s'asseyait là, ici, à la place de l'honorable Ms Savabaddy.

(Interruptions)

Ces retraits, Madame la présidente, effectués en raison de R 1 million par jour mais cela n'a *ring the bell* pour personnes ? L'ancien ministre des Finances, Padayachy, l'ancien Premier ministre n'ont rien vu – R 14 millions de retraits chaque jour. Oui !

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member : *Ek zot ena toupe al dan...*

Mr Guinness: *Pou finans kampagn...*

Mr Assirvaden : Justement, ces retraits effectués en raison de R1 million par jour dépassaient largement les plafonds fixés par la *Financial Intelligence Anti-Money Laundering Act*.

Mr Guinness: *Zis avan eleksyon.*

Mr Assirvaden : Justement, juste avant les élections ! Vous voyez la pertinence de ces amendements ? Je n'ai pas l'habitude de féliciter les gens trop facilement moi, mais là je suis obligé de féliciter ma collègue.

Madame Speaker : Votre voisine.

Mr Assirvaden: C'est un fait que la pertinence est là. C'est précisément pour répondre à ce type de dérives – dérives de *reward money* – que les amendements proposés à la législation bancaire prennent toute leur sens ainsi la modification apportée à la section 26(2) de la *Bank of Mauritius* pourra désormais divulguer toute information nécessaire pour faire un signalement ou transmettre un dossier aux autorités.

Madame la présidente, j'ai entendu, j'écoutais avec attention ce matin quand j'ai lu l'amendement la *Banking Act*, sections : 53, 64, 64A, 64B, 64C – je vous l'ai dit, il y a beaucoup de technicité dans ces amendements. Quand j'ai écouté avec attention la réponse de l'honorable Premier ministre ce matin – Silver Bank.

Mr Bhagwan: *Caverne Alibaba!*

Mr Assirvaden: C'est vrai ! Moi, je pense que l'ancien Premier ministre a raison de se cacher ; il a raison de se cacher.

An hon. Member : *Non, li pe tir latet soidizan la.*

Mr Assirvaden: Non, il a0 raison de se cacher ! On ne le voit simplement que quand il y a des dépôts gerbe. Si aujourd'hui nous sommes en train de procéder à des amendements à la *Banking Act*, ce n'est pas un fruit du hasard.

Vous réalisez ! De 2022 à 2023. Laissez-moi répéter ce que l'honorable Premier ministre avait dit ce matin : de 2022 à 2023, 7 sociétés liées à un homme d'affaires indien, – j'ai oublié son nom –

Hon. Members: Gupta !

Mr Assirvaden: Gupta, l'ami de Padayachy ! Gupta, – ont obtenues des prêts toxiques – *toxic loans* – d'un montant variant de R 157 millions à R 200 millions chacun. Au total, R 1.2 milliards qui a été débloqué par cette banque aujourd'hui en liquidation.

Ms Anquetil: Scandaleux !

Mr Assirvaden: Cela c'est le temps du MSM ! Et on voit aujourd'hui la pertinence de ce que l'honorable membre emmène en ce qui concerne les amendements.

Madame la présidente, l'affaire Silver Bank n'est pas un cas isolé malheureusement, pour le pays. Elle est le symptôme d'un système MSM qui nécessitait une réforme en profondeur. Ces amendements viennent précisément combler les lacunes qui ont permis l'émergence des tels abus en renforçant la transparence, la supervision et la coopération entre institutions.

Madame la présidente, – je surveille mon heure – Maradiva !

(Interruptions)

Encore une fois ! Le papa qui m'écoute ce soir ou la maman qui m'écoute ce soir – Maradiva : c'est votre argent qui a été dévalisé.

Mr Mohamed: *Inn devaliz* State Bank!

Mr Assirvaden: C'est l'argent de la *State Bank*, l'argent des fonctionnaires, R 470 millions donnés à une compagnie que je ne connaissais même pas le nom, Dhyonavartam Ltd, plus connu sous Maradiva.

Mr Mohamed: *Maha Diva*.

Mr Assirvaden: *Maha Diva* ! Une affaire troublante ! R 470 millions accordés en juillet 2024 à la veille des élections générales par la *State Bank of Mauritius*. Dont le propriétaire est – on le connaît, le beau-frère du Premier ministre – *lakwizin*.

(Interruptions)

Ton Georges ! l'ancien Premier ministre ! Oui, l'ancien Premier ministre !

(Interruptions)

Pour vous dire, Madame la présidente, que c'est précisément pour répondre à ce type de situation que le projet de loi amende désormais la *Companies Act* en redéfinissant la notion

de « *beneficial owner* ». Désormais il ne s'agit plus seulement du détenteur officiel d'action mais de toute personne qui contrôle réellement une société directement ou indirectement.

Ce n'est pas fini, Madame la présidente ! Vous réalisez, au lendemain de la Covid-19 alors que le pays est encore meurtri, *MIC* – ils ont dévalué. Quand j'étais juste à côté ici dans l'opposition, je me suis servi du mot « *bangoler* ». J'ai dû retirer ce mot par l'ancien Speaker quand j'avais dit qu'on a *bangolé*. Allez voir le mot « *bangoler* ». *Bangoler* tout ce que le peuple a travaillé pendant des années. Des transactions ! Ils ont *bangolé* d'abord, l'héritage de la population, dévalué l'héritage de la population de plusieurs milliards de roupies sous le Covid-19 – selon leur réflexion pour aider les compagnies alors que c'était pour aider *Pack & Blister*, pour aider... Comment ?

Dr. Saumtally: Les amis d'enfance.

Mr Assirvaden: Les amis d'enfance, justement, R 2 milliards *bangolés*, Madame la présidente.

Mr Bhagwan: *Courtier Joomaye.*

Mr Assirvaden: C'est dans cette optique, Madame la présidente, que nous saluons les amendements amenés cet après-midi. Et ce n'est pas fini, je pense que les Mauriciens et les Mauriciennes en général n'ont pas oublié l'affaire de Ambre Hôtel.

Ambre Hôtel – le rachat de l'Ambre Hôtel a particulièrement, justement, retenu l'attention. Dans le cas de Ambre Hôtel, un accord conclu en 2022 pour un montant de R 2.1 milliards a finalement donné lieu à un paiement de €48 millions en 2024, soit environ R 2. 4 milliards. Et l'écart – l'honorable Premier ministre disait ça ce matin, l'écart – vous savez l'écart de combien ? R 300 millions ! R 300 millions qui a changé de compte. R 300 millions qui est sorti de sur un compte pour aller pour la commission.

Vous réalisez, Madame la présidente ? Un paiement en devises dans un contexte de tension sur les réserves soulève des questions fondamentales sur la transparence au temps du MSM, cela gouvernance au temps du MSM et l'opacité sous l'ancien régime MSM.

Encore une fois, je salue ma collègue, mais ce n'est pas fini ! C'est malheureux pour ce pays.

Peut-être, on a oublié, certains ont oublié dans ce pays, l'affaire bet365. Un *Attorney General*, l'ancien *Attorney General*, Madame la présidente – un scandale financier sous

l'ancien régime touchant l'ancien *Attorney General* qui s'est retrouvé au cœur de l'affaire bet365.

Un moment de ce pays, et vous êtes étonnés que nous sommes visés, nous sommes sous la menace de *grey listing* de la FATF ? On ne peut pas être étonnés quand on a de telles personnes pour diriger notre pays. Un *Attorney General* à un moment donné, fut accusé d'avoir facilité le déblocage des gains de plusieurs dizaines de millions de roupies auprès d'une plate-forme bet365, d'être intervenu.

L'ancien *Attorney General* Ravi Yerrigadoo, avocat des Jugnauth, était intervenu au-delà de ses fonctions, vous réalisez l'*Attorney General* ? D'avoir participé à la mise en place d'un montage financier international impliquant des comptes à Dubaï et en Suisse.

Madam Speaker: L'ancien *Attorney General*!

Mr Assirvaden: L'ancien *Attorney General*! Vous réalisez à quel niveau d'*Attorney General* on est tombé – on avait touché le fond à un moment donné.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Gunness: *Limem li'nn vinn konseye dan State Bank.*

Mr Assirvaden: Comment ? Ah, il est dans le conseil de la State Bank ? Il était, il était !

An hon. Member : Il était consultant.

Mr Assirvaden: Madame la présidente, le *duty-free* – mais il y en a beaucoup.

Vous vous rappelez comment la population a souffert pendant la période de covid-19. La période de Covid-19 restera l'un des moments les plus difficiles, les plus dur de notre histoire récente. Elle a également relevé des pratiques profondément préoccupantes. Ainsi, la population a fait face à la peur. Vous vous rappelez ? A la maladie, à l'incertitude où au moindre moment des contrats de plusieurs centaines de millions de roupie ont été attribués par la STC dans des conditions qui continuent d'interroger ; quincailleries, bijouteries, entreprises nouvellement créées ont obtenu des contrats. Et ces gens-là aujourd'hui osent nous pointer du doigt ! Ce MSM-là ose nous pointer du doigt quand des Rolex sont en circulation partout dans des valises ?

Justement, ce contraste entre la détresse de la population et certaines décisions prises dans ce temps, dans l'attribution des marchés publics est profondément troublant. Ces

situations mettent en lumière l'importance des amendements récents à la *Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act*. Grâce à la section 10A, la *FIU* peut désormais suspendre toute transaction suspecte et demander des informations supplémentaires, empêchant ainsi des flux financiers douteux de se concrétiser comme au temps du MSM et ce n'est pas fini. Mamy Ravatomanga, vous réalisez ? R 7,3 milliards ont été transférées sous le régime du MSM. R 7,3 milliards effectuées à différentes périodes qui soulèvent des interrogations majeures. Comment autant d'argent a pu atterrir sur des comptes ici à Maurice, sans qu'aucune institution ne voit rien. Aucun responsable ne voit, aucun Premier ministre qui est responsable suprême du pays ne voit rien ! Vous réalisez avec qui vous vous êtes assis ? Vous réalisez ? R 7,3 milliards...

(Interruptions)

Madame la présidente, vous voyez, je suis retourné un peu dans le passé. J'ai dû le faire simplement pour que la population réalise dans quelle priorité nous amenons ces amendements. La priorité est que nous faisons face à une menace et la menace est telle que nous devons mettre tout en pratique pour que les institutions fonctionnent, car sans des institutions fortes, crédibles, cohérentes, nous n'allons pas pouvoir faire avancer ce pays. Maurice, Madame la présidente, doit demeurer une juridiction respectée, fiable, exemplaire. A mon avis, c'est une question de souveraineté, c'est une question d'intégrité, c'est une question d'honneur nationale.

Madame la présidente, sincèrement, je suis heureux de soutenir pleinement ce projet de loi. Merci.

Madam Speaker: Je vous remercie. Nous allons lever la séance pour une demie heure.

At 4.49 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.42 p.m., with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Please be seated!

(5.43 p.m.)

Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): Madame la présidente, j'interviens sur ce projet de loi dans un contexte très particulier, probablement historique parce que ce projet de loi suit la démission de l'ancien *Deputy Prime Minister*, l'honorable Paul Bérenger, qui a évoqué justement les raisons dont laquelle ce projet de loi est emmené aujourd'hui au Parlement comme une des défaillances du

gouvernement qui l'a poussé donc vers la sortie. C'est dans ce contexte, un *Deputy Prime Minister* qui démissionne au coût de son parti et de ses camarades de parti et...

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *To content.*

Mr A. Duval: *Mo krwar zis twa ki sagrin la.*

An hon. Member: *Les li trankil !*

(Interruptions)

Mr A. Duval: Et donc...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Je n'ai pas bien suivi. Il a démissionné au coût ? Qu'est-ce que vous avez dit ?

Mr A. Duval: Au coût probable de son parti et son amitié qui le lie à ses camarades de parti – voilà un qui arrive – de longue date. Et donc, un exercice très particulier.

(Interruptions)

Pas du tout ! Pas du tout ! Je m'explique, Madame la présidente. Donc, le *Deputy Prime Minister* quitte sa fonction, ses privilèges et bien sûr il quitte tout ce qu'il a acquis dans cette grande et large victoire ; victoire sans équivoque.

An hon. Member: 60-0 !

Mr A. Duval: De 60-0, exactement. 60-0, 19 députés au début et huit ministres. Il quitte tout cela, son poste de *Deputy Prime Minister*, son portefeuille. Il quitte tout cela et il...

Madam Speaker: May I stop you for a minute? I can understand your introduction.

Mr A. Duval: Yes?

Madam Speaker: But I will not allow you to speak for so long on the issue of hon. Paul Bérenger.

Mr A. Duval: Of course. I am getting to it.

Madam Speaker: Yes, please!

Mr A. Duval: I am tying it...

Madam Speaker: Please...

Mr A. Duval: Yes, no!

Madam Speaker: ...get to the...

Mr A. Duval: Absolutely, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Talk on the Bill! Talk on the Bill!

Mr A. Duval: Absolutely, what I am saying, Madam Speaker, is that he has done that in the name of what? In the name of the fear of Mauritius being put on the FATF grey list. That is his reason amongst others. I put a question today to know the others, it has not come but that is one reason and that is the reason reported by international press, financial and business media outlets organisations, Reuters, Bloomberg, Business Day, Binance amongst many others. And what do they say? They say that he also mentioned the risk of Mauritius being placed on regional anti-money laundering grey list covering, southern and eastern, as one of his fer de lance for motivating his resignation, at the enormous cost that it turns out to be costing him. Yet, it would have been a historic day for him to put these very objections on Hansard today. And he is not here!

(Interruptions)

I hope that we will have the opportunity to hear because he owes it to the nation and to all those hundreds of thousands of people who voted for him, to know exactly...

Madam Speaker: You are still... I am sorry?

Mr A. Duval: ...his objections.

Madam Speaker: Will you sit down for a minute?

Mr A. Duval: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Will you sit down?

Mr A. Duval: Yes.

Madam Speaker: I am sorry, you are still on a political landslide. You are not talking about the Bill.

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, I have listened to hon. Patrick Assirvaden – you have too –, I have not once heard any section or any provision being referred to.

(Interruptions)

That being the case, Madam Speaker, I am moving on. My point has been made, and it is not a point against you, hon. Assirvaden. The point I am trying to make is...

Madam Speaker: It is against me!

Mr A. Duval: ...that we owe it to the nation...

Madam Speaker: It is against me!

Mr A. Duval: Especially, when we have cited these as the main thrust of a resignation, to come and debate here in the House and explain. He went as far as to say that this Bill, although a step in the direction, is not nearly enough to combat corruption and money laundering in this country. So, I hope that he will enlighten us.

That being said, Madam Speaker, this Bill – and that will be my main contention today – is nothing but a cosmetic arrangement to please the FATF. Why? Because the existing legal provisions under the many legislations – I will get to that –, the FCC Act, the FIAMLA, the FSC Act and under all the other legal provisions, which are being amended under this Miscellaneous Provisions Bill, already give adequate powers to law enforcement agencies and to reporting agencies. While they have those powers, not nearly enough is being done, either by this administration or previous administrations. I will get to it.

What is the current legislative framework that we have? Let us look at the FCC Act, which is a part of this Bill. You will see, Madam Speaker, section 36, money laundering, that

–

“Any person who –

“(a) engages in a transaction which involves property, [whether] in whole or in part, directly or indirectly, (...) represents the proceeds of a crime;”

Then –

“where he suspects or has reasonable grounds to suspect that the property is derived or realised, in whole or in part or directly or indirectly, from any crime, shall commit an

offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding 20 million rupees and to penal servitude not exceeding 10 years.”

That is section 36.

Then, there is section 52, Obligations of legal persons, to be read with section 2. What is a legal person? It means any entity, including a private entity other than a natural person, therefore, other than a physical person. So, section 52, Obligations of legal persons, Madam Speaker –

“(1) A legal person shall ensure that it has adequate procedures in place, which are reasonably necessary, to prevent it or any person acting on its behalf from committing an offence under this Part, failing which it shall commit an offence on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding 20 million rupees.”

That is for the company.

There is a subsection (2) to section 52 –

“(2) The Commission, may, after consultation with the relevant supervisory authority, issue appropriate guidelines to a legal person on the adequate procedures which the legal person shall put in place (...).”

I will come to it later. That is for the FCC to do.

Then, there is section 53, Liability of legal persons –

“(1) A legal person shall be guilty of an offence under this Part if any of its directors, senior managers or any other persons involved in its management, or any of its officers, agents or representatives having authority to act on its behalf, commits an offence under this Act for the benefit of the legal person.”

Finally, there is section 56, which is being amended under this Act, Referrals to Commission, that is, to the Financial Crimes Commission –

“(1) Notwithstanding any other enactment, where in the discharge of his functions –

(j) any other person,”

It applies to legal persons, then, that person –

“has reasonable grounds to suspect that an offence under this Act or the Declaration of Assets Act has been, or is being likely to be committed, he shall refer [that is, including that legal person] the matter to the Commission for investigation.”

There is an offence provided under section 141, where you fail to comply. So, that is the existing legal framework that has existed since the coming into force of the FCC Act.

Let us look at section 52 (2), where the Commission may come with guidelines. The Act imposes an obligation on any person to adhere to those guidelines. Yet, there is a discrepancy, which is very important to understand, in the application of this Act by the FCC. I will get to this, but first, I will say on record that I commend the FCC for the work it has been doing so far. I think that the FCC is doing a commendable work. It is regrettable that the Director is still operating in an interim capacity, under a 9-month contract, which is about to expire. I hope that the Prime Minister will see to it that this situation can no longer continue and that a full-fledged director ought to be appointed at the FCC.

That being said, let me come to the guidelines, which the very same FCC, under that Director, has published. I will say, Madam Speaker, that these guidelines show that the FCC did not properly understand and implement its mandate under section 52 (2) – which I have previously read –, which imposes an obligation. The distinction between “shall” and “may” or “should” is a great one.

Madam Speaker, the guidelines published by the FCC are guidelines which, again, guide legal persons, that is, all those private entities operating in various sectors in Mauritius, which deal with persons who may be dealing with illicit money, with proceeds of crimes.

About the guidelines, unfortunately, Madam Speaker, I was expecting the Minister to come and clarify this very essential aspect of enforcement, what the Anti-Money Laundering (Miscellaneous Provisions) aims. Let us not forget, it aims to improve the country’s efficiency in combatting criminality, including money laundering, and to put in place the necessary measures and safeguards to make it more difficult. Then, you would assume that the Minister would have realised the discrepancy between the guidelines, which use terms like “may”.

Let me read for you to illustrate. Principle 2, for example, the Conduct of risk assessment, which is essential in ensuring that we can detect and that we can stop any illicit transaction by the legal entity. It says –

“15. For the purposes of the assessment, the following, which are not limitative, may be considered:”

These are the words chosen under the guidelines: “may be considered”. It gives different, very essential points, I must say, in its guidelines. For example –

“(…) it is recommended that Legal Person conduct and document any risk assessment at such intervals which is appropriate for the sector in which the Legal Person operates and, when there is a change in law or circumstance in the business, to identify, analyse, assess, prioritize its internal and external Part III FCCA Offence risks.” – that is, Part III of the FCC Act.

It also says, another example, that depending on the size of the organisation, the higher the risk, the bigger the size, then it ought to be proportionate to the extent to which you place resources and, of course, that you adhere to these measures.

But the very problem of the guidelines, Madam Speaker, and this is what I am trying to illustrate, is that these guidelines are merely recommendations. It uses words like “may”: the company “may” adopt, the company “may” report, “the company may report” if it finds that there is a *prête-nom*, the company “may” report if he thinks that there is the use or financing of drug money. It “may” do that. That is the FCC saying that. And the law says “it shall”, “the company shall”. The Commission may after consultation the relevant supervisory authority issue appropriate guidelines to a legal person which the legal person “shall” put in place.

So, there is a huge problem, firstly, with what the FCC is doing as per its mandate, a clear mandate, and how it is discharging it, implementing it. That is the first issue that I would have hoped, would have been addressed under this Miscellaneous Provisions. I will illustrate the point. I said that the FCC is doing a tremendous work. I stand by it. We have all seen in the recent days and the recent weeks and the recent months, since this Government has been in power, even before, the constant comings and goings. Comings for that matter, not goings because Government had a good idea to dispose of proceeds of crimes which are being suspected pending trial. I support that as well. But the comings of vehicles in the hundred’s: boats, vehicles, motorcycles, luxury items. We are talking of luxury vehicles that

cost more than a house. The public has seen, very recently, cars being bought at dealerships by one person, totalling Rs50-60 million for one person. Young persons with no professional background – funds channelling from the USA, coming to Mauritius. You said it, the hon. Minister did say that it is becoming more and more sophisticated. True, it is, and this is why you need to adapt yourself to the changing framework of how money laundering is being now used to circumvent the existing framework.

But what do we see, Madam Speaker? We see people going to a car dealership, buying 100 cars, Madam Speaker, – 100 cars! – in one transaction. We see cars in the millions being bought by people of dubious character, some with criminal records.

Mr Mohamed: *Kisanla ti dan puvwar?*

(Interruptions)

Mr A. Duval: *We see... la pe koz ene zafer 2025 la, twa ki ti dan puvwar ! Pe koz 2025. 3 loto 50 milion 2025, publik pe guete !*

Mr Jhummun : *Kan ti aster?*

(Interruptions)

Mr A. Duval: *2025 zisteman mo pe dir twa, avan mont tax !*

People have seen it and, look, I am not criticising this Government. I am trying to get to the crooks of the matter, myself. I am trying to give you my take on what I think should be done to better the system. There clearly is an abuse of the system, Madam Speaker. Clearly! We are chasing the dog's tail and not tackling the problem head-on. What are we doing? We are looking at money laundering, the assets that it has been converted into. But what about the money that has been laundered? The Rs50 million, when it went into the car dealership. Isn't that laundered money? Should we not apply these various provisions that I have spoken about to go into the crooks of the matter? If we want to make an example for FATF, if we want to convince FATF that we are not simply swallowing what they are giving us, we are going over and above, looking at the Mauritian context, understanding the problem, realising that we have an issue and addressing that issue, then we are doomed, Madam Speaker, and the Deputy Prime Minister, *démissionnaire aurait eu raison, finalement*, if we are not doing it.

What I am saying, Madam Speaker, is very simple and I hope the hon. Minister takes it on board. It is about time that car dealers who deal in the millions, who have no reporting duty under the FIAMLA, no reporting duty. Although I have stated the reporting duty under the FCC, it has never been applied. I had a question today coming in Parliament, I can already give you the answer. Zero prosecutions have been laid under the various provisions that I have cited. Zero prosecutions to any of those persons in this industry, zero! That is the truth! Therefore, what I was saying, Madam Speaker, we need to rethink the system. Car dealers have to have a mandatory reporting requirement under FIAMLA like a real estate agent does. How does it make sense that the real estate agent who is leasing a home for Rs5,000, have to go for KYC, have to look at the source of wealth, have to look at all of these issues, but someone who is selling a car for Rs20 million, doesn't? How does that make sense? And, we all know that the car industry is one which is the most flourishing, regardless of the measures.

Madam Speaker, yes, the second issue is car leasing. I have listened attentively to the Minister's reply. Madam Speaker, for car leasing, it is clear that, in fact, it was highlighted in the ESAAMLG Mutual Evaluation Report of July 2018, you could see there was a problem. For the last five years of that evaluation, there had been only three reports made by leasing companies of suspicious transactions, for the whole of five years. Today, the hon. Minister has answered that for since 2020, the 9 domestic leasing companies, there has been only one investigation for serious deficiency. But we all know that all these cars are being financed by leasing companies. We all know as well that the reporting duty of leasing companies is and has to be reviewed. How can a company who is involved in a cleaning service, which owns three or four Toyota 4x4s, worth Rs3 million, have total assets of Rs10 million, have a sudden inflation of its revenues in the last five-six months, now, goes and subscribes to a leasing to buy a luxury vehicles worth Rs50 million which have no connection to its business and it does not fit any essential purpose for its business? How can that person not be made to report that transaction? How?

Madam Speaker, I am pressed by time, I will finish on car rental companies. I hope the hon. Minister will take that on board. The latest investigation the FCC has shown. Car rental companies, 300 cars being owned by people who are suspected to be involved in money laundering and drug transactions. Is it not time for a major review of car rental industry together with the FIU, the MRA, the FCC and all the other investigative and monitoring bodies so that we have an overall and a real audit and get an idea of the real situation?

Madam Speaker, I will finish, since I have, unfortunately, to conclude, by saying this – I said that the situation, unfortunately, shows the failure of this administration and previous administrations in dealing with the real issue. We have seen, Madam Speaker, that there have been persons who have taken advantage of the system, of the red-carpet treatment that has been offered in the past to invest massively in our economy. Who does not remember Álvaro Sobrinho? Who does not remember Mamy Ravatomanga?

(Interruptions)

And, we have to agree, Madam Speaker, that there is no difference between the two. Both are billionaires, both are politically exposed persons, both have been accused of embezzlement of public funds in their respective countries. Both have been given red carpet treatment.

Mr Mohamed: Both MSM!

Mr A. Duval: Both! It doesn't matter who it is...

(Interruptions)

You have to realise...

Mr Jhummun: It matters...

(Interruptions)

Mr A. Duval: Look! Look! I was not going into that. I was not going to go into that but hon. Assirvaden said something earlier. He maybe did not realise that this has been going on for at least three administrations.

Now, I will tell you something. Both invested in multi-million if not billion rupees in the property sector, the financial services sector, the banking sector. Both have been subjected to investigation by international bodies and both have tarnished our financial services sector in Mauritius and our reputation. And, both were not fit and proper and that ought to have been known whether it is now for Mr Ravatomanga or previously for Mr Sobrinho.

But the question is – what is the Government willing to do about it?

I asked a question to the hon. Prime Minister last time; I understand his reply. He cannot divulge the names of banks and the management companies and the property

developers because there is an ongoing investigation. I respect that but yet the question begs to be asked –

What is the government really willing to do about it? Is it willing to go into the depth of it? Is it willing to go and take exemplary measures against all those companies, top 100 companies?

The Prime Minister: You will see, this year itself.

Mr A. Duval: I hope and I will hold you to it because I am talking with sincerity here. Top 100 companies that have been involved, that have facilitated and that ought to be taken to task under the existing framework.

To conclude, Madam Speaker, we do not need 60 pages of laws. I did not have the time to come to the others. We do not need 60 pages of amendments that do absolutely nothing but cosmetic changes to please the FATF. What we need is what I have said, I have touched on the issues; I have scratched the surface – is to be prepared to go where it matters.

What I am going to say, Madam Speaker, just to finish on that, I have seen the Courts (Amendment) Act. The FCC is doing a tremendous job; it is looking for about 30% increase in its budget. I hope that the courts be given 30% of their budget as well because the impositions or the constraints that are being done under the courts, under this Miscellaneous Provision Act, to work *a un pas fou et impossible* given the constraints of materials and staff. And, the fact that they have only two courts that have to be shared by the FCD.

Then, I hope, at the minimum, that we give 30% increase to the court in the upcoming budget if we want to walk the talk and we want to speed up financial crimes in Mauritius to the court and I will see that the government does so, and I will do that again in my budget speech and I hope that you will allow me again more time.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon. Damry. Let us try and keep our time. I am trying to keep the time.

(6.09 p.m.)

The Junior Minister of Finance (Mr D. Damry): Madam Speaker, allow me to set the record straight after the fiction of a narrative exposed by hon. A. Duval. Let me lay down the historical context for this Bill.

In 2017, ESAAMLG conducted the mutual evaluation exercise for Mauritius and adopted the report in July 2018. Starting from October 2018, Mauritius was placed under an observation period of one year with the obligation to implement 58 recommended actions. In November 2019, Mauritius submitted the post observation report and enacted amendments to the AML-CFT-CPF Bill.

Notwithstanding the above, in 2020 – cry my beloved country. FATF determined that the strategic deficiencies outweighed the reforms and placed Mauritius in the grey list. Subsequently, Mauritius was placed on the EU and UK blacklist. However, in 2021, FATF determined that Mauritius substantially implemented its action plan including amendments to its AML-CFT-CPF legislation and removed Mauritius from its grey list. Likewise, Mauritius exited the EU and UK blacklist in 2021 and 2022, respectively.

Then, the shit hit the fan. All hell broke loose. Whereas between 2022 and 2024, the authorities were expected to initiate or complete 25 measurable enforcement and effectiveness actions, they failed to implement any single action. As a responsible government, we initiated or completed all the 25 actions between November 2024 and now. 7 actions in 2025, 7 actions to date in 2026, 11 forthcoming actions in 2026 itself.

Hon. A. Duval mentioned that this is a stand-alone Bill. Madam Speaker, this is not a stand-alone Bill. The Bill is part of 25 actions. These actions are so important to our nation, local and international industry stakeholders and FATF observers, that with your permission, Madam Speaker, I would like to list them, underscoring our strongest political commitment. It is a bit technical but in the interest of international FATF observers, I would like to give the headline 25 actions. It will be quick.

The seven actions in 2025 –

1. Publication of the 2nd National Risk Assessment Report;
2. Completion of the national strategy on AML-CFT and national action plan;
3. Development of a comprehensive roadmap for the 2027 Mutual Evaluation;
4. Setting up of the Interministerial Committee on AML-CFT- CPF for the preparation of the 2027 Mutual Evaluation;
5. The registrar of cooperatives to start AML-CFT supervision of credit unions;
6. Designation of 3 persons based on the United Nations (Financial Prohibitions Arms Embargo and Travel Ban) Sanctions 2019;

7. Reactivation of the Technical Assistance Coordination Committee for support from development partners.

The seven actions in 2026 in process –

1. Promulgation of regulations and administrative penalties to sanction noncompliance with AML-CFT;
2. Completion of the midterm mock evaluation;
3. Constitution of a mutual evaluation team;
4. Establishment of a joint public committee on AML-CFT-CPF;

I can go on but it is going to be long.

The reason I am saying that is because this is what was supposed to be done by the precedent government but they did not do it. We picked up the pieces and we have implemented it.

Madam Speaker, it is with a lot of surprise that as a non-practicing barrister, I can relate to the crux of this Bill and I will submit that hon. A. Duval has completely missed the crux of this Bill. Hon. A. Duval referred to a Mock Evaluation Report in 2018 but he failed to mention the Mock Evaluation Report of 2025, and in that report, 11 immediate outcomes to remedy deficiencies in the existing legislations were found. This is precisely why this Bill is being brought to remedy the deficiencies that the Mock Evaluation Report of 2025 has found, to remedy the deficiencies in terms of effectiveness, in all the legal frameworks that have been listed by hon. A. Duval.

Madam Speaker, we were all shocked by the reply of the hon. Prime Minister to the PQ on Silver Bank this morning. The scale of institutional conspiracy to defraud our country is incredulous. I was even more shocked by the list of endless scandals raised by hon. Assirvaden in this same House, earlier today.

This begs the question –

What could have been the motive for zero action between 2022 and 2024? Could it be to cover up Silver Bank like Money Heist at the expense of livelihoods depending on our financial industry? What could be the motive for covering up or harbouring criminal networks that launder illicit funds through assets, as raised by hon. A. Duval. He referred to property and to motor vehicles.

Had the previous government completed the 25 actions, had the previous government completed the national risk assessment that they were supposed to complete in 2022, they could have identified the different assets that are used to launder illicit funds. But they did not do so! In fact, the mock evaluation report for both 2018 and 2025 identified what, we call, domestic non-financial businesses as a weakness. This forms part of it.

Criminal networks are very dynamic. They try to outwit/outsmart a system. They try to find loopholes in the laws. This is exactly what they were doing with the precedent legislations. This is the deficiencies in the laws that this Bill is remedying. This Bill will close the loopholes that will allow these criminals to launder their funds.

Madam Speaker, between November 2024 and as at date, over 300 vehicles valued in excess of Rs218 million have been seized. Car leasing companies are under investigation. The FCC is investigating 400 hundred cases of value Rs30 billion and contrast that with 800 cases of value Rs2 billion between November 2019 and November 2024.

On the topic of cars, unfortunately, in the interest of time, I will not be able to cite these cases, but I would like to refer the House to two cases in Singapore. One is the 2.8 billion luxury vehicles scandal and the second one is the SRS Auto Investigation in 2025.

Even a jurisdiction like Singapore only started combatting money laundering with regard to cars as from the late 2020s. The 2.8 billion luxury vehicle scandal – this case, in my humble opinion, is a jurisprudence for effectiveness because intelligence, investigations, prosecution and asset recovery were completed in two years, Madam Speaker. Compare that with the time taken in our jurisdiction.

Let me reassure the House that our intelligence and enforcement agencies have been working tirelessly in tracking high value assets that have been paid for by illicit cash. Madam Speaker, my contention is that, this Bill provides for effectiveness enabled by a risk-based supervisory framework around the four key elements of the AML/CFT/CPF value chain –

- Intelligence;
- Investigation;
- Prosecution, and
- Asset recovery.

Other speakers have sufficiently canvassed the technical details. So, in the interest of time, I cannot list each amendment, but I will give you an example. For instance, the change, the proposed amendment to the beneficial ownership goes deep because it is not only about know your customer. It is also about know your business, which is a small change, but it has giant implications. What hon. A. Duval was referring to, car leasing companies being used for money laundering, etc., you will be able to do that when you start tackling ‘know your business.’

When you have cases like Prateek Gupta & co coming to Mauritius through the veil of multiple legal entities through know your business, you will be able to track whether these businesses actually do what they actually mean to do.

Now, with the advance in technology, a business can be safe. Let us say, the business is in online entertainment, but when you go deep behind the business, it could be used for arms trafficking or drug dealing.

So, this is one example of how this Bill brings effectiveness in combatting money laundering, terrorism financing and proliferation financing. I have lot to say, but I do not have much time. So, I would like to respond to what hon. A. Duval said: ‘What is the Government willing to do?’ Under the previous government, criminal networks outwitted and outsmarted authorities in this financial jungle that we live in.

Allow me to send a stern warning to those criminals. We will hunt them down because this is not their jungle, this is our jungle! And to drill down the point, let me take you to a real jungle and tell you the story of the lion and the deer.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Damry: How many of you know that the maximum speed of a deer over a long distance 60 mph, but the maximum speed of a lion over a long distance is only 40 mph. Yet, the lion hunts deer all the time. What is the reason?

An hon. Member: You are the deer!

Mr Damry: A lion prepares.

Madam Speaker: *Chut! Chut!*

Mr Damry: A lion prepares; a lion is patient; a lion strategizes; a lion develops tactics. When the time is right, the lion accelerates to a maximum speed of 80 mph and hunts the deer.

An hon. Member: *Be deer la lamem!*

Mr Damry: Madam Speaker, enough of stag parties! We are the lions of this jungle and we will nail down the criminals. The hon. Prime Minister has a track record. My word is my bond. I commend this Bill to the House.

Long live Mauritius! Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister for respecting the time.

Yes, hon. Parapen!

(6.24 p.m.)

The Junior Minister of Minister of Social Integration, Social Security, and National Solidarity (Mr K. Parapen): Madam Speaker, history can be ironic at times. During colonial times, empires acted as bandits and plundered many economies. The aim was quite simple: to exploit the world's resources to fund the expansion of empires. In this scheme of things, the colony was merely an extractor of wealth at the service of the almighty colonial master.

So, it is definitely not a coincidence that major revolts in the colonies be it the Boston Tea Party of December 16, 1773, or even Mahatma Gandhi's Salt March of 1930, all had to do with taxation. After all, taxation is the lifeblood of organised societies. Who gets taxed and by how much one gets taxed is often a reflection of how societies organise and in whose interest it is working.

Under colonial rule, the colonies faced many taxes as the aim was to repatriate as much as possible to the heart of the empire. Who would have thought, then, that many of the same colonies who were victims of colonialism would shake the very foundation of these former empires many years later by running light fiscal regimes. History can indeed be ironic at times. As the biggest and most powerful economies of the world witnessed the significant movement of financial flows from their own network toward the network of countries which optimise tax avoidance, the so-called race to the bottom – they had to react and react, they did.

Mauritius is not a member of the FATF, has never been and probably never will be but, yet, here it is – Mauritius, that is, modifying an array of enactments ahead of the 2027 evaluation by FATF.

The FATF was set up in 1989 by G7 countries and, to date, it has 40 members, only 40. Primarily, the largest economies of the world. The FATF is one of the ways that the developed world has devised to influence policy-making in other jurisdictions especially those willing to engage in the race to the bottom. Its Grey List is a powerful tool that can convince even the most reluctant of regimes into action. The previous MSM regime could testify. The inclusion of the concept of ecocide in Environment Act is concrete proof that the FATF, and by extension, the developed world, is exercising major influence on the rest of the world.

As a political activist with *Rezistans ek Alternativ*, I have been involved over the last 15 years in numerous grassroots struggles involving environmental causes, most notably, an ongoing legal battle against New Mauritius Hotels which started in 2018 where my two-party comrades, David Sauvage and Stephan Gua, along with them, we have been fighting in the courts for the preservation of wetlands of critical importance at Les Salines, Rivière Noire. Not to forget my involvement in the “Say No to Coal”, fighting the construction of CT Power on the shores of Montagne Jacquot near Pointe aux Sables, years before I would eventually become a representative of Constituency No.1.

I have also been actively involved in the “*Aret Kokin Nu Laplaz*” movement against the beach grabbing at Pomponette which culminated with the re-proclamation of a Pomponette beach as a public beach following the *Alliance du changement* historic win in November 2024.

Throughout these years of activism, I have been a prime witness of lacklustre effort of Mauritian policymakers in addressing the environmental challenges of our time. There is so much to be done to protect our environment from looters and destroyers.

As a matter of fact, the inclusion of nature’s rights in our Constitution is one of the main demands of *Rezistans ek Alternativ* prior to joining the *Alliance du changement* as we recognise the urgency to protect our fragilised natural environment in the epoque of Anthropocene.

It will, therefore, not come as a surprise to you, Madam Speaker, that my party, *Rezistans ek Alternativ*, is enthused by the amendment to the Environment Act being proposed in this Bill. The inclusion of ecocide as a crime in our laws will go a long way toward safeguarding our environment, keeping it safe from predators.

However, if the hon. Leader of the Opposition was referring to my political party when he alluded that the amendment to the Environment Act was made to please, as he said, a member of the *Alliance du changement*, then I think that he is misinformed. As much as *Rezistans ek Alternativ* welcomes this timely addition of ecocide in the Environment Act, this is being done in the context of improving the country's efficiency in combating criminality. This is being done with the Financial Action Task Force breathing down our neck.

In cruder terms, the criminalisation of such destructive human behaviour in our Environmental Law is the doing of international capitalism. This marks an alignment with a strategy shift of the FATF which started in 2012, that is treating environmental destruction not just as a regulatory breach but as a predicate offence for money laundering.

It is estimated that environmental crimes generate between US\$110 billion and US\$281 billion annually making it the world's fourth-largest criminal activity. Such a strategy shift did not, however, fall from the sky; it represents the courageous, relentless and principled stance taken by progressive movements across the globe over the years with NGOs like Global Witness and Tax Justice Network being leading, prominent examples. These organisations have since long denounced the exploitation of resources of the Global South by the Global North, be it corporates or criminal syndicates that have pushed for stricter environmental laws in the Global South to neutralise them.

Allow me, today, to pay tribute to all the progressive climate and environmental activists around the world for their unflinching determination to preserve mankind's greatest asset: Planet Earth.

The growing influence of international capitalism on the affairs of Mauritius is evident, and it is worth pondering at whose expense is this happening. Is it happening at the expense of the country's historical, local oligarchy. One thing is clear though, with the introduction of the ecocide in the Environment Act, the FAFT has managed a feat which the historical local bourgeoisie will never have sanctioned. Can this be termed as progress?

In reality, two international institutions, emanating from international capitalism namely, the Financial Action Task Force and Moody's, the rating agency, have seemingly coerced Mauritius into addressing long-standing issues which local institutions have repetitively failed to address, that is, improve legislations to combat criminality linked to money laundering and deep structural economic reforms, respectively, failing which the

country will likely be sanctioned either by a grey-listing in the case of the FAFT or a downgrading to Junk Status in the case of Moody's.

Why is it, then, that we respond to international institutions in such a strikingly different way? Could it be that the offshore sector is progressively becoming the main pillar of our economy, and, as such, we are obliged to comply to such requirements that will keep the offshore sector thriving because as much as we are appreciative of the ecological legislative progress, Madam Speaker, we remain wary of the ramification of an ultra-dominant offshore sector.

With your permission, Madam Speaker, allow me to table this article from the newspaper 'The Atlantic', published on 28 July 2016 and the title of which reads 'Why tax heavens are political and economic disasters', written by Mrs Brooke Harrington, a Dartmouth College Economic Sociology Professor and a PHD holder from Harvard University. It provides ample evidence of numerous countries which sought prosperity through lax business and tax regulations which eventually made them and their respective population worse off. This article has had a profound influence on my understanding of offshore centres and I sincerely hope that many will consult the article tabled to catch a glimpse of the often-untold reality of offshore centres. The offer goes as far as evoking a finance curse, a paradox of plenty similar to the resource curse suffered by many African countries, whereby the plentiful availability of a resource does not, unfortunately, improve the living conditions of the masses as one would come to expect.

It is often said in business quarters or even on mainstream platforms that the offshore sector is the biggest tax contributor in Mauritius. That is not true. The main contributor to taxes in Mauritius is the population which has, since the advent of the light fiscal regime, associated with the offshore sector, shouldered a disproportionately large tax burden, mainly through value added taxes and other indirect taxes. In his first budget, the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance unveiled a new fiscal strategy, whereby the population would not shoulder a disproportionate fiscal burden. Instead, additional direct taxes were introduced, mainly through fair share contributions, so as to rebalance the fiscal effort between direct and indirect taxes. Should the offshore sector evolve into a dominant pillar of the economy, it is only fair that Government taxes further the wealth that the industry generates, be it through the profitability it generates for locally based companies or through the income of its employees; failing which, it is very likely that Mauritius will endure the

same feat as numerous tropical Caribbean countries, that is, state capture by the wealthiest and let us face it, they are not the most ethical beings on the planet.

Back in 2017, my electoral campaign at the by-elections of Quatre Bornes would focus exclusively on the risk of gentrification for the Mauritian society. Nearly 10 years later, there can be no debate that our society is in a full-blown gentrification process; soaring property prices amidst a mushrooming of gated communities, exodus of the youth and often the most educated of them and an ever-increasing cost of living for the average Mauritian. Over this time, the offshore sector has thrived, this is a reality we cannot depart from. The critical question we need to ask is whether the offshore sector has been a boon or a curse for our society. By our society, I mean the average Mauritian who earns less than Rs25,000 monthly and who can barely make ends meet. Has he benefitted from the billions of dollars which have transited through our economy over the years? If the answer is no, then we need to go back to the drawing board, Madam Speaker. What can we do as policy makers to ensure that the country as a whole benefit from the offshore sector? After all, economic growth is more tangible when it is served on a plate rather than through pompous speeches.

Madam Speaker, I also want to discuss an amendment being brought to the Declaration of Assets Act in section 10(3) where a new subsection is being added and I quote –

“(3) Notwithstanding subsection (1), where a person fails to submit a declaration within the specified period and thereafter, makes a voluntary declaration, he shall not be liable to any penalty, provided that he is not the subject matter of an investigation under this Act.”

I believe such an amendment is contrary to the spirit in which the Bill is being presented. To put it blandly, if there is no cost for being late, then there is no incentive to be on time. Allow me to share my personal experience. Back in June 2025, I sold a property to adjust to my new financial reality of being an MP. However, it was not until November 2025 that I notified the FCC of the sale of a property. I had mistakenly assumed that only acquisition of assets should be disclosed to the FCC. My mistake, I fully accept it. Ignorance of the law is not an excuse, so I had to fork out Rs25,000 to settle the fine impossible as per the Declaration of Assets Act.

Madam Speaker: Maybe everybody is hearing this. So, nobody else will do that.

Mr Parapen: I have now learned my lesson, an expensive lesson be it and you can be sure that if there is a next time, I will comply with the law within the 30 days provided.

However, if this amendment in this Bill goes through, I would not have been liable to any fine as long as I voluntarily declare the disposal of the asset to the FCC with no time bar. With the new provision, I could potentially acquire an asset in year 1 of the mandate, dispose of it in year 4 of the mandate, pocket some non-taxable capital gains in the meantime and not notify the FCC at all without incurring any fine whatsoever. This is clearly not right and I have raised the issue with both the Minister of Financial Services and the Attorney General and I am comforted that they will both look into the matter and consider bringing appropriate amendments at committee stage.

So, to conclude, Madam Speaker, the Bill in front of the House today once voted, will definitely bolster the arsenal of laws aimed at combatting criminality and the Minister of Financial Services needs to be given the credit she deserves for presenting such a comprehensive piece of legislation. But in reality, the main issue of our offshore sector is not so much in the laws that govern it but rather in the effectiveness of the implementation of these laws.

Madam Speaker, having witnessed *le branle-bas général* ahead of the evaluation by the FATF in early 2027, the cynical part in me cannot but ask the following question; what if our public institutions were under perpetual evaluation? Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you very much. Hon. Seeburn!

(6.44 p.m.)

Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to express my strong support for the proposed legislation on Anti-Money Laundering, Combating the Financing of Terrorism and Countering Proliferation Financing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill introduced by the hon. Minister of Finances and Economic Planning. The Bill is a comprehensive framework designed to strengthen Mauritius' financial integrity, align our laws with international standards and ensure that our economy remains transparent, resilient and well regulated.

Madam Speaker, Mauritius has over decades carefully built its reputation as a credible, stable and well-regulated international financial centre. That reputation did not come by chance. It is the result of deliberate policy choices, institutional strengthening and continuous engagement with the global financial system. However, in today's world, reputation is not static. It must be constantly protected, reinforced and renewed. This is precisely what this Bill seeks to achieve. It introduces amendments to various laws to cover the full spectrum of

financial institutions, corporates, non-profit organisations and public sector to improve the efficiency of Mauritius in combating criminality, money laundering, terrorism financing and proliferation financing.

Madam Speaker, we operate in a global financial environment where transparency, accountability and compliance are fundamental requirements. As a responsible jurisdiction, Mauritius must align itself with the standards set by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). For the first time, I heard, Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, at the very outset of his speech, stating that this Bill is necessary. He further stated that Mauritius was placed on the grey list in February 2020 when the previous government was in power, but did not comment further on the real consequences of this downgrading.

This is what happened, Madam Speaker. In fact, the previous government and the Minister of Financial Services had failed to take the necessary steps on time, which led Mauritius to be placed on the grey list in February 2020 by the Financial Action Task Force. Mauritius was then placed under increased monitoring. This enormously affected the investors' confidence. It further affected the reputation of Mauritius as a credible financial centre, which further led to strictest scrutiny from international partners. Furthermore, actions taken by the European Union demonstrated that reputational risks had translated directly into economic risks, affecting investment flows, increasing the cost of doing business and placing pressure on the financial institutions.

Madam Speaker, the Bill responds to the past shortcomings. It strengthens supervisory powers. It improves information sharing and ensures that our institutions are better equipped to detect, investigate and act against illicit financial activities. In summary, Madam Speaker, clause 2 to clause 8 of the Bill lay down the foundation of a robust and uncompromising framework to combat money laundering, terrorism financing and proliferation financing. They decisively strengthen the powers of the Bank of Mauritius and impose strict obligations on our banks, companies, cooperatives to uphold transparency, conduct proper due diligence and report suspicious transactions without delay.

At the same time, the Bill reinforces the authority of our courts to act swiftly, including freezing illicit assets, enhance accountability through stricter assets declaration requirement for public officials and extend vigilance to environmental activities, highlighting the offence of ecocide – as emphasised by hon. Parapen earlier to environmental activities – to ensure

that criminal elements cannot exploit our natural resources for illicit gains. These provisions send a clear and unequivocal message: that Mauritius will not tolerate abuse of its financial and institutional system.

Clause 9 of the Bill brings clarity, coherence and effectiveness to an institution that is already central to our financial crime framework. In a world where illicit financial flows are increasingly sophisticated and transnational, it would be irresponsible for this House to leave gaps, overlaps or uncertainty in the mandate of the Financial Crimes Commission. Clause 9 ensures that our enforcement architecture is properly coordinated and capable of meeting both domestic expectations and international obligations.

Clause 10 of the Bill introduces important amendments to the Financial Intelligence Unit and Anti-Money Laundering Act, reinforcing the preventive and reporting framework that underpins our fight against financial crimes. By enhancing obligations, clarifying compliance mechanisms and strengthening the role of reporting entities and supervisory bodies, this provision ensures that suspicious financial activities are more effectively identified, reported and acted upon. This is a necessary step to ensure that our legislative framework remains robust, responsive and fully aligned with evolving international standards.

Madam Speaker, in summary, clause 11 to clause 24 of the Bill seem to be closing gaps by strengthening enforcement and extending oversight across every key sector of our economy. In general, it empowers our enforcement and intelligence agencies to detect, investigate and act decisively against financial crimes while tightening reporting standards and governance requirements for financial institutions, foundations and higher risk sectors such as gambling real estate sectors. These provisions further enhance transparency in taxation payment systems for companies, for trusts and associations, and fully ensure full disclosure of beneficial ownership and enable the effective implementation of international sanctions.

Taken together, these measures are not merely technical amendments. Madam Speaker, they are a stronger statement of intent that Mauritius will remain a transparent, credible and fully compliant international financial centre, where integrity is protected and where illicit activity has no place. What becomes clear is that this Government is taking concrete and decisive action where it truly matters.

The strengthening of beneficial ownership transparency will put an end to the abuse of opaque corporate structures by those who seek to hide behind anonymity. The enhanced reporting obligations will ensure that suspicious activities are flagged earlier and dealt with more effectively. At the same time, the Bill gives greater teeth to our regulatory and enforcement authorities, enabling them to act firmly against those who attempt to undermine our financial system.

Madam Speaker, this Bill is fundamentally about safeguarding the future of Mauritius as a jurisdiction, integrated into the global financial system. By strengthening our legal framework, we are sending a clear signal that Mauritius is a clean, transparent and has resilient financial centres. This will enhance investors' confidence, secure our access to international banking system and support sustainable economic growth. This is not a merely legislative exercise, but also, a strategic investment in the long-term stability and prosperity of our country.

We must continuously align with the standards of the Financial Action Task Force to preserve our credibility and competitiveness. Failure to do so will expose our country to reputational damage, reducing investors' confidence and potential economic consequences, as seen in the past with actions being taken by bodies such as the European Union and the Financial Action Task Force. The classical example is what happened with the operation of Silver Bank in Mauritius, as stated by the Prime Minister earlier. It is now clear that stricter regulation is necessary to prevent future crisis.

This Bill is about ensuring that honest businesses are protected while those who are engaging in illicit activities find no place in Mauritius. These provisions send a strong message that this Government will not tolerate financial crimes as we are fully committed to protecting the integrity, credibility and future of our economy. By strengthening our laws, we are not only complying with the international standards, but also, protecting our society, our institutions and our future.

It is also important to situate this Bill, Madam Speaker, within the broader international context. When we examine leading jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia, we find the continuous strengthening of legal and regulatory framework to combat money laundering, terrorism financing and proliferation risks. In the United Kingdom, for instance, there has been a strong emphasis on beneficial ownership,

transparency and the tightening of corporate accountability through reforms to company registers and enforcement mechanism. In the United States, authorities have significantly enhanced oversight through measures such as stricter reporting requirements and expanded powers to tract illicit financial flows, particularly under anti-money laundering reforms. Similarly, Madam Speaker, Australia has moved towards reinforcing its regulatory regime, including closer supervision of reporting entities and expanding the scope of regulatory net and enhancing supervision across various sectors.

Madam Speaker, the lesson is simple. Even the most advanced economies in the world are constantly evolving to address new and emerging risks. The French President, Emmanuel Macron, had constantly advocated for deeper European Union financial integration and stronger oversight with the legislation. Christine Lagarde, the President of the European Central Bank, one of the most influential leaders, strongly supports regulations and further encourages balancing stability with innovation. Mauritius must do the same and this Bill ensures that we do not lag behind but rather, remain aligned with global best practices.

This legislation is also about sending a strong and unambiguous signal to the international community. It says that Mauritius is committed to transparency, accountability and is committed to maintaining the highest standard of financial integrity. This Government has chosen to position Mauritius as a forward looking responsible and resilient jurisdiction. This legislation strengthens our legal architecture. It reinforces our credibility on the international stage and further secures the foundations for a sustainable economic growth.

Before I conclude, Madam Speaker, allow me to express my sincere thanks to the hon. Minister and the State Law Office for coming forward with this progressive piece of legislation, and, also, to thank all those who have spoken before me in support of this proposed legislation. This Bill is not just about compliance and regulation; it is about the future of Mauritius. It is to ensure that our country continues to thrive in a highly competitive global environment. In a world of uncertainty, one thing must remain certain that Mauritius stands for integrity, credibility and excellence. We choose integrity. We choose credibility. We choose progress.

With these words, Madam Speaker, I thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you so much.

Hon. Narsinghen!

(6.57 p.m.)

The Junior Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr H. Narsinghen): Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me the floor.

Looking at the body language of the iron lady, I understood that I cannot be too long. I have fully understood. Therefore, ...

Madam Speaker: You see an iron lady somewhere?

Ms Anquetil: Where is she?

Mr Narsinghen: The Whip!

So, I don't want to be whipped!

So, Madam Speaker, normally as an ex-academic, I usually give a plan, so I will start with a plan. So, I will give a short rebuttal to the hon. Leader of the Opposition and to my good friend the hon. A. Duval, and then, subsequently, I will come to the rationale behind the amendments, and also try to explain the distinction between financial stability as opposed to financial integrity because my intention, here, Madam Speaker, I know we have got seven-eight lawyers in the House, a number of economists, a number of accountants. So, my intervention is not to explain to these learned friends but to the population. Then I would like to comment on international organisations and in my rebuttal, I will not rebut one of my colleagues from Government but I would beg to differ on certain comments made on FATF and the ESAAMLG and also comments made that Mauritius should not exploit African countries. On the contrary, we have developed a strategy, the hon. Prime Minister, the ex-Deputy Prime Minister, my colleague Mr Ramful and myself, we have been going to Africa, to explain to all the stakeholders, many countries that they have to use Mauritius as a platform to invest in Africa and be equitable to our African brothers and sisters.

So, it is important to understand, in spite of the fact that we can be critical towards international organisations, FATF, and even the World Bank and IMF, we have to understand that we are a small jurisdiction, so we have to be careful. Also, I would like to bring some comparative perspectives and then go on some technical points if I have time.

Now, normally I don't crack jokes but since I know all of you are tired, I listened carefully to our good friend hon A. Duval, I don't know if he still remembers *zoli mamzel*. Do you remember the story of *zoli mamzel*? He was referring to cosmetic amendments.

If you look at the Bill, Madam Speaker, it contains 69 pages – not 6! It is harping on more than 20 different legislations. Just like hon. Patrick Assirvaden, normally, I don't like to easily congratulate people but I have to confess that the team, not only the Minister, her team and herself has done a very good job.

Now, coming to the second point raised by hon. A. Duval – he mentioned about guidelines. I think we have to make a clear distinction between what is hard law, Madam Speaker, as opposed to guidelines. Guidelines, normally, should be couched in a language where you are using best endeavour standards and there is no need to use words like 'shall', you may use 'may' because these are guidelines and guidelines are meant to be guidelines.

Now, coming to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I listened to him, I was expecting more solid and constructive contribution. Unfortunately, I could not really hear some serious criticisms. Normally, we give, Madam Speaker, seven days for people to reflect unless there is a Certificate of Urgency and it is sad to note that the Leader of the Opposition failed to understand the logic of including ecocide in the Bill. Ecocide is related to money laundering and even in sophisticated economies, waste management companies use their companies as a conduit for money laundering. Secondly, I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition has failed to understand that a delicate balance has to be struck between promoting a sound global business sector whereby we have to attract capital and investment versus combating money laundering. It is easy to talk but not easy to strike that balance.

So, certainly, the Bill is not perfect but I think the right balance has been struck. I can understand, I, myself, could have levelled certain criticisms but we have to understand that a sort of delicate balance has to be struck. I think that the hon. Minister is taking a sort of incremental approach.

Now, let me come to a very important point which has to be driven. It is of paramount importance, Madam Speaker, to preserve the integrity of the financial services. It is the financial integrity, not only at the international level, but also at the national level. At the same time, Mauritius has to be fully compliant with international standards set by international organisations, be it the World Bank, the IMF, and, above all, the Financial Action Task Force, and the Eastern and Southern African Anti-Money Laundering Group – this is a regional organisation.

The financial system, Madam Speaker, in Mauritius, cannot act in isolation, it has to pay heed to other financial systems, be it at regional level and also at the international level.

If mismanaged, you will see, it will contaminate the whole global financial system and it will have far reaching effects and rippling effects. To have a comprehensive understanding, it will be also apposite to understand a few concepts. Like also financial stability and financial stability is of utmost importance for Mauritius.

Now, coming to the international organisation, which one of my colleagues from Government criticised, it is important to understand that, yes, we may level certain criticisms against these organisations but as a small jurisdiction, – don't forget, we are a small dot in the Indian Ocean – we cannot afford to disregard inter-governmental organisations be it the FATF or IMF or the World Bank or the Eastern and Southern African Anti-Money Laundering Group. So, we have to accept the international standards which have been imposed by the FATF and, Madam Speaker, we certainly cannot ignore these standards.

Madam Speaker, Mauritius is not US, Mauritius is not China, Mauritius is not Russia, that is, it is not an autarchy entirely self-sufficient and economically self-contained. The FATF, as you know, is a global watchdog for money-laundering and financing of terrorism and now mass weapon financing. In such international standards with more than 40 recommendations, the main objective as we know, is to combat illicit financial floats.

Founded in 1989 and based in Paris, it provides operational measures to protect the integrity of the financial system. It sets strict standards and countries must use them as benchmark. It carries also, very important to note, a peer review mechanism which is held periodically and countries may be in the compliant list or the grey list or the black list. When a country is in the grey list, it is a high-risk jurisdiction and will be monitored as a country which is willing to collaborate. It may also be in the black list, as my colleagues explained before, how Mauritius with the incompetence of the previous regime, fell in the grey list and now we have to be careful.

I also understand that there are certain birds of bad omen who are voracious to go back in the grey list but I am sure that with this piece of consolidated legislation, this will not happen. Let us pray.

So, regarding the ESSAMLG, it is a sort of subset of the FATF. It has 21 members. This is also a very important organisation comprising countries like Madagascar, Seychelles, Namibia, South Africa and so many other countries. So, it is important to understand that Mauritius, even if you can be critical about this organisation, we have to comply with the standards which are being set by both organisations.

At the same time, Madam Speaker, I fully concur with some of my colleagues and I have to also say that hon. A. Duval has made a few valid points also. Passing the law is one thing but I think what is very important is about implementation. The population is still expecting that those who have been guilty of certain shortcomings in the past, certain crimes in the past – who managed the case of Sobrinho, who managed the case of Bastos? These management companies are still scot-free and we will have to take concrete actions against these companies. This is very important.

At the same time, I noticed that there has been consultation before stabilising the text but at the same time, my recommendation for next time, not only for this Bill from this Ministry but also from other ministries, I think it is very important to have a window on the website of all ministries to allow professionals, researchers, academics and also the brains from the diaspora to bring their criticisms and suggestions. So, we can improve; it is good but it could have been better, in terms of consultations.

Also, I want to shed some light in terms of comparative perspectives. You will see that to a great extent, those who have prepared the Bill, the technicians, they have borrowed the best from different models. From the UK model, as you know, it is a very good model but one of the golden standard models is the Hong Kong model. Even before, in 2002, we did follow many of the standards from Hong Kong and this time also, there has been a sort of attempt to align our law, our amendments with what is being done in Hong Kong. And also, I think to certain extent, I don't know how far, those who prepared the Bill, have followed the Scandinavian standards.

So, it is important, Madam Speaker, I will just take a few examples...

Madam Speaker: You have got two minutes left.

Mr Narsinghen: Two minutes.

So, to see for example from a technical angle, how the amendments of the Bank of Mauritius Act and the Banking Act shift the regulatory focus from a reactive watchdog approach to a proactive hunter model. And I think my colleague mentioned about hunter, so this is a hunter model which has been adopted.

Also, the Bank of Mauritius, the bank is not empowered to disclose information to law enforcement agencies, if necessary, to report suspected offence. Furthermore, it can impose administrative penalties and sanctions on financial institutions and their directors for non-compliance with banking laws and guidelines. Similarly, the Banking Act, through

section 53(a), 64, 64(a), 64(b) and 64 (c) have been amended and this time, the scope of supervision has been widened beyond money-laundering to also englobe proliferation financing. This alignment with FATF standards ensures that the financial system is also shielded against funding of weapons of mass destruction.

To conclude, I would say that this incremental approach adopted by the Minister of Financial Services, is a starting point but personally, I am still waiting for more amendments. For example, the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Attorney General mentioned that we are soon coming with a National Crime Office, Fraud Office and this is important. As I mentioned, having the laws and the books is very good but implementation and also placing the right persons in the right places is of paramount importance.

So, thank you for your attention, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you very much.

Yes, hon. Ameer Meea.

(7.13 p.m.)

The Minister of Industry, SMEs and Cooperatives (Mr A. Ameer Meea): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Allow me at the outset to commend my colleague, Dr. the hon. Mrs Jyoti Jeetun, Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning, for introducing this important piece of legislation to the House. I wish to place on record my sincere appreciation to her Ministry, to the Attorney-General's Office, to the Core Group, to the inter-ministerial committee, to the monitoring teams, to the competent authorities and to all the Ministers and institutions that are working relentlessly on this national priority. This is technical, demanding and often invisible work but it is absolutely vital for Mauritius.

I also wish to salute the leadership of the hon. Prime Minister. The Prime Minister has been clear from the outset that the integrity of our financial system and the credibility of Mauritius as a jurisdiction, are non-negotiable.

Financial services have transformed Mauritius from a low-income agriculture-based economy into an upper middle income financial hub. Mauritius is not just a small island economy. We are recognised as an International Financial Centre, a gateway connecting capital to Africa and beyond. Our jurisdiction plays a critical role in facilitating investment flows and supporting economic development across the region. We are a bridge between

Africa, Asia, Europe, the United States and the Gulf. We are a platform of trust, expertise and connectivity. That is the position we have built over the years, and that is the position we must now defend with even greater seriousness. A strong AML/CFT framework is not a burden on our International Financial Centre. It is the very foundation of it.

No serious international financial centre in the world has been built on weak compliance. It is precisely because of jurisdictions like Singapore, Luxembourg and Dublin take these matters seriously that they are trusted globally. Let me be clear – being compliant does not mean being hostile to business. On the contrary, a jurisdiction that meets international standards is a jurisdiction where serious investors want to be. Compliance opens doors. It does not close them.

The message we send to the world is that Mauritius welcomes legitimate investment and will protect it within a framework that is transparent, robust and internationally respected. The consequences of falling short of AML/CFT standards are severe, to say the least. We cannot afford at any cost to be non-compliant. Remaining on the FATF white list is not a formality. It determines how the world sees us. It determines whether global investors view Mauritius as a safe, compliant and reliable jurisdiction.

Madam Speaker, Mauritius has already paid the price of weakness, delay, complacency in this area. We were placed on the FATF Grey List. That was not minor embarrassment. It was a serious warning to the country. It damaged confidence. It increased scrutiny. It imposed costs on our institutions and our businesses. It affected the standing of Mauritius internationally.

We know what it means when correspondent bank relationships become fragile and every transaction involving Mauritius is looked at with suspicion. We know what it means when legitimate businesses bear the cost of past shortcomings. This is precisely why this government is determined to ensure that Mauritius meets every international standard and demonstrate effectiveness across every immediate outcome.

Let us be clear about how we got there. The previous government had years to act. It had the warnings. It had the recommendations. It had the institutional machinery. Yet, it did not act. The grey listing was the direct consequence of neglect, delayed reforms and a failure to take this file seriously when it mattered most. Even after Mauritius came out of the grey list, they treated the exit as an end in itself.

They did not entrench the culture of readiness. They did not institutionalise the reforms. That was a grave failure of stewardship. This government has a different path. We are not waiting for the next crisis. We are strengthening the law, tightening supervision, improving coordination and doing the work that should have been done earlier.

The threats we seek to address are real – corruption, fraud, drug trafficking, illicit financial flows, illegal betting and bookmaking, amongst others. They are present within our communities. They distort the economy. They pollute legitimate businesses. They attack the very integrity of the State.

Madam Speaker, this fight cannot be left to one Ministry. It cannot be left to one regulator. It cannot be left to one committee. This is the battle of the whole country. It concerns the public sector. It concerns the private sector. It concerns our regulators, our banks, our designated non-financial businesses and professions, our cooperative institutions, and the public at large. If Mauritius is to remain trusted, then every link in the chain must halt.

Madam Speaker, let me now highlight some key amendments that this Bill introduces because they illustrate the death of this reform. The Bill amends no fewer than 23 enactments. It is not a narrow or sectoral exercise. It is a comprehensive overhaul of the legal architecture underpinning our AML/CFT/CPF framework.

Under the Bank of Mauritius Act, the Bill strengthens fit and proper person requirements and enhances supervisory powers. Under the Companies Act, it tightens the framework for maintaining accurate and up-to-date beneficial ownership information for companies and partnership.

Under the Financial Crimes Commission, it reinforces investigation and enforcement capacity. Under the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act, it provides for the temporary suspension of suspicious transactions by the FIU giving the unit a critical tool to prevent the dissipation of illicit funds while investigations are pursued.

The Bill establishes a centralised information management system for AML/CFT/CPF consolidation data across competent authorities and enabling more effective coordination. It creates a register of trust at the Financial Services Commission, addressing a key gap in the beneficial ownership framework. It strengthens the framework for target financial sanctions and asset recovery. It introduces the offence of ecocide; it requires that payments for the

purchase of motor vehicles above a prescribed threshold be effected by cheque or bank transfer not by cash, closing a known channel for the laundering of proceeds of crime.

The Bill also enhances AML/CFT obligations in the insurance sector, tightens supervisory requirements under the Gambling Regulatory Authority Act, strengthens the identification of controllers of associations and improves the transparency of trust arrangement under the Trust Act.

Madam Speaker, I now turn to matters that specifically concern my Ministry. The Bill is also highly targeted and practical in its approach to strengthening the cooperative sector.

Cooperatives occupy a unique place in the socio-economic fabric of Mauritius. Cooperative credit unions are member owned, democratically governed institutions operating on the principle of one member, one vote. They play a crucial role in fostering a savings culture and making credit accessible to their members.

They are community based, industry based and they operate in Rodrigues as well. Precisely because cooperatives are close to the people, they must also be protected from abuse. Smaller cooperatives sometimes face challenges in the fully understanding their obligations under technical framework such as AML/CFT/CPF.

This is precisely why as Minister, one of the first areas we tackled was cooperative supervision. The Co-operatives Act was amended under the Finance Act 2025 conferring enhanced supervisory and enforcement powers upon the register of cooperative societies, including the authority to conduct onsite inspections of cooperative societies, particularly credit unions to impose and enforce sanctions in case of noncompliance and to issue directive to cooperative credit unions to ensure adherence to the relevant AML/CFT enactments, including the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2002, the Co-operatives Act 2016 as amended, and the United Nations (Financial Prohibitions, Arms Embargo and Travel Ban) Sanctions Act 2019.

Madam Speaker, following these amendments extensive outreach programmes have been undertaken. Five workshops were held between August 2025 and February 2026 with cooperative credit unions and officers of my Ministry covering the FATF recommendations, the National Risk Assessment, the Mutual Evaluation Process, customer due diligence, suspicious transaction reporting, sanctions screening and vulnerabilities faced by the sector.

Cooperative unions are classified as reporting persons under FIAMLA and are required to register on GoAML platform. A dedicated training session was held on 24 February 2026

and directives were issued by the Registrar to require mandatory registration. Out of 148 cooperative credit unions, 100 have already registered. The remaining 48 are expected to register by end of April this year.

This is what seriousness looks like. This is what it means to move from policy to results. The cooperative supervisory framework is no longer theoretical. It is up and running. Let me underline this point. In the space of a few months, the Cooperatives Division of my Ministry has moved from a position where the cooperative sector had limited AML/CFT awareness to a position where structured workshops have been delivered, a legal framework for beneficial ownership has been defined, directives have been issued, and two-thirds of all cooperative credit unions are now registered on the GoAML platform. This did not happen by accident. It happened because we treated this as a priority from day one. It happened because we understood that the credibility of Mauritius depends on every sector being brought into the fold, and not only the large financial institutions.

During the workshops, concern was raised by cooperative credit unions that, in line with Recommendation 24 of the FATF, there is an obligation to identify beneficial ownership in the cooperative sector to ensure transparency in the control structure, yet this had not been defined in the Co-operatives Act 2016. Advice was sought from the Attorney-General's Office. The Attorney-General's Office advised that beneficial ownership should be defined as the Board of a cooperative society that is responsible for, and exercises ultimate control over, the cooperative society. Directives dated 25 February 2026 were issued to all cooperative credit unions, accordingly. This proposed Bill now aims at providing a legal definition of beneficial ownership in the statute itself.

The Bill introduces the requirement to maintain a register of beneficial owners through a new section 25A, requiring every society to keep accurate and up-to-date information on its beneficial owners. The register shall be open for inspection by the supervising officer, members, the Registrar, the Principal Co-operative Auditor, auditors and competent authorities and a fine of not exceeding Rs100,000 is provided for non-compliance.

Madam Speaker, I now turn briefly to the jewellery sector, which also falls under the responsibility of my Ministry through the Assay Office. The FATF has identified the jewellery sector, which forms part of the Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professions, as one potential sector in which money is laundered. This is not theoretical. In recent years, we have all witnessed an increasing number of money laundering cases in which

the jewellery sector has been used to launder the proceeds of crime. At this very moment, as I address this August Assembly, the Assay Office is involved in testing jewellery and precious and semi-precious stones retained by the Financial Crimes Commission for a current case of suspected money laundering. That is how close and how real this work is.

The Assay Office assists the FCC, the Police, the MRA and the Judiciary in determining the fineness of jewellery and the carat of precious and semi-precious stones for investigation and prosecution purposes, and participates in the National Risk Assessment.

Madam Speaker, since 2020, under Act No. 5 of 2020, the definitions under the Jewellery Act were amended to include precious metals and precious stones. In compliance with FATF Recommendation No. 28, a fit and proper person test is now conducted on every applicant, examining financial soundness, competence, honesty, reputation and integrity. Dealers are also required to report suspicious transactions above the threshold of Rs500,000.

My Ministry is also working on the setting up of the AML unit at the Assay Office. Section 166 of the Financial Crimes Commission Act 2023 will be proclaimed shortly, whereby the Assay Office will become the regulatory body for Dealers in Precious Metals and Stones instead of the FIU, allowing the FIU to focus on its core intelligence and dissemination functions. This is a necessary step to build stronger and more specialised supervisory capacity in this sector. We want the Assay Office to be properly equipped, properly structured and properly prepared for the responsibilities that lie ahead.

The principle is simple. Effectiveness first, optics second. A lot has already been done to make the jewellery sector more transparent and more accountable. My Ministry is pursuing every available avenue to address this matter. The direction we have set is clear: the Assay Office will be transformed from a purely technical body into a credible sector-specific supervisory with a fully operational AML unit – proper training, proper procedures and proper systems. This is what the FATF expects, and this is what Mauritius will deliver.

Madam Speaker, the 2027 Mutual Evaluation team has already been constituted. The preparatory work is underway. The independent mock evaluation conducted in late 2025 identified areas where Mauritius needs to demonstrate greater effectiveness, and those findings are now being acted upon. But success in the upcoming evaluation will not belong to one Ministry alone. It will belong to Mauritius. It will belong to every institution that played

its part, every officer who did the work, and every stakeholder who understood that a clean jurisdiction is in the national interest.

Madam Speaker, I wish to assure this House and the international community that Mauritius is fully committed to meeting the requirements of the FATF standards and demonstrating effectiveness across its AML/CFT/CPF framework ahead of the 2027 Mutual Evaluation. We are not approaching this evaluation with apprehension. We are approaching it with determination and with the confidence that comes from sustained institutional effort.

Madam Speaker, to conclude, Mauritius must never be perceived as a jurisdiction where illicit funds can circulate unchecked. This Bill reinforces transparency through beneficial ownership, accountability across all sectors, enforcement through stronger compliance mechanisms, the protection of our economic model, and the assurance that Mauritius remains a trusted International Financial Centre.

Mauritian has learnt from the failures of the past. This Government will not be complacent. We are building permanence, not patchwork. Mauritius chooses seriousness over negligence, discipline over drift, and trust over reputational risk. The world is watching. The standards are rising. And the margin for error is shrinking. We owe it to our economy. We owe it to our institutions. We owe it to our international partners. But above all, we owe it to Mauritius.

I thank you for your attention.

Mr Subron: Madam Speaker, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr Mohamed rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister, adjournment of the House.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 14 April 2026 at 11.30 a.m.

Mr Mohamed seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned!

At 7.35 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 14 April 2026 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

POLICE STATIONS – RELOCATIONS & CONSTRUCTION – PROPOSED LOCATIONS

(No. B/238) 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 Police Stations, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police and table the list thereof identified for relocation and indicate whether new ones will be set up, indicating, in each case, the proposed new locations and where matters stand as to the setting up new ones.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that there are presently 80 Police Stations and 15 Police Posts in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

Police have worked out a plan to renovate some of the buildings and to relocate others. In this connection, eight Police Station projects have been identified under the Public Sector Investment Programme 2025/2026 to 2029/2030, of which seven involves the construction of new stations and one involves major renovation works. These stations are at Cent Gaulettes, Phoenix, Triolet, Goodlands, Moka, L'Escalier, Tombeau Bay and Vallée des Prêtres.

For the Financial Year 2025/2026, five police stations projects are being implemented as follows –

- (i) Cent Gaulettes – works started on 25 August 2025;
- (ii) Phoenix - works started on 21 November 2025;
- (iii) the projects at Triolet and Goodlands are at design stage, and
- (iv) renovation works at Tombeau Bay started on 14 January 2026.

Of the remaining three projects under the Programme, Vallée des Prêtres Police Station has already been relocated while Moka Sub-Divisional Headquarters and L'Escalier Police Station which are at design stage will be implemented in subsequent financial year.

Additionally, Police has identified seven Police Stations involving significant renovation works, for which the scope of works is currently under preparation.

These initiatives reflect the Government's commitment to modernising Police infrastructure, improving operational capacity, and to provide conducive working environment for the Police Force.

**REPORT OF THE VARIETIES OF DEMOCRACY INSTITUTE 2026 –
RECLASSIFICATION OF MAURITIUS – FACTORS & INDICATORS**

(No. B/239) 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 Mauritius being reclassified as a democracy in the Report of the Varieties of Democracy Institute 2026, he will state whether a detailed comparative analysis of the factors and indicators which, according to the reports thereof of the past five years highlighting the evolution of Mauritius, has been carried out and, if so, indicate whether same will be laid on the Table of the Assembly.

Reply: The Report of the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute 2026, which was published on 17 March 2026, provides a comprehensive assessment on democracy across countries worldwide, using indicators grouped into five indices, namely Electoral democracy, liberal democracy, participatory democracy, deliberative democracy and egalitarian democracy.

The information presented in the various V-Dem Reports over the past few years, including the factors and indicators used therein, has been carefully noted. In fact, the House may wish to note that for the past five years, the V-Dem, in its reports, classified Mauritius as follows –

- In 2021, Mauritius was in the unenviable position of being ranked among the 10 autocratizing countries. This was due to a sharp decline in the indicator for quality of elections in 2019 due to allegations of electoral fraud, complaints of widespread dissemination of false information, anti-democratic measures such as suspension of Parliament in 2020 and dispersion of peaceful protests.
- In 2022, Mauritius remained among the 10 autocratizing countries and the Report noted that there was increased media censorship in Mauritius.
- In 2023, Mauritius was classified as a 'Major Autocratizer' and the Report noted, among others, that democracy in Mauritius was in steep decline and that, I quote, 'democracy seems to hang by a thread.'

- In 2024, Mauritius was classified as a ‘Grey zone electoral autocracy’. The Report underlined that Mauritius had lost its status of liberal democracy in 2014 and transitioned from an electoral democracy to an electoral autocracy. Mauritius was cited among the worst government offenders when it came to increasing efforts to censor the media. Mauritius was also described as top ‘stand-alone’ autocratizer with the autocratization beginning from 2018.
- In 2025, the Report noted that Mauritius could potentially be misclassified as a ‘Grey zone electoral autocracy’ after the 2024 General elections which could bring a turnaround after years of autocratization.

After years of democratic decline, there has finally been a welcome and well-deserved shift in the classification of Mauritius. According to the 2026 Report, I quote, ‘the 2024 general elections brought a change in government and halted authoritarian transgressions.’

Mauritius now leads the U-turn list in terms of magnitude of improvement and has regained its standing as an electoral democracy, after a long period of autocratization, during which the previous Government censored the media, harassed journalists and was caught wiretapping.

This reclassification reflects improvements in key democratic indicator measures by V-Dem, some people still think that there has been no change. There is no greater change – than being free again.

‘Freedom of expression’ and media-related rights are fundamental human rights which were most severely affected during the periods of autocratization which Mauritius faced under the previous Government. Since the election of this Government, which has led to the re-democratization of this country, these fundamental freedoms have now been restored.

It is comforting to see that the efforts which have been made by this Government have been seen and acknowledged in the 2026 Report of V-Dem. As highlighted in the Government Programme 2025–2029, Government stands committed to restoring the trust of the nation in independent and impartial institutions, and in reinstating the independence of public institutions.

The consolidation of our democracy is a continuous journey, and this Government remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing progress across diverse areas. We are going to invite international organisations to re-look at the loopholes in our system.

HON. PAUL RAYMOND BÉRENGER – RESIGNATION – MEETING WITH PM

(No. B/240) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the recent resignation of Honourable Paul Raymond Bérenger, GCSK, as Deputy Prime Minister, he will state whether he met the Honourable Member in the days prior to the said resignation and, if so, indicate the reasons put forward by the latter therefor.

(Withdrawn)

**WOMEN'S PRISON – BAGGAGE SCANNING EQUIPMENT – INSTALLATION
STATUS**

(No. B/241) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the baggage scanning equipment purchased in 2023 for the Women's Prison, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to whether it has been installed and, if so, indicate –

- (a) by whom, and
- (b) whether –
 - (i) it is operational, and
 - (ii) training has been imparted to the staff operating same.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that five Baggage X-Ray Inspection Systems were procured in 2023 for installation in the following prisons –

- (a) Beau Bassin Prison;
- (b) New Wing Prison;
- (c) Women Prison;
- (d) Grand River North West Remand Prison, and
- (e) Eastern High Security Prison.

Regarding part (a) of the question, the equipment has been installed at the Women Prison on 13 November 2023 by the supplier, AfricaMED Ltd.

With regard to part (b)(i) and (ii) of the question, the equipment at the Women Prison became operational on 23 July 2025 and a training session was conducted on 08 May 2025 by the supplier. One Woman Assistant Superintendent of Prisons and seven Women Prison Officers/Senior Prison Officers had been trained on the operation of the equipment.

There was a delay in the obtention of the licence from the Radiation Safety and Nuclear Security Authority as the location of the equipment at the Women Prison was not found suitable.

Appropriate measures were taken by the Mauritius Prison Service to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Radiation Safety and Nuclear Security Authority. After obtention of the required licence, the system became operational on 23 July 2025.

RODRIGUES – PLAINE CORAIL AIRPORT – NEW RUNWAY CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/242) 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)

SILVER BANK LIMITED – CONSERVATORSHIP & RECEIVERSHIP – NON-PERFORMING/TOXIC LOANS – DEPOSITS HELD

(No. B/243) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal) 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 Silver Bank Limited, following the placement thereof under conservatorship in February 2024 and in receivership on 30 March 2026, respectively, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to the total amount of –

- (a) non-performing or toxic loans identified at the time of conservatorship, indicating the amount thereof recovered during the said period from local and foreign customers, respectively, and
- (b) deposits held therewith by public bodies/institutions as at the date of the receivership, giving a breakdown thereof.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that in the first report of the Conservator submitted in March 2024, non-performing loans were estimated at approximately Rs8.1 billion out of a total loan portfolio of Rs8.3 billion.

As regards the amount recovered, as at date, only a relatively small amount of around Rs209 million has been recovered since the placement of the bank under conservatorship, of which, Rs47 million from a non-resident customer and Rs162 million from resident borrowers.

Concerning part (b) of the question, the deposits held by public bodies and institutions at Silver Bank Limited as at 28 February 2026 amounted to around Rs907 million as follows

- (a) Rs523 million by the COVID-19 Projects Development Fund;
- (b) Rs158 million by the National Insurance Co. Ltd;
- (c) Rs132 million by the NIC General Insurance Co. Ltd;
- (d) Rs58 million by the Municipal Council of Curepipe, and
- (e) Rs36 million by the Sugar Insurance Fund Board.

PROPOSED ELECTORAL REFORMS – PUBLIC CONSULTATION

EXERCISE – PROPOSALS

(No. B/244) 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)

ROAD ACCIDENT – CAUDANT ROUNDABOUT – HEAVY VEHICLE – INQUIRY

(No. B/245) 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.

(Withdrawn)

**MIDDLE EAST TENSION – OIL PRICES VOLATILITY – VAT & LEVY
PROPOSED REDUCTION**

(No. B/246) 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 volatility of international oil prices amidst the escalation of tensions in the Middle East, he will state whether consideration will be given for temporarily reducing taxes, Value Added Tax and levies on petroleum products to mitigate rising cost of living and inflationary pressures in Mauritius and, if not, why not and whether consideration will be given for the introduction of a time-bound and targeted fuel tax adjustment mechanism linked to international oil price volatility.

Reply: The war in the Middle East has caused a considerable reduction in the global supply of energy products. Based on reports from early April 2026, the war in Iran has caused the largest oil supply disruption in history, surpassing the crisis of 1973 and 1979. The conflict has resulted in the effective blockade of the Strait of Hormuz by Iran and production drops due to infrastructure damage in main oil producing countries in the region. Global oil supply was projected to plunge by 8 million barrels per day in March 2026.

Net importing countries like Mauritius are bearing the brunt of the impact of this disruption. As a result of the war, our import bill for petroleum products by the State Trading Corporation in March this year has increased by 82% due mostly to price increase over the previous month. It is expected that the import bill will rise further by 21% in the month of April 2026.

As at 03 April 2026, the price per barrel of Brent oil was \$109.03 compared to \$72.48 on 27 February, representing an increase of 50%.

The price of oil may not have peaked yet. As an importing nation, Mauritius faces two major risks. One, escalating prices that can further severely destabilise our macroeconomic

fundamentals through the balance of payments, inflation and official foreign currency reserves.

Second, Mauritius faces the risk of major disruption in accessibility to energy products. This is an existential issue since we are totally dependent on supply from overseas.

The situation, therefore, calls for more judicious use of energy products, in particular stringent demand management policies.

As regards the first part of the question, I wish to inform the House that there are already safety nets in our tax system in particular for the manufacturing sector. Manufacturers using Gas Oil in stationary engines, boilers and burners are already exempted from payment of excise duty. They can also recover the VAT paid on Gas Oil.

Likewise, Fuel Oil used by CEB is not subject to excise duty and the VAT paid is recovered by CEB.

For the public transport sector, under the Bus Company Recovery Account Scheme, a refund is made on the retail price of diesel to owners of buses used for public transport to ensure that the actual cost of diesel per litre is maintained at a subsidised price of Rs40 per litre. In fact, the subsidy element has increased to Rs24.80 per litre compared to Rs18.95 prior to the adjustment in retail price on 25 March 2026.

There are also other mechanisms in place to mitigate rising cost of living and protect the population from inflationary pressures.

For example, my Government has earmarked Rs2 billion for this financial year in the Price Stabilisation Fund to maintain affordable prices for essential goods, namely milk, edible oil, processed cheese, infant milk powder, canned pilchards, diapers.

As from 01 February 2026, medicines relating to cardiovascular diseases, hypertension and diabetes are also subsidised.

Since March 2025, an additional 500 products are under the maximum mark-up price control mechanism to control the maximum retail price of these products.

In addition, Government is providing a subsidy of more than 50% of the cost of a 12-kg cylinder Liquefied Petroleum Gas. On 02 April 2026, the cost price was Rs646, thus the subsidy was of Rs396.

Government is maintaining free transport for students and elderly at an annual cost of Rs1.7 billion.

As regards the second part of the question, I am personally chairing a Crisis Committee to look into the economic and social impacts of the present conflict in the Middle East.

The first meeting was held on Wednesday 01 April 2026 and a number of proposals have been made by Ministers, including measures to alleviate the impact of the surge in petroleum prices. The proposals are being examined and will be submitted for a decision to Cabinet.

**CÔTE D'OR – SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE – INCENTIVE PACKAGE –
FINANCIAL COST**

(No. B/247) 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)

SEAPORT AND AIRPORT – BORDER CONTROL – DRUG SEIZURES

(No. B/248) 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 seaport and airport 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 a profiling exercise is 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.

(Withdrawn)

AIR MAURITIUS LTD. – STRATEGIC PARTNER – SHORTLISTED PARTNERS

(No. B/249) 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)

CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO – UNITED KINGDOM & MAURITIUS AGREEMENT – JUDGEMENT’S CONSEQUENCES

(No. B/250) 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 Island 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)

MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT – MAURITIAN NATIONALS – SAFETY & ASSISTANCE

(No. B/251) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand’ Baie and Poudre d’Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications,

Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the 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.

(Withdrawn)

**ILLICIT TRANSACTIONS – SEIZED MOTOR VEHICLES – FINES &
PROSECUTIONS**

(No. B/252) 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 motor vehicles of retail value exceeding Rs3 million seized by the Financial Crimes Commission since November 2024 to date, owned, controlled or acquired by or on behalf of persons allegedly involved in illicit transactions, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain the list thereof, indicating –

- (a) the make, model and value thereof in each case, and
- (b) whether fines have been imposed and/or prosecutions initiated in connection therewith, indicating whether car dealers and leasing companies are involved therein.

(Withdrawn)

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD – DEPUTY CEO (MR S.M.) –
APPOINTMENT & CONTRACT RENEWAL**

(No. B/253) 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)

**DIRECTOR OF AUDIT REPORT 2024-2025 – PERFORMANCE-BASED
BUDGETING – ASSESSMENT**

(No. B/254) 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.

(Withdrawn)

SDDS+ STATUS – MEASURES & ECONOMIC BENEFITS

(No. B/255) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the upgrading of Mauritius to the Special Data Dissemination Standard Plus (SDDS+) status by the International Monetary Fund, he will state the –

- (a) measures taken by Government that led thereto, and
- (b) key benefits associated therewith, particularly, in terms of access to financing, investment prospects and economic resilience.

(Withdrawn)

**BASIC RETIREMENT PENSION – SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT –
VULNERABLE GROUPS IMPACT**

(No. B/256) 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.

(Withdrawn)

**STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS – STUDENT POPULATION BELOW 150 –
STAFFING DETAILS**

(No. B/279) Mr E. Juman (First Member for Port-Louis Maritime & Port-Louis East) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to State Secondary Schools, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof with a student population of less than 150 as at date, indicating, in each case, the number of teaching and non-teaching staff attached thereto.

(Withdrawn)

PESTICIDES REGULATORY OFFICE – STAFF REDUCTION – REASON

(No. B/280) 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)

8000 HOUSING UNITS – CONTRACT VALUE – ARSENAL PROJECT

(No. B/281) Mr E. Juman (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the 8,000 housing units project being implemented by the New Social Living Development Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House –

- (a) obtain information as to the –
 - (i) contract values thereof, indicating the initial estimated and revised costs, giving details thereof;
 - (ii) total mobilisation advances disbursed, and

- (iii) cost overruns, variations or contract amendments approved, if any, and, if so, give details thereof, and
- (b) whether a quality assessment of the Arsenal Project has been carried out and, if so, table the findings thereof.

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUAN ARTISTS – CULTURAL COOPERATION MoU – EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES

(No. B/282) Ms M. 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)

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMS – MAURITIAN CANDIDATES – PERFORMANCE – REMEDIAL MEASURES

(No. B/283) 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)

BREAD PRICE – INCREASE REQUEST – CONSUMER IMPACT

(No. B/285) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the request made by the Bakers' Association for an increase in the price of bread, he will state –

- (a) whether an assessment of the impact of such an increase on consumers has been carried out, and
- (b) the measures being envisaged to ensure the continuous supply of bread and prevent any shortage thereof on the local market.

Reply: With regard to the request made by the *Association des Boulangers et Pâtisiers (ABP)* for an increase in the price of bread, I wish to inform the House that APB has officially requested for an increase to Rs4.70. Government is fully conscious of the potential impact that any price adjustment may have on consumers, particularly on low-and-middle-income households.

Since assuming office as Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection, I have held several meetings with the different stakeholders of the sector with a view to addressing the issues being faced by them. Government has consistently privileged open dialogue, and we are fully aware of the difficulties encountered by the baking industry, particularly in the context of increasing input costs.

It is also to be noted that the price of standard bread of 100g has remained unchanged since 2017. In parallel, the current subsidy mechanism, which has been used to sustain this price, is now operating under significant deficit pressure. In this context, there is a clear need to identify a long-term and sustainable solution that balances the interests of consumers, producers and public finances.

In this respect, Government had, on 23 February 2026, set up an Inter-Ministerial Committee under my chairmanship, in collaboration with the hon. Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity, and the hon. Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperatives, to examine the matter in a comprehensive manner.

The Committee has, to date, met on three occasions and has held consultations with all key stakeholders, including the *Association des Boulangers et Pâtisiers*, as well as consumer associations such as ACIM and Consumer Eye.

The assessment being carried out takes into account production costs, prevailing market conditions and the purchasing power of the population, with a view to ensuring that any decision taken is balanced, justified and in the overall interest of both consumers and the sustainability of the sector.

With regard to part (b) of the question namely measures to ensure the continuous supply of bread and prevent any shortage on the local market, Government is maintaining

close and ongoing consultations with all stakeholders in the value chain, including bakers and large retailers involved in the production and sale of bread.

The situation is being closely monitored, and Government stands ready to take appropriate measures, where required, to safeguard both the availability and accessibility of bread on the local market.

I wish to reassure the House that Government will continue to act responsibly, ensuring that the interests of consumers are protected while at the same time securing the long-term sustainability and stability of the baking sector.

MAURITIUS SPORTS COUNCIL – SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE – RUNNING COST

(No. B/286) Mr E. Juman (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to sports infrastructure falling under the purview of the Mauritius Sports Council, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the said Council, information as to the –

- (a) number of facilities being –
 - (i) fully operational;
 - (ii) partially operational, and
 - (iii) currently non-operational, indicating, in respect of the latter, the reasons therefor, and
- (b) monthly running costs incurred in respect of each such infrastructure.

(Withdrawn)

PUBLIC SECTOR – TRAINING & CAPACITY-BUILDING – BUDGET EARMARKED

(No. B/287) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms whether, in regard to officers in the public sector, he will state the total budget earmarked for the training and capacity-building thereof in financial year 2025-2026, indicating the number of officers who have benefited therefrom since January 2026 to date.

(Withdrawn)

UNEXPLOITED AGRICULTURAL LAND – REASONS – MEASURES PROPOSED

(No. B/288) 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 incentivize the cultivation thereof to ensure food self-sufficiency and security.

(Withdrawn)

**MOHUNLALL MOHIT GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – ELECTRICITY SUPPLY
ISSUES**

(No. B/289) Mr P. Venkatasami (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the Mohunlall Mohit Government School, situated at L'Avenir, he will state whether the electricity supply issues occurring in a few classrooms thereat have been addressed and, if so, when and, if not, indicate the timeframe therefor.

(Withdrawn)

**LAGOONS – SWIMMING & SPEED LIMIT ZONES – REPORTED INCIDENTS –
DEMARCATIION ZONES**

(No. B/290) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the lagoons in Mauritius, he will state –

- (a) the present status of the demarcation of swimming zones and speed limit zones, indicating the number of reported accidents or incidents having occurred thereat over the past six months, and
- (b) where matters stand as to the proposed maintenance, repairs and reinstatement of the said demarcation zones, giving details of any ongoing or planned works, timelines and key milestones in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

**MUSICAL WORKS PRODUCTION – LOCAL ARTISTS – INCENTIVES
PROVIDED**

(No. B/291) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the production of musical works by local artists, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the incentives currently available therefor, indicating the procedures applicable and the financial facilities provided thereunder.

(Withdrawn)

MALDIVES-MAURITIUS – SUSPENSION OF TIES – COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

(No. B/292) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Maldives, he will state whether, following the recent suspension of our diplomatic relations therewith, an updated list of Mauritian nationals currently residing or employed thereat has been drawn, indicating the communication channels and consular mechanisms established, if any, to provide timely guidance, assistance and protection thereto and whether any Mauritian national has reached out accordingly and, if so, indicate the measures taken in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

NURSING STUDIES – SCHOLARSHIPS/FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE – LOCAL SHORTAGES

(No. B/294) 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.

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUES – INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS – ALLOTTED FUNDS

(No. B/295) 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)

TOURISM ACT AMENDMENTS – PROTECTION OF MARINE MAMMALS – STATUS

(No. B/296) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness 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.

(Withdrawn)

TAMARIN PUBLIC BEACH – TOILET FACILITIES & AMENITIES – DESILTING WORKS

(No. B/297) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the Tamarin Public beach, he will state whether the upgrading thereof is being envisaged and, if so, indicate whether consideration will be given for –

- (a) the provision of toilet facilities and additional amenities thereat, and
- (b) desilting works to be carried out at the mouth of the river thereat to prevent beach erosion.

Reply: I am informed by the Beach Authority that Tamarin Beach of an extent of 2.19 Ha with a sea frontage of approximately 410m was proclaimed as public beach through General Notice 206 of 1940.

As regards part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that there is one toilet block at Tamarin public beach which is fully operational and caters for the current demand.

Other amenities already available on the public beach are, benches, picnic tables, lighting pole, bins, kiosk, fire places and open shower, amongst others.

All the amenities are functional, in good condition and the beach is cleaned and well maintained on a daily basis by a cleaning contractor. The provision of additional amenities on the beach will depend on the availability of funds.

As for part (b) of the question, I am further informed by the Beach Authority that the river and its outlet into the sea do not form part of the proclaimed public beach of Tamarin.

However, the House may wish to note that following the passage of Cyclone Belal, a joint site inspection was conducted on 23 May 2024, by the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Division of my Ministry, the Beach Authority, and the Forestry Service. It was observed that there was a localised coastal erosion, and immediate remedial measures, including removal of weakened trees and stumps, were then undertaken by the Forestry Service.

A follow-up visit on 29 August 2024 by my Ministry confirmed that the beach had largely recovered naturally, with only minor residual escarpments observed. While conditions are presently stable, the site remains under periodic monitoring.

I wish to highlight that desilting of the Tamarin river mouth falls under the purview of the Ministry of Local Government and the latter has informed that desilting at the mouth of the river is not technically advisable as the sea level is higher than the water level of the river and separated by an estuary. In the event the estuary is removed, same will be formed again due to tidal action. However, desilting can be envisaged to remove any accumulated debris over the estuary and upstream part of the river.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT – CURRENT RATE – EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES

(No. B/298) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to youth unemployment, he will state –

- (a) 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.

(Withdrawn)

**FISHERMAN REGISTRATION CARD – CERTIFICATE OF CHARACTER –
PREREQUISITE**

(No. B/299) 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)

PHARMACY BOARD – MEMBERS – QUALITY CONTROL EXERCISES

(No. B/300) 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 the –

- (a) name of the members and of the Officer-in-Charge thereof, and
- (b) frequency of the quality control exercises conducted over the drugs and health supplements imported over the past three years, indicating whether adverse reports have been recorded in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

**SECONDARY SCHOOLS – SYNTHETIC DRUGS CASES – PREVENTION
MEASURES**

(No. B/301) Mr C. Ramkalawon (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the secondary schools, he will state the number of reported cases of introduction, possession and consumption of synthetic drugs thereat over the past ten years, indicating the measures being taken to prevent the recurrence thereof.

(Withdrawn)

VALETTA BYPASS – SPEED CAMERAS INSTALLATION – OPERATION DATE

(No. B/302) Mr G. P. Venkatasami (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the projected installation of speed cameras along the Valetta bypass, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Traffic

Road Management Support Unit, information as to where matters stand, indicating the expected date of coming into operation thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIAN GLOBAL BUSINESS SECTOR – TIGER GLOBAL INTERNATIONAL II HOLDINGS VS. THE AUTHORITY FOR ADVANCE RULINGS – IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(No. B/303) 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.

(Withdrawn)

GRAND BAY WATERFRONT MASTERPLAN – PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP MODEL

(No. B/304) 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 a Public Private Partnership model and, if so, indicate the expected timeframe for the preparation and implementation thereof and, if not, the reasons therefor.

(Withdrawn)

ST. PIERRE TRAFFIC CENTRE – BUS PLATFORM REPAIR

(No. B/305) Mr G. P. Venkatasami (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the St. Pierre Traffic Centre, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Development Unit, information as to where matters stand regarding the urgent repairs to be effected to the bus platform thereat, indicating the –

- (a) the nature and scope of the works to be undertaken, and

- (b) expected start and completion dates thereof.

(Withdrawn)

DRAMA, MUSIC & ARTS – YOUTH PROMOTION & SUPPORT

(No. B/306) Mr C. Ramkalawon (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to drama, music and arts, he will state whether consideration will be given for the setting up of appropriate infrastructure for the promotion thereof amongst the youth.

(Withdrawn)

NPF & NSF – FINANCIAL POSITION & INVESTMENTS

(No. B/307) Mr C. Ramkalawon (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the National Pensions Fund and the National Solidarity Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Investment Committee thereof, information as to the –

- (a) balance currently standing to the credit thereof, and
- (b) investments effected since 2015 to date, indicating the profit or loss realised thereon.

(Withdrawn)

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL KREOL – CONCEPT REVIEW - TOURISTS ATTRACTION

(No. B/309) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture 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)

PENALTY POINT SYSTEM – IMPLEMENTATION OUTCOME

(No. B/311) 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.

(Withdrawn)

VIEUX GRAND PORT – LA TOUR DES HOLLANDAIS – INAUGURATION & OPENING

(No. B/312) 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.

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUES – FLOODING – ACCACIA DRAIN WORKS & PORT MATHURIN PHASE 3 DRAIN PROJECT

(No. B/313) Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the recent torrential rain and flooding that severely affected the northern region of Rodrigues Island, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Land Drainage Authority and the National Development Unit, information as to –

- (a) where matters stand as to the implementation of the Accacia drain works, and
- (b) whether consideration will be given to implement, through emergency procurement, the Port Mathurin phase 3 drain project.

(Withdrawn)

LPG – STOCK LEVEL, PROCUREMENT DETAILS, PRICE INCREASE & IMPACT

(No. B/314) Mr E. Juman (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to Liquefied Petroleum Gas, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information from the –
 - (i) State Trading Company, as to the current stock level thereof, forthcoming consignments thereof, indicating the expected quantities and estimated arrival dates and details of the last procurement contract therefor, indicating

the name of the supplier/s, volume, agreed price and duration of the contract, and

- (ii) Petroleum Pricing Committee, the reasons for the recent increase in the price thereof, and
- (b) state the impact of the said price increase on households and businesses, particularly, small and medium enterprises.

(Withdrawn)

KOREK APPLICATION – DIGITAL DRIVING LICENCE FEATURES

(No. B/315) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the KOREK Application, he will state where matters stand as to the coming into operation of the digital driving licence features thereof.

(Withdrawn)

NOUVELLE FRANCE – WATER PUMP FAILURES – WATER SUPPLY – SHORT & LONG-TERM MEASURES

(No. B/317) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand' Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the water pump failures at Nouvelle France over the past few months, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the short-term and long-term measures being envisaged respectively, to restore stable and continuous water supply thereat, giving details thereof.

(Withdrawn)

PRIVATE PRE-PRIMARY & PRIMARY SCHOOLS – GRANT-IN-AID SCHEME – TEACHING STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

(No. A/13) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to private pre-primary and primary schools, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) number thereof registered since the introduction of the Grant-in-Aid Scheme;
- (b) regulations governing the operation thereof, and
- (c) qualifications of the teaching staff employed therein.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the Grant-in-Aid Scheme was implemented as from January 2024. The Scheme caters exclusively for private pre-primary schools. Since its implementation, 427 private pre-primary schools, which were previously benefiting from a per-capita grant of Rs400 per child monthly, opted to join the Grant-in-Aid Scheme. As at date, 417 private pre-primary schools are operating under the Scheme. No new private pre-primary school has joined the Grant-in-Aid Scheme since its implementation.

As regards part (b) of the question, all private pre-primary schools operate under the provisions of the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority (Registration of Pre-Primary Schools) Regulations 2011.

As regards part (c) of the question, I am informed that the qualifications of the teaching staff in Private Pre-Primary Schools under the GIA Scheme are as follows –

- Master’s Degree: 1
- Degree: 6
- Diploma: 47
- Teachers’ Certificate: 275
- HSC/GCE ‘A’ Level: 227
- School Certificate: 21

LABOUR EXPLOITATION & WORKPLACE BULLYING – SUPPORT – REPORTING MEASURES

(No. A/14) **Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to labour exploitation and workplace bullying, he will state –

- (a) the measures currently in place to support victims thereof, and
- (b) whether consideration will be given for the development of a digital platform to facilitate reporting and access to assistance in relation thereto.

Reply: Labour exploitation is not defined in our labour legislation. However, labour exploitation may be deemed to include forced labour, debt bondage, worst forms of child labour, deception, restriction of movement, retention of identity documents, withholding of wages, abusive working and living conditions, intimidation and threats, and physical and sexual violence at work, amongst others.

As regards workplace bullying, same is provided for under section 114 of the Workers’ Rights Act concerning ‘Violence at Work’. Under this section, “bullying” includes –

“A pattern of offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or humiliating behaviour or an abuse or misuse of power or authority which attempts to undermine an individual or group of individuals, gradually eroding their confidence and capacity, which may cause them to suffer stress.”

With regard to part (a) of the question, any worker who is a victim of labour exploitation or bullying can report a complaint to any of the 17 regional labour offices nearest to his place of work to seek redress. In case of a migrant worker, the latter can report a complaint to the Special Migrant Workers’ Unit of my Ministry.

Upon receipt of such complaints, the officers of my Ministry investigate into the matter to determine whether there is sufficient substance to institute criminal proceedings against the perpetrator/s, after seeking advice from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution. Since January 2025 to March 2026, a total of 675 cases of violence at work, involving 265 male workers and 410 female workers, have been handled at the level of my Ministry, out of which, 328 have already been disposed of.

Moreover, there are presently 19 cases of violence at work falling under section 114 of the Workers’ Rights Act at the level of the Prosecution Unit of my Ministry. 16 of these cases have already been lodged before the Industrial Court, and the remaining three cases are being finalised by the Prosecution Unit prior to referral to court. I am also informed that since January 2025 to March 2026, two cases of verbal abuse and one case of sexual harassment were heard by the court. However, there has been no conviction as all three cases were dismissed.

Other measures taken by my Ministry comprise inspections at workplaces to detect any cases of violence at work, including bullying, amongst others. From January 2025 to March 2026, 1,651 inspections were carried out, covering 18,718 male workers and 12,621 female workers, to look into all conditions of employment, including instances of alleged violence at work.

Moreover, as a preventive measure, my Ministry also conducts sensitisation sessions with workers and employers on matters pertaining to violence at work. Since January 2025 to March 2026, 78 sensitisation sessions, covering 511 male workers and 632 female workers, on provisions of the labour legislation, including those pertaining to violence at work, were carried out by my Ministry. Additionally, 37 training sessions were conducted for the technical staff of my Ministry on provisions of the labour legislation, including those pertaining to violence at work.

As regards part (b) of the question, it is worth noting that my Ministry has computerised the Labour and Industrial Relations Division through a digital system known as LabourConnect. The system is being tested and finetuned, and once fully operational, workers will be able to report through its portal, any complaints, including those pertaining to violence at work and bullying.