



EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 21 APRIL 2026

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THE CABINET

(Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)

Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands
Hon. 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

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

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Deputy Speaker	Hon. Vedasingam Vasudevachariar Baloomoody, GOSK
Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Hon. Mohamed Ehsan Juman
Clerk of the National Assembly	Lotun, Mrs Bibi Safeena, CSK
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MAURITIUS

Eighth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 06 of 2026

Sitting of Tuesday 21 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)

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

Certificate of Urgency in respect of The Electronic Transactions (Amendment) Bill (No. V of 2026). (In Original)

B. Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection

(a) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 42 of 2026)

(b) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 43 of 2026)

(c) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 4) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 44 of 2026)

C. Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research

The Annual Report and Reports of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the ‘Université des Mascareignes’ for the period 06 September 2012 to 30 June 2020.

D. Ministry of Industry, SMEs and Cooperatives

The Mauritius Standards Bureau (Certification Mark) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 46 of 2026)

E. Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Information and Communication Technologies Authority for the year ended 30 June 2024.

F. Ministry of Local Government

- (a) The Amended Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Statutory Bodies Family Protection Fund for the year ended 30 June 2024.
- (b) The District Council of Grand Port (Naming of public places) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 45 of 2026)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

**CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO – TRANSFER OF SOVEREIGNTY – OFFICIAL
COMMUNICATIONS – COSTS INCURRED**

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 transfer of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago to the Republic of Mauritius, he will state where matters stand –

- (a) and table the latest official communications exchanged between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in connection therewith, and
- (b) give the names of the international and local legal advisers appointed by Government therefor since December 2024 to date, indicating the costs incurred in terms of legal fees, air tickets and *per diem* allowances in relation thereto and including in relation to the Honourable the Attorney-General.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I shall reply to this Private Notice Question together with Parliamentary Questions B/399 and B/416, as they relate to the same subject matter.

At the very outset, I would like to point out that under international law, Mauritius has undisputable sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia, as confirmed by the International Court of Justice in its Advisory Opinion of 25 February 2019, the UN General Assembly in its Resolution 73/295 later in the same year, that is, 2019, and the Special Chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in its Judgment of 28 January 2021.

I should add, Madam Speaker, that this fight was started in 2010 when I was Prime Minister at the time when the UK purportedly established a ‘marine protected area’ (‘MPA’) around the Chagos Archipelago. I instructed our lawyers to initiate actions at the level of an UNCLOS Annex VII Arbitral Tribunal. Mauritius was successful in as far as the ‘MPA’ was concerned and the Tribunal declared unanimously and, I quote –

“In establishing the MPA surrounding the Chagos Archipelago, the United Kingdom breached its obligations under Articles 2(3), 56(2) and 194(4) of the Convention.”

Therefore, Madam Speaker, in addition, the Tribunal found –

1. that the United Kingdom’s undertaking to ensure that fishing rights in the Chagos Archipelago would remain available to Mauritius as far as practicable is legally binding insofar as it relates to the territorial sea;
2. that the United Kingdom’s undertaking to return the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius when no longer needed for defence purposes is legally binding, and
3. that the United Kingdom’s undertaking to preserve the benefit of any minerals or oil discovered in or near in the Chagos Archipelago for Mauritius is legally binding.

In addition, two of the arbitrators gave a Dissenting and Concurring Opinion in which they confirmed that the Chagos Archipelago forms part of the territory of Mauritius since it was unlawfully detached from the territory of Mauritius. This laid the foundation for the ICJ Advisory Opinion of 25 February 2019.

I also wish to recall that Mauritius has never recognised the so-called “British Indian Ocean Territory” which the United Kingdom purported to create by unlawfully excising the Chagos Archipelago from the territory of Mauritius prior to our independence.

Madam Speaker, in reply to part (a) of the Private Notice Question, as the House is aware, on 22 May 2025, Mauritius and the United Kingdom signed an Agreement concerning the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia. Under this Agreement, the United Kingdom recognises the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago in its entirety, including, that is, Diego Garcia.

It is, therefore, misleading to refer to the transfer of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, as implied in the question. Mauritius is Sovereign.

Madam Speaker, the Agreement on the Chagos Archipelago has to be ratified by the United Kingdom so that it can enter into force. In order to be able to ratify the agreement, the British Government introduced on 15 July 2026 in the House of Commons a Bill titled “Diego Garcia Military Base and the British Indian Ocean Territory Bill”.

Madam Speaker: 2025.

The Prime Minister: 2025, sorry.

Following its adoption by the House on 20 October 2025, the Bill was considered by the House of Lords. Since the Bill was adopted by the House of Lords on 12 January 2026 with amendments, it had to go back to the House of Commons. On 20 January 2026, the

House of Commons considered the amendments of the House of Lords and rejected all of them, except for one. Accordingly, the Bill went back to the House of Lords but has not yet been moved.

The United Kingdom's stand is clear and it has indicated that it would have to update the UK/US Exchange of Notes in respect of the military base in Diego Garcia before it can proceed with the Bill at the House of Lords.

In a statement to the House of Commons on 13 April 2026, hon. Stephen Doughty, Minister of State at the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, indicated that because of the change in position of the US President in recent weeks on the agreement between Mauritius and the United Kingdom concerning the Chagos Archipelago, it has not been possible so far for the United Kingdom and the United States to agree, at the political level, on an updated Exchange of Notes in respect to the military base in Diego Garcia, although a finalised text has been agreed at the level of officials.

Madam Speaker, in view of the delay in reaching such an agreement on the updated Exchange of Notes, the Minister of State stated that the “Diego Garcia Military Base and the British Indian Ocean Territory Bill” would not be able to complete its passage during the current session of the UK Parliament. He also stated that the Bill cannot be carried over in view of the progress it has already made in the UK Parliament.

The Minister of State added that the British Government nevertheless remains confident that the agreement between Mauritius and the United Kingdom on the Chagos Archipelago is the best means of protecting the full operation of the military base in Diego Garcia. He further mentioned that the United Kingdom would continue to work with the United States on the agreement and on the way forward, and would also continue to engage with Mauritius.

In this regard, officials from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office are visiting Mauritius this week – it is at their request – and will hold talks with Mauritian officials tomorrow. In the light of the outcome of those talks, consideration will be given to actions which may eventually need to be taken by Mauritius with regard to the agreement on the Chagos Archipelago.

Madam Speaker, on 31 March 2026, the Court of the so-called “British Indian Ocean Territory” at first instance delivered a judgment following an application made by some Chagossians, as British citizens, for judicial review of the failure of the Commissioner of the so-called “British Indian Ocean Territory” to make a decision on the application of those

Chagossians for permits to enter into the Chagos Archipelago and of his decision to issue removal notices to them following their arrival at Ile du Coin in Peros Banhos on 16 February 2026.

The judgment relates to the application of the laws relating to the so-called “British Indian Ocean Territory” and therefore bears no relevance to the agreement between the Government of Mauritius and the Government of the United Kingdom concerning the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia, which is governed by international law. This agreement is in line with international law and has been entered into following the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on 25 February 2019 and the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 73/295 of 22 May 2019 and the Judgment of the Special Chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea on 28 January 2021, all of which confirm the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago.

Accordingly, the judgment of the court of the so-called “British Indian Ocean Territory” does not constitute an impediment to the ratification of the agreement concluded by the two States and which aims, *inter alia*, at providing for the manner in which the sovereignty will be exercised.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (a) of the Private Notice Question, I am tabling the official communications exchanged between the Governments of Mauritius and the United Kingdom with regard to the agreement on the Chagos Archipelago.

Madam Speaker, in reply to part (b) of the Private Notice Question, since November 2024, Withers LLP, a Law Firm of London, has been appointed by the current Government and that Law Firm has designated the following lawyers from its organisation to deal with us

—

- (a) Mr Haeri Hussein, KC;
- (b) Ms Floriane Lavaud;
- (c) Ms Camilla Gambarini;
- (d) Ms Jovana Crncevic;
- (e) Ms Maanya Tandon, and
- (f) Ms Sudipta Purkayastha.

Legal fees paid to them to date amount to GBP 408,028.40.

As regards the local legal advisers, the Attorney General's Office, including the hon. Attorney General himself, the Solicitor General, Mr Dabee, former Solicitor General, Mr Yvan Jean Louis and Ms Soraya Gareeboo, Assistant Solicitors General have been acting as such and have not been paid any additional fees.

Madam Speaker, an amount of Rs631,285 has been disbursed for air tickets for our external legal advisers. No *per diem* has been paid to them.

The sums disbursed in respect of the local team from the Attorney General's Office for two trips in January 2025 and one trip in November 2025 are as follows –

- (a) Air tickets: Rs1,334,461
- (b) *Per diem* as per approved rates.

Madam Speaker, let me be clear, we shall leave no stone unturned until the issue of the Chagos Archipelago is resolved, diplomatically or otherwise. The decolonisation process of Mauritius must be completed and this Government will see to it that this becomes a reality, sooner rather than later. However, at this stage, we are still engaged with the UK Government which has repeatedly stated that it has not abandoned the ratification process. Therefore, let us see how things progress, but there will come a time when Mauritius will have to look at alternative avenues to assert its sovereignty.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, your first supplementary.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, thank you.

Madam Speaker, I made reference to transfer of sovereignty because the whole process is not yet over.

Madam Speaker: No, question!

Mr Lesjongard: I had to rectify that, Madam Speaker.

Now, the hon. Prime Minister said there were regular exchange of communication between himself and the British Prime Minister. Can he inform the House what assurances, if any, was obtained regarding the timeline for the transfer of sovereignty to Mauritius? I am going to...

The Prime Minister: I already explained, Madam Speaker, that there is no timeline because of the disagreement that there is between the President of the United States and the

UK Government on the manner in which sovereignty should be given. They are speaking on their terms, not us.

Madam Speaker: Second supplementary!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, thank you. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether the Government has received any formal notice from the UK Government regarding the suspending of or withdrawing from the treaty? And if yes, will the hon. Prime Minister give details of this communication because we know decisions have already been taken in the UK?

The Prime Minister: There is no question and no communication on withdrawing. There is none. But there are exchanges.

Madam Speaker: Yes, third question!

Mr Lesjongard: May we know what is the reason for those exchanges? What is it about?

The Prime Minister: This is precisely why they are coming, I think, today, and they are meeting us tomorrow. We are continuing this.

Madam Speaker: Fourth question!

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether he has spoken to President Trump?

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister! Very interesting!

The Prime Minister: I barely think he will have time to do all this. He is very concerned with the war in the Middle East. But I have written to him, yes.

Mr Lesjongard: You have written?

The Prime Minister: Yes.

Mr Lesjongard: You have not talked to him?

The Prime Minister: No, no.

Madam Speaker: Fifth question!

Mr Lesjongard: Will the hon. Prime Minister agree that we have wasted a lot of time because of an ego issue with regard to this agreement?

Madam Speaker: This is imputing... You are imputing motives!

Mr Lesjongard: If he does not agree, ...

Madam Speaker: No, but you are imputing motives, which is not acceptable!

The Prime Minister: Of course, I do not agree!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: The deal that was agreed on the eve of the elections – unprecedented – was not a good deal. We improved on that deal. We cannot just come in as a new government and agree to what the previous government has agreed.

Madam Speaker: Fifth question, I think.

Mr Lesjongard: All of us recall what the hon. Prime Minister said in this House when I put a PNQ to him, and I quote –

“Let us not cross the bridge before we reach the bridge. Let us reach the bridge and then we will cross it.”

Hon. Prime Minister, the time has come to cross the bridge now. Therefore, ...

Madam Speaker: No, question! Question!

Mr Lesjongard: Therefore, can you inform the House what concrete steps Government intends to take to assert Mauritius’ legal sovereignty over the entire Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia?

An hon. Member: Irrelevant!

Madam Speaker: Including Diego Garcia. Yes!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, as I have explained, we have asked for legal opinion, which we have received, and we are not going to jeopardise the situation. That is why we are speaking to them.

Madam Speaker: Okay, sixth question!

Mr Lesjongard: The situation has got out of control, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Sixth question! No comments!

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House why the sum of Rs10 billion was included in the Budget 2025-2026 as revenue contingent on the Chagos Agreement despite the absence of a ratified treaty or a defined timeline, Madam Speaker?

The Prime Minister: As he said, the treaty has been signed. Ratification is something else, but the treaty has been signed.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: I think your seventh supplementary!

Mr Lesjongard: You do not have the money!

Madam Speaker: Do not comment, please! Especially not to me!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, I need to comment, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: No, you have to put questions!

Mr Lesjongard: Okay. The Government has made a three-year budget plan. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House how Government intends to address the shortfall of Rs30 billion over three years if the treaty is not implemented?

Mr Jhummun: *Profet maler!*

Mr Lesjongard: You will agree, Madam Speaker, ...

Madam Speaker: Don't put...

Mr Lesjongard: ... this *trou* is bigger than the *trou* Bheenick, Madam Speaker! Much bigger!

The Prime Minister: As I said, Madam Speaker, a treaty has been signed. This is why...

Mr Jhummun: *Inn al chek trou!*

Madam Speaker: *Chut!*

The Prime Minister: But then, you have this agreement between President Trump, the British Prime Minister and the officials, and this is why there is a delay.

Madam Speaker: Okay. There is a demand for question from your friend. No?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, one more question, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: And then, we have Mr Ramdass and also, Mr A. Duval because their questions have also been taken care of. Okay!

Mr Lesjongard: In the meantime, Madam Speaker, Mr Mandarin, the self-proclaimed First Minister...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: *Chut!*

Mr Lesjongard: ... has already settled on l'île du Coin. May we know whether Government is planning a settlement of Chagossians on the islands of Chagos, including Diego Garcia, and if you can inform the House, what logistical and financial provisions have been made, Madam Speaker?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, this is a premature question. Mr Mandarin...

Mr Lesjongard: No, I could not...

Madam Speaker: Don't comment while he is speaking!

The Prime Minister: Let me remind the Leader of the Opposition. Mr Mandarin acted from Britain. As a British citizen who is there, he went to Chagos. The British are dealing with this. There is a court case. There is an appeal on that case.

(Interruptions)

Yes, I have stated. Thank God, you are not the Prime Minister because you would have jeopardised everything. We need to get our Chagos Archipelago back. And this is what we are doing!

Mr Lesjongard: Nothing has happened until now!

The Prime Minister: Not the way you were doing. The way you were doing it, you would have jeopardised everything.

Mr Etwareea: Irresponsible!

Madam Speaker: Do you have another question?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, I will come later.

Madam Speaker: Okay. So, hon. A. Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Yes, thank you. Can I ask the Prime Minister, in light of the fact that he had a conversation with the Secretary of State on 23 December 2024, telling the Prime Minister to sign the deal because Trump would rip it up, and in light of his answer to the Private Notice Question which was put in this House on 04 February 2025, where he said –

“(...) why are we afraid of President Trump (...)? As if he will tear the agreement! In fact, it would be better to let him have a look. If it is a good agreement, why would he not agree?”

Madam Speaker: So, what is the question?

Mr A. Duval: The question is now: does the Prime Minister still hold the view that this was the proper way of going about, in light of the information he had received?

The Prime Minister: Absolutely, you are right. I think the former Deputy Prime Minister was right. Why do we have to hide behind what the US would say? They will see

the treaty anyway. But we proceeded on the basis that what has been agreed by the former government was not what we would have agreed. We have changed a few things. Not a few things, quite a few things. And we are now hoping that this will be ratified at some point.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Mr Ramdass does not want. Okay, because your question B/399 was also in that reply. Okay, fine.

Yes, next one!

Mr A. Duval: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister with regard to the former terms of agreement of the former deal and the present one, the Prime Minister of the UK, Sir Keir Starmer, says that they are both virtually the same, and has said that...

Madam Speaker: Please, put a question!

Mr A. Duval: That is the question! Does he agree with the statement of the Prime Minister Keir Starmer that here it is being sold as better off for political reasons, but that it is not, in fact, better off, but they are the same deals?

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Then, I will ask the hon. Member, if it was the same deal, why did we not sign it?

Mr A. Duval: Tell me!

The Prime Minister: Because it was a wrong deal! Madam Speaker, we had improved the deal. We were not prepared, as a new government, to come in and just sign the deal which was made, and which was not the right deal for us.

Madam Speaker: Yes, do you still have questions? Yes!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, I have more questions.

À écouter le Premier ministre...

Madam Speaker: Put questions!

Mr Lesjongard: ...s'il avait suivi les pas de ses prédécesseurs...

Madam Speaker: Ne faites pas de commentaires !

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: ...Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Pravind Jugnauth...

Mr Jhummun: *Asize do! Si pena kestion, assize!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: ...on aurait déjà signé ce traité, M. le Premier ministre.

Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether Government has already considered seeking compensation or back payments from the UK Government for the economic losses arising from the prolonged non-implementation of the sovereign transfer?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, how can this arise at this point? It does not arise.

Mr Lesjongard: It does not arise at this point?

The Prime Minister: No, it does not.

Mr Lesjongard: Okay. Last one, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House as to why the Chagos Archipelago has not yet been included in the Outer Islands Ministry, despite being constitutionally part of the Republic of Mauritius?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, perhaps, the hon. Leader of the Opposition does not realise, we do not have control over the Chagos Archipelago at this point. We have signed a treaty, but we do not have control.

Mr Lesjongard: You do not have control of ministries in this country?

Madam Speaker: Okay. If I understand, we have finished...

(Interruptions)

We have finished! We have finished with the PNQ!

Now, we go to PMQT!

Give me one minute! Mr Beehook is not here. So, B/398 has been withdrawn. B/399 was just replied by the Prime Minister.

CÔTE D'OR, SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE – INCENTIVE PACKAGE, COST & BENEFITS

(No. B/398) 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)

CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO – UK-MAURITIUS AGREEMENT – BIOT SUPREME COURT JUDGEMENT – CONSEQUENCES

(No. B/399) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Agreement signed between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius concerning the Chagos Archipelago including Diego Garcia, he will state the consequences, if any, of the judgment delivered by the Supreme Court (British Indian Ocean Territory) on 31 March 2026 on the ratification thereof.

(Vide Reply to PNQ)

Madam Speaker: So, you are right, hon. Jhummun. It is your turn!

**SBM HOLDINGS LTD – GOVERNMENT SHAREHOLDING – TOXIC LOANS
WRITTEN OFF (2014-2024)**

(No. B/400) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to SBM Holdings Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) percentage of shareholding of the Government of Mauritius therein, and
- (b) total amount of toxic loans written off over the period 2014 to 2024, indicating the –
 - (i) actions taken to recoup same;
 - (ii) names of the chairperson and head of the Credit Committee during the said period, and
 - (iii) responsibility of the Board of Directors in relation thereto.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, SBM Holdings Ltd is the holding and ultimate parent company of the SBM Group, which includes SBM Bank (Mauritius) Ltd. It is a public company public company limited by shares, and is listed on the Stock Exchange of Mauritius.

With regard to part (a) of the question, as at 31 March 2026, the Government of Mauritius holds a direct shareholding of 4.92% in SBM Holdings Ltd, for a market value of Rs987 million.

Concerning part (b) of the question, I assume that the hon. Member is referring to the loans made by SBM Bank (Mauritius) Ltd.

In this respect, I am informed that, for the period 2014 to 2024, the cumulative write-offs amounted to approximately Rs14.34 billion, compared to just Rs1.12 billion for the period 2004 to 2013.

On average, for the period 2014 to 2024, the Bank was writing off Rs1.3 billion annually, compared to an annual average of Rs100 million from 2004 to 2013. This represents a more than a tenfold increase, clearly reflecting a total disregard of basic banking

principles and a complete breakdown in the effectiveness of asset monitoring, risk management and internal controls over the period, that is, 2014 to 2024.

That was not just a systemic failure but a deliberate action to dilapidate the Bank's assets.

One must ask oneself why has the Bank been subjected to such a terrible fate! Two weeks ago, in this House I gave enough details about the plundering which took place at Silver Bank and before that, I had replied to a PQ on the Development Bank of Mauritius where, again, hundreds of million were given away to cronies of the previous regime without collaterals.

The Rs14.34 billion which had been written off by the SBM took place in the same vein as was seen in other banking institutions under the, I should call it a kleptocratic former regime. During the 10-year period, they stopped at nothing to loot the assets of various banks while their *protégés* at the Central Bank turned a blind eye on the regime's daylight robbery. That's what it was, Madam Speaker, daylight robbery.

The consequences have been significant. The profitability of the Bank was severely impacted, and its capital has been eroded.

Madam Speaker, this adds to the long list of scandals under the former regime, involving huge loans made to large corporates without proper scrutiny and due diligence. Surprisingly, these loans were provided without adequate collaterals and in some cases without any collateral at all.

The House will recall the total loan of Rs1.4 billion which was granted to Dhyonavartam Ltd, the operator of Maradiva Villas Resort & Spa, at a time when the company was already facing financial difficulties. Yet, they got another loan of Rs1.4 billion.

This includes a facility of approximately Rs470 million extended to Dhyonavartam Ltd in 2024 on the eve of the General Elections in spite of the fact that the then Credit Committee did not approve the loan. In spite of that, they were given the loan. Allegedly, this was overridden by the then Chief Executive of the Bank, Mr Premchand Mungur and this matter is being investigated by the FCC.

Madam Speaker, when we look at the period 2014 to 2024, the impaired loans were highly concentrated. Three companies alone were sufficient to erode the capital of the Bank to a point where a new capital injection had to be made.

The total loans granted to these three foreign companies, namely NMC Healthcare, Pabari Group and Renish Petrochem FZE, without adequate or no tangible collateral at all, amounted to Rs9 billion out of the total of Rs14.34 billion which represents approximately two-thirds of the total toxic loans for that period.

These impaired loans plummeted the profits of the SBM Holdings. In 2019, the SBM Holdings recorded a lamentable profit of Rs15 million only in contrast to the Rs2.7 billion in 2013. Look at the damage that has been done. That was an all-time low in the recent history of the Bank.

This is what the MSM regime did to the SBM, supported by their accomplices in the Bank of Mauritius.

In all these bank scandals which we have brought to light in this House, one must ask where was the supervisory responsibility of the Bank of Mauritius!

Fortunately, as from January 2025, the situation at SBM Bank has been improving, and the bank has proved to be quite resilient in spite of the past scandalous actions.

Madam Speaker, what has happened at the SBM, cannot and will not go unpunished.

With regard to all provisions and write-offs, internal investigations are already underway. A special dedicated team has been set up on 23 March of this year for this purpose and specialised investigators are being recruited. We need specialised investigators. It is acknowledged that, on the recovery side, the task will be challenging in the absence of tangible collateral. They just gave loans without collaterals.

The appointment of external consultants to assist with recovery and investigated efforts was approved by the Board in December 2025.

The focus is not only on the external parties, but also identifying with the Bank who have contributed to or enabled such transactions. Even individuals who may no longer be employed by or associated with the Bank will not be spared.

Madam Speaker, as regards to part (b)(i), I am informed that the Bank has taken several actions to recoup amounts due, including –

- (a) the realisation of collateral and securities, where there are collaterals;
- (b) the initiation of legal proceedings against defaulting borrowers, both locally and internationally, and
- (c) the implementation of recovery and restructuring mechanisms, where it would be appropriate.

As of now, an amount of Rs2.6 billion has been recovered by the Bank. I am informed that all avenues are being pursued to recover the dues.

As regards part (b)(ii), I am informed that from 2014 to 2019, it was a Board Credit Committee that made the credit decisions. The various chairpersons of this Committee were as follows –

- (a) from January 2014 to December 2014 - Mr Muni Krishna Reddy;
- (b) from January 2015 to December 2017 - Mr Nayen Kumar Ballah;
- (c) from January 2017 to March 2019 - Mr Mahmadally Burkutoola, and
- (d) from March 2019 to December 2019 - Mr Raja Krishna Chellapermal.

With effect from 2020, the responsibility for credit decisions was then entrusted to the Management Credit Forum. The chairpersons of this Forum for the period 2020 to 2024 were as follows –

- (a) from January 2020 to June 2021 - Mr Jorge Stock;
- (b) from July 2021 to January 2023 - Mr Anoop Nilamber;
- (c) from February 2023 to October 2023 - Mr Sanjaye Rawoteea, and
- (d) from November 2023 to December 2024 - Mr Premchand Mungur.

The House may wish to note that both the Board Credit Committee and the Management Credit Forum were managed by the Head of Credit of the Bank. The Head of Credit is responsible for assessing and making recommendations in respect to loan applications. Over the period 2014 to 2024, this position was occupied by the following persons –

- (a) January 2014 to July 2016 – Ms Pauline Seyave;

- (b) September 2016 to August 2021 – Mrs Veronique Lim Hoye Yee;
- (c) September 2021 to December 2022 – Mr Darmen Hurkoo;
- (d) January 2023 to December 2023 – Mr Rajnish Lutchmah, and
- (e) January 2024 to December 2024 – Mrs Veronique Lim Hoye Yee.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (b)(iii), I am informed that the Board of Directors has the responsibility to safeguard the Bank's assets and protect its clients' deposits. This involves ensuring sound banking operations, effective leadership as well as exercising overall control of its affairs. It also entails proper risk management and financial oversight through the establishment of a robust internal control system. The Board is thus responsible for minimising credit losses and write-offs as well as the initiation of appropriate recovery measures in respect of impaired loans.

It goes without saying, Madam Speaker, that the Board Directors failed miserably in their fiduciary duties.

Madam Speaker, when one connects the dots, it is evident that these toxic exposures are not isolated incidents but the result of a pattern of poor lending decisions, absence of controls and inadequate oversight for a number of years under the former Government. I would even add it was done deliberately.

Let me be very clear, Madam Speaker, this Government will not tolerate any form of mismanagement that undermines public confidence or jeopardises the integrity of our financial system.

As I have said on numerous occasions, these crimes will not go unpunished.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Okay. Hon. Second Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or.

POLICE FAMILY PROTECTION UNIT – NORTHERN DIVISION – CASES & JURISDICTION

(No. B/401) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Police Family Protection Unit, Northern Division, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the –

- (a) number of –
 - (i) cases handled category-wise since January 2026 to date, indicating the average response time and case resolution rate;
 - (ii) officers and ranks thereof attached thereto, and reasons for their frequent transfer since 2023 to date, and
- (b) jurisdiction thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, in 2022, the Police Family Protection Unit and the *Brigade Pour la Protection des Mineurs* were merged and restructured as the *Brigade pour la Protection de la Famille*.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a)(i) of the question, according to the Commissioner of Police, since 01 January 2026 to 17 April 2026, 198 cases have been handled by the Brigade pour la Protection de la Famille of the Northern Division as follows –

- 1) 132 cases of Domestic Violence of which –
 - (i) 50 were on physical abuses;
 - (ii) 48 on verbal abuses;
 - (iii) 22 on threats of violence.
 - (iv) 6 on psychological abuses;
 - (v) 5 on financial constraints, and
 - (vi) 1 on property damage.
- 2) 49 cases of Child Abuse of which –
 - (i) 40 were related to sexual offences;
 - (ii) 3 on offences of ill-treatment;
 - (iii) 2 on offences of assaults;
 - (iv) 2 on cohabitation of an adult with a child:
 - (v) 1 on abduction of child, and
 - (vi) 1 on bullying.
- 3) 17 cases of Elderly Abuse of which –

- (i) 12 were on psychological abuses, and
 - (ii) 5 on physical abuses.
- 4) Out of the 198 cases reported –
- (i) 27 accused in 27 cases have been either fined or imprisoned;
 - (ii) 12 cases have been resolved through first hand counselling by the *Brigade pour la Protection de la Famille* of the Northern Division;
 - (iii) 5 cases have been filed with no further action for the following reasons –
 - (a) in one case, the police has issued a warning to the accused;
 - (b) three cases were related to only precautionary measure, and there has been no follow up by the alleged victims;
 - (c) in one case, the victim withdrew her complaint.
 - (iv) 4 cases are pending trial in Court;
 - (v) for the remaining 150 cases, the enquiries are expected to be completed in four to five months and the case files would be submitted to the Office of the Director of Prosecution for advice.

In general, Police intervene in a prompt manner, within an average of 15 minutes of the reporting of any incident.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (a)(ii) of the question, I am informed that 14 Police Officers are currently posted to the *Brigade pour la Protection de la Famille* of the Northern Division and they are as follows –

- (i) 1 Police Inspector;
- (ii) 1 Police Sergeant;
- (iii) 3 Women Police Sergeants;
- (iv) 2 Police Constables, and
- (v) 7 Women Police Constables.

From 2023 to 16 April 2026, 13 Police Officers were transferred from the *Brigade pour la Protection de la Famille* and were replaced by 12 Police Officers. The transfer of Police

Officers is a common practice within the Force not only to enhance skills and meet administrative needs but also based on the exigencies of service.

As regards part (b) of the question, the *Brigade pour la Protection de la Famille* of the Northern Division has a main office at Piton Divisional Headquarters and another office at the Triolet Police Station. The Brigade also provides support to the Goodlands Family Support Services of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare. *The Brigade pour la Protection de la Famille* of the Northern Division has jurisdiction over 14 police stations from Tombeau Bay to Grand Bay and from Rivière du Rempart to Pamplemousses. All cases of domestic violence, child abuse and elderly abuse reported and investigated by 14 police stations are referred to the District Courts of either Pamplemousses or Rivière du Rempart.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Mr Beejan.

Mr Beejan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House that in view of statistics of previous years which clearly show that cases of domestic violence, child abuse and ill-treatment of elderly person have increased, will he direct the Commissioner of Police to reorganise this Unit by separating *Protection de la Famille* and that of Protection of minors? Thank you.

The Prime Minister: In fact, the police are doing that. They have applied but a lot of these appointments depends on the DFSC.

Madam Speaker: Yes, the second one.

Mr Beejan: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister to indicate whether, due consideration will be given for additional police officers having a broad knowledge in this specialised unit?

The Prime Minister: This is what I indicated. The Commissioner of Police is doing just that.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Was that alright?

Yes, okay.

So, next question then hon. Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue.

MAURITIUS POLICE FORCE – FINANCE & REVENUE SECTION – VACANCIES

(No. B/402) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in

regard to the Finance and Revenue Section of the Mauritius Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of current vacancies thereat, giving a breakdown thereof grade-wise, indicating when same will be filled.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the Finance and Revenue Section of the Mauritius Police Force is responsible for budget allocation, expenditure, and revenue collection in compliance with the Finance and Audit Act 2015. According to the Organisation Chart, the Section should comprise 62 officers from the Finance Cadre. Presently, the Section is staffed with 48 officers of the Finance Cadre in the following grades –

Manager, Financial Operations	-	Two
Assistant Manager, Financial Operations	-	Five
Principal Financial Operations Officer	-	Nine
Financial Operations Officer/Senior Financial Operations	-	Eight
Assistant Financial Operations Officer	-	Twenty-four

There are 14 vacancies for the post of Assistant Financial Operations Officer. 13 Police Officers, including two Police Sergeants, are posted to the Finance Section to assist in its daily operations.

Madam Speaker, on 09 May 2025, the Ministry of Finance had reported a total of 94 vacancies in the grade of Assistant Financial Operations Officer to the Public Service Commission. The vacancies were advertised on 20 August 2025. The candidates will be required to sit for a written competitive examination conducted by the Commission. That written examination is still being awaited.

The Mauritius Police Force has, on several occasions, informed the Ministry of Finance of the acute shortage of the financial cadre. The last correspondence sent to the Ministry dates to 10 April 2026.

Madam Speaker, I have requested the Public Service Commission to expedite the filling of vacancies that have remained unfilled.

Madam Speaker: One moment. Mr Caserne, you are alright? Okay.

Mr François: Just allow me to put a supplementary, Madam Speaker.

May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether, he is aware that the shortage of human resources as he mentioned at this department is causing a lot of *retard* of payment of passage benefits dues to many police officers who applied for same for medical, travelling and study purposes many months ago or I should rather say back since September, last year? Can needful be done to expedite matters thereat?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, that is why we have requested, through my office, to the Public Service Commission to expedite the filling of vacancies that have remained unfilled.

Madam Speaker: Yes, next question.

First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue!

PUBLIC SERVICE – RECRUITMENT PROCESS – MERITOCRACY & NON-DISCRIMINATION

(No. B/403) 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 service, he will state the measures being envisaged to ensure –

- (a) increased transparency and accountability in the recruitment process therein, and
- (b) that the principles of meritocracy and non-discrimination in employment are upheld through the strengthening of the powers of the Equal Opportunities Commission in line with the commitment taken in the Presidential Address.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, transparency in recruitment in the public service is crucial to ensure fairness, meritocracy, and public confidence in government institutions. Several measures have been implemented to enhance transparency.

The Public Service Commission and the Local Government Service Commission are bodies responsible for recruitment, appointment and promotion in the public service. Their independence helps prevent political interference and ensures that decisions are taken impartially.

Each post, Madam Speaker, in the public service is governed by a scheme of service, which clearly outlines the qualifications, experience, and skills required. Candidates are assessed through structured interviews, and in some cases, written examinations. This ensures that the selection is based on the above criteria and principles of meritocracy.

The E-Recruitment Systems at the Public Service Commission and the Disciplined Forces Service Commission allow vacancies to be advertised online and candidates can submit applications electronically. This ensures equal opportunity and allows better tracking of applications, thus reducing the risk of manipulation.

In addition, the standardised recruitment procedures applied across ministries and departments include clear guidelines for shortlisting interviewing and the final selection, which promote consistency and fairness.

As laid down in the Government Programme 2025-2029, my Government is committed to undertake major reforms to ensure that recruitment and promotion in the public sector are conducted in an enhanced and transparent and fair manner.

To that effect, the Public Service Commission is developing a modernised E-Recruitment System not only to receive online application, but also to carry out the automatic screening of applications to determine the eligibility of candidates. The Local Government Service Commission is working on an E-Recruitment System which will be introduced, I believe, early next year.

My Government will also introduce clear and standardised selection criteria and strengthen oversight mechanisms to ensure full accountability throughout the recruitment process. Furthermore, in view of the undue delays in the filing of vacancies, again, the Public Service Commission will re-engineer its administrative processes to expedite the recruitment process.

With regard to part (b) of the question, Government remains resolute in ensuring that meritocracy prevails and that no form of discrimination arises in employment.

In this respect, following preliminary consultations aimed at identifying the necessary amendments to be brought to the Equal Opportunities Act, my office has approached the Law Reform Commission to undertake a comprehensive review of the legal framework with a view to strengthening the powers of the Equal Opportunities Commission.

The Law Reform Commission has, accordingly, submitted a Discussion Paper entitled "Strengthening the Powers of the Equal Opportunities Commission", which provides an in-depth review of the Equal Opportunities Act and its interaction with the Workers' Rights Act 2019, and proposes a series of reforms aimed at reinforcing the legal and institutional framework governing equality in Mauritius.

The proposals put forward include, *inter-alia* –

- (i) the extension of the definition of status under the Act, and
- (ii) an improved coordination between the Equal Opportunities Commission and relevant institutions.

The Discussion Paper also contains an Equal Opportunities (Amendment) Bill in draft form provided for enhanced enforcement powers, including sanctions in cases of non-compliance.

Consultations have, accordingly, been initiated with key stakeholders, and the views received are currently being consolidated with a view to finalising the appropriate legislative and policy measures.

Madam Speaker, the Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal also acts as an oversight mechanism on decisions taken by the Public Service Commission and the Local Government Service Commission. Its main object is to hear and determine appeals made by any public officer or any local government officer against any decision of the Public Service Commission or the Local Government Service Commission, as the case may be, pertaining to an appointment exercise or to a disciplinary action taken against that officer.

Madam Speaker, may I remind the House that I introduced the Equal Opportunities Act and the Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal Act. This was done with the precise objectives to ensure that public officers have a mechanism to have redress if they think they have been aggrieved. In the past, this would take years. Now, with the tribunal, it does not. My Government has had the political will to take bold measures to create more opportunities for all components of our society. In the same vein, I am reiterating my engagement and that of my Government to ensure that recruitment in the public service is transparent, fair and based on merit.

Madam Speaker: Yes, first supplementary!

Ms Savabaddy: Merci, Madame la présidente. Puis-je demander à l'honorable Premier ministre s'il peut examiner les recrutements récents, par exemple, dans les autorités locales, où clairement ces principes de méritocratie et de non-discrimination n'ont pas été suivis ? Par exemple, seulement trois sur 123 dans un cas. Peut-il mener une enquête dessus ? Merci.

The Prime Minister: This is being done. Actually, I can say to the House that the Chairperson has resigned. He has submitted his resignation following that enquiry.

An hon. Member: *Bien bizin!*

Madam Speaker: Okay, second!

Ms Savabaddy: Merci, Madame la présidente. L'honorable Premier ministre peut-il considérer l'élargissement du champ d'intervention de l'*Equal Opportunities Commission* afin qu'elle soit plus efficace et non pas comme c'est le cas actuellement ? Cela prend six mois, par exemple, pour que la commission convoque pour la première fois la plaignante. *Justice delayed is justice denied.* Merci.

Madam Speaker: I think it has been replied. Anyway!

The Prime Minister: The short answer is: there is a huge backlog. The previous regime – and you know who was there – just did nothing!

Ms Anquetil: Exactement!

Madam Speaker: Yes, one for the hon. Member!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister with regard to the Equal Opportunities Commission, pending the Public Service Commission's propositions for reform and the Law Reform Commission, is the hon. Prime Minister agreeable to, at least, open up the application of the Equal Opportunities Commission to cases of discrimination at work in the public service so that they may enquire and take sanctions in the case of public servants, where they are victims of discrimination or other offences under the Equal Opportunities Act?

The Prime Minister: The Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal was made for that. But we will have to change the law, to amend the law to consider that.

Madam Speaker: There is a little confusion.

Anyway, next question! Hon. Second Member for Rodrigues!

RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY ACT – PROPOSED AMENDMENT

(No. B/404) Mr J. F. Francois (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 proposed amendments to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act, he will state where matters stand, indicating –

- (a) the number of proposals received therefor as at to date, and

- (b) whether the introduction thereof in the Assembly and enactment thereof can be expected prior to the forthcoming Regional Assembly Elections pending the introduction of the major proposed national electoral reform.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to refer the hon. Member to my reply to his Parliamentary Question B/1194 on the same subject. I had informed the House that on receipt of the proposed amendments from the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, consultations with relevant stakeholders would be undertaken with a view to ensuring a comprehensive review of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act.

On 27 February of this year, the Island Chief Executive of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has, following approval of the Executive Council, submitted proposals comprising fifteen amendments to key provisions of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

The proposed amendments relate, amongst others, to the definition and delimitation of Rodrigues, the qualifications of members of the Regional Assembly, the composition and functioning of the Executive Council, the autonomy of Commissions and Departments within the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, mechanisms for dispute resolution, creation of localities and recognition of villages and amendments to the Constitution.

These proposed amendments will have far-reaching implications on institutional arrangements, on the electoral framework and the consequential amendment to the Constitution. Consultations are underway with Attorney General's Office, the Electoral Commissioner's Office, the Ministry of Local Government, and the Department for Continental Shelf, Maritime Zones Administration and Explorations.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, the Electoral Commissioner has been consulted. He has emphasised that the best practice is to legislate and prepare reforms well in advance of the next electoral contest, and to ensure that such reforms are developed through broad and inclusive consultation involving both political and non-political stakeholders.

The proposed amendments to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act form part of a broader institutional and constitutional framework. Accordingly, all proposals for the amendments to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act must be considered as a whole and in an integrated manner.

In this context, I am proposing to set up a High-Level Committee to examine the proposed amendments to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act, undertake consultations and make appropriate recommendations.

Madam Speaker: Fine. Time is up, anyway!

I had mentioned PQ B/398 has been withdrawn.

Now, The Table has been advised that PQs B/408, B/409, B/411, B/413, B/414, B/415, B/417, B/418, and B/419 have been withdrawn.

So, now we go to questions addressed to hon. Ministers and I call – I hope I have got these all right because it is written everywhere. Let me just check.

I see PQs B/443, B/445, B/461, B/470 have been withdrawn. In case I have said it twice, please, forgive me.

Yes, hon. First Member for Rodrigues, Ms Collet!

RODRIGUES – SUPERAPP KOREK – IMPLEMENTATION & ACCESSIBILITY

(No. B/420) Ms M. R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the deployment and adoption of the SuperApp KOREK in Rodrigues Island, he will state –

- (a) the measures being envisaged to encourage the uptake and accessibility thereof for residents and institutions thereat;
- (b) the timeframe for the implementation or expansion thereof, and
- (c) whether any budgetary allocation has been earmarked in support thereof, particularly in respect of capacity-building.

Dr. Ramtohol: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I will be replying to PQ B/420, PQ B/466 together as they pertain to the same subject. Madam Speaker, the blueprint for Mauritius 2025/2029 is the strategic documents that recommends under the first pillar, the foundation of the state-of-the-art info structure. The implementation of an App that is built around life events to deliver simple and reliable, government to citizen, government to business and government to government services.

These document, Madam Speaker, is a reflection of the vision of the Ministry and unlike the previous regime, those documents do not just find their way in drawers, they do get implemented. The App KOREK is one such implementation. In this context, the App

KOREK has been established with the aim of consolidating fragmented government applications that consumed in the past, a lot of public funds with no value to the public – but now there is value that the public is deriving – that has been consolidated into a single window for all the users of our Republic.

It will eventually evolve into a fully-fledged SuperApp which will be based around the whole of government concept. So, every transaction what a person needs to do with the government from birth till the last day – whether it is about education, health, local authorities, permits, all those will ultimately be available in SuperApp and we have started that work already and these are bringing cost savings, citizen trust and convenience to citizens as well.

Therefore, KOREK represents a paradigm shift toward a proactive government, Madam Speaker, that anticipates citizen's needs rather than reacting to their requests. This approach strengthens social inclusion in public institutions and demonstrates government's commitment to leaving no one behind in our digital journey.

The first version, Madam Speaker, was made available on 30 January 2026 with the details of driving license and the digital Penalty Point System which we worked on together with the hon. Osman Mahomed and that gives citizens the possibility of them, online in real time consulting the number of penalty points in case there is any that we have acquired through road traffic offences.

At my Ministry, we have set a target of making available at least one new government, new service on KOREK every month. The last two services added on 03 April 2026, are, firstly, information that comes straight from the power grid of the Central Electricity Board and it provides color coding – red, yellow or green. So, people will understand real-time, any actions they need to take at home in order to optimize the use of power in currently difficult times.

We have also added Government Information Service, vacancies which are now centralised on the mobile App so that people seeking jobs find it easier to come onto the mobile phones and to find all jobs advertised in the public and in parastatal sectors.

With the help of my colleague. hon. Reza Uteem, we will soon also be making it possible for them to apply online through their mobile phones. The next addition will be the reporting of serious water leakages – we all know that we have a serious problem with that – and potholes on roads that could be safety hazards and lead to accidents.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, there are series of services that have been added and more will be added and this is phase 1. My Ministry is taking several measures to promote the

uptake and accessibility of the application among residents and institutions and these include: targeted awareness campaigns and collaboration with the Mauritius Digital Promotion Agency together with SILWF centers under hon. Ms Navarre-Marie. The colleges as well working with the inhabitants of the surroundings with the local authorities and various stakeholders so that we are able to touch a maximum number of people. There are so far, 406 000 Mauritians using this App, Madam Speaker, and we are actively pursuing further onboarding.

Furthermore, with respect to the deployment and adoption in Rodrigues Island, I wish to inform the House that a visit is planned in the coming days and to this end, my Ministry is liaising with relevant authorities in Rodrigues to plan engagement sessions to empower local ambassadors which so far has 3,058 users of this App in Rodrigues and we intend to replicate the same approach that we have taken in Mauritius for Rodrigues Island as well.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Lukeeram? No?

Hon. Ms Collet?

Okay, great, let us do one more.

Hon. Second Member for Mahebourg... Oh, sorry! I did not see you. You must ask me verbally sometimes.

Yes, please!

Mr Edouard: Thank you, Madam Speaker, may I ask the hon. Minister, if he is aware that there are incorrect entries sometimes and how he intends to address these?

Madam Speaker: Incorrect?

Dr. Ramtohul: Incorrect entries with respect to which service hon. Member, please?

Mr Edouard: The application concerning the residents, the data is sometimes incorrect – they do not give full information about what is on the application?

Dr. Ramtohul: Thank you for the supplementary question. There are different types of services which pertain to different ministries. For example, the Ministry of Transport, the Civil Status Division and others.

Therefore, in case of any discrepancy being identified, my request would be for the person to actually notify the relevant ministry, and I am sure there is a process for them to address that. We only use data that is available in those ministries. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Are you happy, hon. Edouard?

Mr Edouard: Yes, very happy.

Madam Speaker: May I propose that we do another question. Let me see.

So, now we are going to Second Member for Mahebourg. That is what I had said. Yes!

**CONSTITUENCY NO. 12 – DAMAGED ROAD SIGNS – REPAIR &
REINSTATEMENT WORKS**

(No. B/421) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the road signs reportedly damaged, faded or not clearly visible in Constituency No. 12, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof, indicating whether consideration will be given for the urgent carrying out of repair and reinstatement works thereof and the timeframe set therefor.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Madam Speaker, following the last general elections, the portfolio of maintenance of road traffic signs and road markings has been entrusted to my Ministry.

As per section 28 of the Roads Act, the maintenance of existing traffic signs and road markings falls under the purview of the highway authority, that is, the Road Development Authority for classified roads and that of local authorities for urban and rural roads – road C, for example.

Concurrently, maintenance of road signs is currently undertaken by the RDA, the local authorities and TRMSU of my Ministry. Accordingly, I have been informed that the RDA had carried out inspections on roads falling under its purview in the district of Grand Port covering also Constituency No.12 and it has been observed that out of some 233 traffic signs, 78 were found to be defective, either damaged or faded.

In August 2025, works order for the amount of Rs1.075 million was granted by the RDA under the framework agreement for maintenance and minor works for the reinstatement of traffic signs. As at date, all the 78 defective traffic signs have been replaced.

Madam Speaker, according to information obtained from the Ministry of Local Government, 250 defective or worn-out road signs have been surveyed by the District Council of Grand Port are non-classified within its administrative jurisdiction of Constituency No.12.

The estimated costs for the replacement of these road signs and posts amounts to Rs248,000. Works which will be undertaken by the in-house labour of the District Council Grand Port are expected to be completed within three months subject to funds being made available.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed by the TMRSU that the latter has worked out a road safety inspection report, whereby the following roads within Constituency No. 12 have been included for maintenance of traffic signs by the TMRSU –

- (i) A10 – Phoenix to Plaisance Road: 24.4 kilometres;
- (ii) B81 – Junction Road: 3.3 kilometres;
- (iii) B7 – Deux Bras Road: 10.5 kilometres, and
- (iv) La Barraque Road: 13.2 kilometres.

My Ministry has already approached the Ministry of Finance for the required funding to be made available in the next financial year, for implementation of these projects. Also to avoid duplication of works, the Local Authorities, RDA and TMRSU hold joint site visits to agree on the appropriate course of action to be undertaken.

I have to also stress Madam Speaker, that the maintenance of road signs is an ongoing exercise to ensure road safety and proper traffic management. Signs are often damaged due to road accidents and in some cases, acts of vandalism. I have also therefore requested the TMRSU to carry out regular inspections and initiate prompt repairs to keep signage visible, legible and effective at all times.

Madam Speaker: Yes?

Mr Apollon: Je remercie le ministre. Comme le ministre vient de le dire, il y a une grosse confusion même parmi les députés pour savoir quelle route doit être faite par le *District Council*, quelle route doit être faite par le *TMRSU*. Est-ce qu'à l'avenir nous pourrions discuter avec les autorités concernées pour faire qu'une seule autorité qui s'occupe des *signs* sur la route ? Parce que là on parle des accidents qui arrivent souvent, parce qu'on ne sait pas si c'est le *District Council* ou *TMRSU* qui doit s'occuper des *road signs*. Merci.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, you mentioned TMRSU and Local Authorities but there is also the RDA. I tend to agree with you but ultimately, my Ministry is responsible for coordination because like I said, after the elections of 2024, this portfolio has been entrusted to my Ministry.

Madam Speaker: The question was how are people going to deal with this, given that there are three different entities. How do they react? Through you? Through the Ministry?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Ministry of Land Transport.

Madam Speaker: Through the Ministry, you have got it. Okay, maybe we can have one last question, hon. Third Member for Rodrigues! Yes, hon. Ms Henriette-Manan?

MAURITIUS FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE & RODRIGUES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE – FIREFIGHTERS – TRANSFER REQUESTS

(No. B/422) Ms D. Henriette-Manan (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the transfer of firefighters between the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service and the Rodrigues Fire and Rescue Service since 2022 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of requests therefor received and the number thereof acceded to.

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, at the very outset, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply to Parliamentary Question B/303 dated 08 April 2025, which clearly sets out the legal and constitutional framework governing transfers between the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service and the Rodrigues Fire and Rescue Service. With regard to the specific question, I am informed that since 2022 to date, no request for transfer has been recorded and consequently, no transfer has been effected.

For completeness, Madam Speaker, prior to 2022, a total of 13 requests was received in 2019 from firefighters of Rodriguan origin, along with one individual request in 2021 and the reconsideration request in April 2025. However, none of these requests were acceded to, and therefore, no permanent transfer has taken place.

Madam Speaker, this situation must be understood within the existing legal and conditional framework. Under the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2006, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly is established as a separate body, corporate with responsibility for the fire services in Rodrigues. Consequently, distinct civil establishment orders exist for Mauritius and Rodrigues, creating two independent establishments, each with its own staffing structure, budgetary provision and administrative authority. Furthermore, under the Disciplined Forces Service Commission Regulation which governs the conditions of service of firefighters, there is no provision for permanent transfers between these two establishments. Any such transfer would therefore require a specific legal basis which does not exist actually.

Madam Speaker, in addition to this legal constraint, any transfer would raise practical consideration, including the availability of vacancies in Rodrigues, alignment of rank and seniority, operational requirements of the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service and the

confluence of the relevant institutional bodies. I am further informed that this matter has been subject to consultations with the Disciplined Forces Service Commission, the Public Service Commission and the Office of the Attorney General, and the Prime Minister's Office and remained under consideration at policy level as it would necessitate appropriate legislative and regulatory amendments.

Madam Speaker, in the meantime, the Government has adopted a legally compliant and practical approach to address the staffing needs in Rodrigues. A recruitment exercise was conducted in October 2025, following which, 11 firefighters were recruited, specifically for the Rodrigues Fire and Rescue Service and have already assumed duty in March 2026. It is also noteworthy that one previous applicant for transfer has successfully joined through this recruitment process, in line with the established legal framework.

So, Madam Speaker, to conclude, the position is clear. Since 2022 to date, no request for transfer has been recorded. Prior to that period, a total of 13 requests were made. However, none of these requests were acceded to and consequently, no transfer has taken place. This is due to the absence of legal provisions allowing for permanent transfers between the two distinct establishments under the current legislative and regulatory framework. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Ms Henriette-Manan, fine? I am going to give hon. Ms Collet first.

Mr François: Oh, okay. No, that is fine.

Madam Speaker: *C'est moi qui décide.*

Mr François: No, I did not realise. That is fine, Madam Speaker.

Ms Collet: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Minister confirm to this House whether his Ministry envisages the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding regarding those matters concerning the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service running in Mauritius and running in Rodrigues, please?

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister?

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, I just answered. So, all depends on the extensive consultation involving the Disciplined Forces Service Commission, Public Service Commission, Office of the Attorney General, and the Prime Minister's Office. It is not in my Ministry but we have already made the request. It is under consideration.

Madam Speaker: But you will use your good offices with all the ministries concerned.

Mr Woochit: Of course. We have already requested for it. Yes.

Madam Speaker: Of course. I thought that was it, yes.

Mr François: I have a very important question, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: *On va tomber là.*

Mr François: My question is, I listened well to the hon. Minister – if those firefighters who are on the Mauritian establishment applied at the Rodrigues Regional Assembly level and they are recruited thereat, can your Ministry see to it that if they get the job thereat, they carry their years of service with them? Is that possible? Do you see what I am saying? So, those firefighters who are here and have ten years of service, if they apply at the Regional Assembly level and they are recruited thereat, is it possible for them not to lose their years of service in Mauritius?

Madam Speaker: Is that a problem, hon. Minister?

Mr Woochit: No, because they... I just told that...

Madam Speaker: Do you know the reply?

Mr Woochit: No, no. No, I know the reply. I know the reply! Because there is no such legal impediment on this actually. No such legal impediment prevails actually.

Madam Speaker: You mean that if they go to Rodrigues, they carry on their years of service? That is what he is asking.

Mr Woochit: We can look into it.

Madam Speaker: What I suggest is that once you have heard this, you take time and then you will tell us.

Mr Woochit: Okay.

Madam Speaker: *Parce que c'est important.* Thank you very much everybody. I raise the Sitting for one and a half hour.

At 1.04 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.37 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Please be seated!

Hon. Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac!

POST OFFICES – RENOVATION & CLOSURE PLANS

(No. B/423) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the post offices, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Posts Ltd. and table the list thereof earmarked for renovation or permanent closure and in respect of the latter, indicate the –

- (a) reasons therefor, and
- (b) alternative measures being envisaged for the residents of the localities concerned therewith in relation to the services provided by same.

Dr. Ramtohul: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to refer to replies given to previous PQs, wherein I highlighted the difficult financial situation of Mauritius Post Ltd.

In reply to PQ B/424, from hon. Babajee, for the Sitting of 06 May 2025, I informed the House, among others, of the deficits being faced by Mauritius Post Ltd. and outlined the main reasons behind this situation. Subsequently, in my reply to PQ B/515, from hon. Beejan, for the Sitting of 13 May 2025, I, again, drew attention to the financial challenges being faced by MPL, and referred to an internal audit report which revealed that there were post offices operating at a loss.

I also informed the House that MPL was working on a turnaround plan, focusing on reviewing its business model, creating new revenue streams, restructuring its human resources and improving operational efficiency. The financial situation of MPL, today, remains challenging. However, corrective measures are being implemented in a phased manner and these are expected to progressively improve the performance of the organisation.

I am informed that following an assessment, MPL has identified post offices that are currently operating at a loss. While the option of closing these post offices had initially been considered as a cost saving measure, consideration has been given to the fact that closure is not the preferred course of action. Accordingly, closure of these post offices, as at date, is not conclusive. Instead, as a policy measure, MPL has been exploring the possibility of

repurposing these outlets under new business models while ensuring continuity of postal service delivery.

The above, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, addresses part (a) of the question. In light of this response, part (b) of the question does not arise. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien!

MAHEBOURG MUSEUM – RENOVATION WORKS & RE-OPENING

(No. B/424) Mr C. Lukeeram (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the Mahebourg Museum, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the expected re-opening date thereof, giving details of the renovation works which have been or will be carried out thereat.

Mr Gondeea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the National History Museum of Mahebourg, which is a national heritage building dated back to the French colonial period, had to be closed by my Ministry in December 2025 for renovation works as its roof had reached an advanced stage of deterioration with water ingress during rainy weather.

It is regrettable that no substantive action was taken by the previous government despite clear and repeated signs of deterioration over many years to preserve this important heritage asset, apart from the installation of a trampoline over the roof to prevent water ingress. This temporary measure proved ineffective, and rainwater infiltration over time has significantly damaged the timber structure of the building, thereby necessitating comprehensive renovation works.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in December 2025, during the cyclonic season, the museum was closed and all artefacts were relocated to safer locations in other museums under the Mauritius Museum Council. I wish to highlight that, initially, due to budgetary constraints, my Ministry had envisaged to carry out the roofing works in the first instance. However, following a reassessment of the overall condition of the building, my Ministry is now considering a comprehensive renovation of the museum instead of a phased approach as this would be more sustainable and beneficial in the long term.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the scope of works which would, *inter alia*, comprise a complete rehabilitation of the museum, re-roofing, replacement of wooden structure and

timber openings and its estimated cost are currently being worked out and will be taken into consideration in the context of budget preparation. Once the tender is finalised, launched and awarded, the renovation works are expected to take approximately one year to be completed.

The museum's scenography, on its part, will be worked out simultaneously with the assistance of the French Government, in line with the agreement signed on the protection and preservation of our heritage buildings. Accordingly, at this stage, it will be difficult for me to give an indication of the date of the re-opening as this will depend on the completion of all the procurement processes.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the objective is not merely to re-open the museum, but to restore it as a modern, resilient and nationally significant heritage institution. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes!

**SODNAC WELLNESS PARK & FARQUHAR RECREATIONAL PARK – STRAY
DOGS – SAFETY MEASURES**

(No. B/425) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the persistent presence of stray dogs at the Sodnac Wellness Park and the Farquhar Recreational Park, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare, information as to the measures being envisaged in relation thereto, including ensuring the safety of the persons visiting the said parks and the welfare of the dogs.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, hon. Member. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, nice to see you in the Chair. Welcome back!

I am informed by the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare that in response to concerns regarding stray dogs at Sodnac Wellness Park and Farquhar Recreational Park, no less than 10 interventions were carried out around the area of Sodnac Wellness Park and Quatre Bornes. Furthermore, the Director of MSAW had a meeting with the Mayor of the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, the councillors and local dog feeders to address the situation of stray dogs in the area. That meeting was held on 11 December 2025.

A key outcome of the meeting was the identification of unused State land that could be converted into dog sanctuaries to facilitate the relocation of stray dogs. Land has already been

identified at Riche Lieu for construction of a dog shelter, and the Engineering Unit of my Ministry is working on the design and technical drawing of the shelter.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to tackle the issue of stray dogs at Sodnac Wellness Park as well as Farquhar Recreational Park and to ensure that the parks remain protected, the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare will be sterilising the dogs thereat, and where appropriate, these dogs will be released under the Catch Neuter Release Programme.

Also, well-meaning but misguided people feeding the dogs near the parks will be asked to relocate the feedings spot to avoid gathering of dogs. Dogs exhibiting aggressive or dangerous behaviour have been managed separately and will be managed if ever they are called upon to address this issue to save separately, to safeguard the safety of park visitors and staff.

The Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare alone cannot ensure the safety of persons visiting the park, other concerned stakeholders should also provide assistance as follows –

- The security personnel have been requested to remain vigilant at all times to prevent entry of dogs and neighbouring residents have been informed and sensitised to ensure that their pet dogs are properly controlled and not allowed to roam freely;
- The Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change has agreed to the inspection of fencing – it's well-fenced, I must say it but around the park except there are a few holes here and there that have to be repaired – to restrain dogs from entering and using these apertures;
- Community cooperation is vital to reducing the stray dog population, not only in and around the park but also around the island.

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, M. le président. Je remercie le ministre pour sa réponse. Le ministre peut-il indiquer à la Chambre du calendrier prévu pour la relocalisation des chiens errant vers les nouveaux refuges compte tenu du danger que représente ces chiens qui poursuivent les marcheurs dans les deux parcs ? Merci.

Dr. Boolell: It's difficult to give a specific reply but my hon. friend can understand that much is being done to address the problem despite the limited resources which MSAW has. But we need to appeal to one and all. I am also appealing to those who have dogs that

whenever they take their dogs out to make sure that it's on leash. Most of the stray dogs are due to the fact that, you know, as citizens, we don't also live up to our expectation but we have identified sites. You know, one of those sites identified is Richelieu where those dogs can be transferred and relocated.

Ms Anquetil: Une dernière question, s'il vous plait ?

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, last one!

Ms Anquetil: *Une petite, merci. Je vous remercie, M. le président.* After the relocation of the dogs, will the hon. Minister state what services will be provided in the new shelters to ensure the welfare of the animals? Thank you.

Dr. Boolell: You can rest assured that welfare of animals is of great concern to one and all. You just have to refer to the provisions of the legislations and whoever fails to live up to expectation can be subject to a maximum fine.

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

***ASSOCIATION MAURICIENNE DE BADMINTON – MANAGING
COMMITTEE – DISSOLUTION & COMPOSITION***

(No. B/426) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the interim committee set up by his Ministry following the dissolution of the Managing Committee of the Association Mauricienne de Badminton on 10 March 2026, he will state the composition thereof, indicating the criteria for the selection and appointment of the said members.

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Deputy Speaker, my Ministry dissolved the Managing Committee of the Mauritius Badminton Association on the 10 March 2026 pursuant to section 9 (9) of the Sports Act 2016. In accordance with section 9 (9) (c) (ii) of the Sports Act 2016, a Temporary Committee, and not an interim committee as stated by the hon. Member, has been set up. The mandate of the temporary committee is to organise fresh election within three months. By way of a letter dated 10 March 2026, my Ministry informed the Mauritius Olympic Committee of its decision to dissolve the Managing Committee of the Mauritius Badminton Association. It was further consulted the Mauritius Olympic Committee with respect to the setting up of a Temporary Committee pursuant to section 9 (9) (c) (ii) of the Sports Act 2016.

In that spirit, my Ministry invited the Mauritius Olympic Committee to nominate one person to serve as a member on the Temporary Committee. On 18 March 2026, I even had a meeting with the president of the Mauritius Olympic Committee and on that same day, the latter informed my Ministry that they had referred the matter to the legal department of the International Olympic Committee.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 31 March 2026, the Mauritius Olympic Committee informed my Ministry of its decision not to participate in the Temporary Committee for the time being unless so agreed by the International Olympic Committee.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the temporary committee is chaired by Mr Nicolas Boli, the latter is a member of the board of Directors of the Mauritius Multi-Sports Infrastructure Ltd. The two other members are as follows –

- Mr Soudesh Kumar Appadoo is the Acting Assistant Director of Sport at my Ministry and is a desk officer for badminton, and
- Mrs Ragini Junkeesaw Sunjhoreea is an Acting Principal Inspector of Associations;

Mr Emrith, a Sports Officer from my Ministry, is the Secretary.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that there are no established criteria under the present legislation for the selection and appointment of the members of a Temporary Committee, that is, being said the overriding criterion is the availability and commitment of the members to make arrangement for the holding of election within three months of a fully-fledged new Managing Committee. I repeat myself, Mr Deputy Speaker, that there are no established criteria under the present legislation for the selection and appointment of the members of a Temporary Committee.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, avec votre permission. L'honorable ministre peut-il dire à la Chambre pourquoi il s'obstine à nommer des activistes politiques à des postes décisionnelles ? Alors que nous savons tous qu'il faut à tout prix éviter de mélanger le sport à la politique ou la politique au sport et là je fais référence à la nomination de M. Nicolas Boli en tant que *Chairperson*, président du comité temporaire dont l'honorable ministre lui-même vient de nous informer ?

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister!

Mr Nagalingum: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, that being said, there is nothing that prevents a person who is active in politics to be involved in sports as well. When a person is chairing the Temporary Committee, there is no political affiliation or not but is doing its job independently.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, je ne comprends pas comment peut-on au niveau du *Sports Act*, il est stipulé que les activistes politiques, que les personnes engagées en politique n'ont pas le droit d'être des membres et de présider une fédération et là, par rapport à un comité temporaire, un *caretaker committee*, qui va supposément remettre en ordre toute une fédération de badminton...

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question!

An hon. Member: It's a statement!

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question, please!

Mr Quirin: *Guet to zafer twa!*

Ceci dit, M. le président, le ministre est-il au courant que la Badminton World Federation qui est la fédération internationale de badminton reconnaît toujours le comité dissout par le ministère des sports et lui confère même le pouvoir d'engager des athlètes dans des compétitions internationales et avec votre permission, M. le président, je dépose une copie de la lettre adressée au président sortant de la fédération de badminton par le président du World Badminton Association ?

Mr Nagalingum: I don't really get your question exactly what you want to ask. Put your question straight and I am going to answer you.

Mr Quirin: My question is very straight, *M. le président*.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, put a straight question!

Mr Quirin: Je demande à l'honorable ministre, est-ce qu'il est au courant que la Badminton World Federation qui est l'instance suprême du badminton au niveau international, cette instance reconnaît toujours le comité qui a été dissous et lui confère, à ce comité, le pouvoir d'engager des athlètes dans des compétitions internationales ? Est-ce que l'honorable ministre est au courant, a-t-il pris connaissance de la lettre qui est parvenue au président sortant de la fédération de badminton ?

Mr Nagalingum : Je suis au courant.

The Deputy Speaker: The next question. Hon. Second Member for Grand Baie & Poudre d'Or.

KINGS ROAD, GOODLANDS – NEW CENTRALISED TAXI STAND – STATUS

(No. B/427) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the proposed setting up of a new centralised taxi stand in Goodlands, he will state whether a plot of State land located at Kings Road, in Goodlands has been earmarked therefor and, if so, indicate where matters stand regarding the vesting of the said land therefor.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the NLTA that presently, there is no designated taxi stand in Goodlands. Taxis with base of operation at Goodlands and adjoining localities of Goodlands, operate from side roads to the royal roads, which serve as passenger generating catchment areas.

I am also informed that following a request from the Riviere du Rempart District Council, a joint site visit was carried out on 08 October 2025 at Plateau Road, Goodlands, in the presence of the three elected members of the Constituency No. 6 to consider the creation of a taxi stand thereat to accommodate taxis currently operating in the locality.

However, the proposal was not retained as the road is relatively narrow with a width of approximately 4.6 metres and is also used by 30-seater buses operating along route 187, Melle Jeanne to Bel-Mont traffic centre.

The NLTA is not in the presence of any proposal for a taxi stand at Kings Road, Goodlands, which is part of the question. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to the NLTA, there are 107 taxis licensed in the area of Goodlands with different designated bases of operations. Appointing an official taxi stand in accordance with section 103 of the Road Traffic Act, will entail operational issues as it will exclude 35 taxi operators licensed at adjoining bases in Goodlands. This is the principle, actually. Those places are Atlas Road, Bois Rouge, CEB Road and Melle Jeanne for accessing the facility. This will give rise to constant source of dispute and ongoing friction between those based in Goodlands and those not based in the main village.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there is a plot of state land of an extent of 757.7 m² at Kings Road about 50 metres from the main road which is vested in the Prime

Minister's Office currently. I am further informed by the District Council of Rivière du Rempart that the road is narrow, 4 metres wide instead of 6 metres. The more so it is served by feeder buses and has no reserves which causes accessibility issues and is therefore not suitable for taxi stand parking thereat. I can table the letter for the information of the hon. Member, the one from the District Council of Rivière du Rempart.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. Table that. Finished?

Mr Osman Mahomed: To end, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I invite the hon. members to pursue consultation at their level and identify a suitable plot of land at Goodlands following which, the NLTA will be requested to have a joint site visit with the stakeholders concerned namely the TRMSU and the police to assess the viability of the site and feasibility of the project.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. Supplementary.

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

The Deputy Speaker: Still on Kings Road in Goodlands? The Minister has taken quite a bit...

Mr Beejan: Exactly. Will the hon. Minister inform the House, in view of Goodlands taxi current corners at Plateau Road, Goodlands, Atlas Road Goodlands, Arya Mandir Road, Goodlands and even near police station which are high demand areas, if we can conduct a site visit together with you and relevant authorities at the soonest possible?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, I will be very pleased to do that. Last week, I attended a site visit at your neighbour, Constituency No. 7. I will be very glad to do that.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Fourth Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue.

Mr A. Duval: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It is good to have you back by the way. Glad to see you. B/ 428.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS INTERCEPTION & MONITORING – COURT ORDERS – EXECUTION MECHANISMS

(No. B/428) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Attorney-General whether, in regard to the interception and monitoring of telecommunications, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the

number of Court Orders issued by the Supreme Court of Mauritius in relation thereto since January 2025 to date, indicating the –

- (a) number thereof executed, and
- (b) mechanism in place for the execution thereof.

Mr Glover: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the House would know, for a court order to be issued, there must be an application made for such a court order. And, in view of the subject matter of the question, it is clear that such court orders would only be applied for by investigative agencies.

Now, the hon. Whip of the Opposition must know, as a law practitioner, that all such applications are usually made before the judge in Chambers, the more so *ex parte* so that it would be impossible for the information sought to be obtained.

Furthermore, the question seeks to have information about operational issues at the level of investigative agencies like the police and the FCC and my view is that there is no ministerial responsibility to answer such a question as it relates to operational issues pertaining to these agencies.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House may wish to note that by virtue of Section 161 of the FCC Act, no information relating to any investigation can be divulged and the exception provided for under the law would not apply to parliamentary questions.

Moreover, it is worthy to mention that under section 13(1) of the FCC Act, even the Parliamentary Committee which includes members of Parliament is precluded from seeking information regarding any investigation.

Mr A. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my question relates to the functioning, the mechanism in place as to the implementation of Judges' Order. As the Attorney General, can he enlighten us as to how, in practice, Judges' Order is effectively adhered to by whichever institution that maybe when it comes to interference and the monitoring?

Mr Glover: The answer remains the same; it is an operational issue and we are not going to divulge any information regarding operational issues at the level of investigative agencies. *Le secret de l'instruction, M. le président, est d'une importance capitale.*

Mr A. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask...

The Deputy Speaker: If you have a specific case, ...

Mr A. Duval: Yes, I am not going to argue with the hon. Attorney General and seek the answer that he is not going to give. However, what I am going to ask the hon. Attorney General is, I will refer him to the statement here made by the hon. Prime Minister with regard to acknowledging that there has been a monitoring of telephone conversation and that the said system had been shut down. That was the assurances given in this House during the answer to my own question in PQ B/6 dated 04 February 2025.

In light of this, I would like to ask the hon. Attorney General, whether, yes or no, has the system been shut down and are Judges' Orders thus being implemented or not in light of the statement?

Mr Glover: There are two questions within one. I will answer the first part of it. The first part is whether the answer given by the hon. Prime Minister to PQ B/6 and thereafter PQ B/15 is still true today and the answer is yes.

Mr A. Duval: The last question.

The Deputy Speaker: You have had enough.

Mr A. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one last question?

The Deputy Speaker: No.

Hon. Ms J. Bérenger.

**RENEWABLE ENERGY HYBRID FACILITIES PROJECTS – SPV 30MW
BELLE VUE 2 & 3 LTD – POWER PURCHASE AGREEMENT**

(No. B/429) **Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal)** asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Renewable Energy Hybrid Facilities projects in respect of SPV 30MW Belle Vue 2 Ltd. and SPV 30MW Belle Vue 3 Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to whether –

- (a) there has been any breach of their Power Purchase Agreements due to delays, unmet Conditions Precedent and repeated changes of site;
- (b) the injection of power at Belle Vue will be maintained in accordance with the provisions thereof, and
- (c) the landowners have notified of their intention to legally challenge the wayleaves requested by the said companies.

Mr Assirvaden : M. le président, je souhaite aborder en priorité la partie (c) de la question.

Selon les informations communiquées par le Central Electricity Board, le raccordement des deux projets au sous-station de Belle Vue dépend en grande partie du *way-leave* sur des terrains appartenant à Novaterra. Or, dans une lettre en date du 8 décembre 2025 adressée à Corexsolar International (Mauritius) Ltd, et dont copie m'a été transmise, Novaterra a clairement signifié son refus d'accorder ces autorisations. Il y est expressément indiqué que toute tentative du promoteur, donc Corexsolar, d'aller de l'avant dans ce sens, se heurtera à leur opposition légale.

M. le président, dans ce contexte, il apparaît que les sociétés Belle Vue 2 Ltd et 30MW Belle Vue 3 se trouvent aujourd'hui dans l'incapacité d'obtenir les accès nécessaires, le *way-leave*, ce qui constitue un obstacle sérieux à la concrétisation de ces projets.

S'agissant de la partie (b) de la question, je suis informé par le Central Electricity Board que, conformément aux dispositions des *Power Purchase Agreement (PPA)*, le raccordement de ces deux projets au réseau électrique est prévu au niveau de la sous-station de Belle Vue. Je suis également informé que ces dispositions ne feront l'objet d'aucune modification.

M. le président, s'agissant de la partie (a) de la question, je suis informé que les retards accumulés dans ce projet ne relèvent pas du hasard, mais trouvent leur origine dans des décisions contestables, prises sous l'ancien conseil d'administration du Central Electricity Board, alors sous l'autorité du précédent gouvernement.

En effet, il apparaît clairement que deux changements successifs de site ont été approuvés après l'attribution du contrat, ce qui constitue, à mon avis, une entorse sérieuse à la logique même du processus d'appel d'offres. Le premier déplacement de Belle Vue vers Baie du Tombeau, a été validé le 9 novembre 2023. Le second, de Baie du Tombeau vers Mare d'Australia, a été approuvé le 15 avril 2024.

M. le président, ces décisions prises sans un cadre suffisamment rigoureux et en totale rupture avec les paramètres initiaux du projet ont inévitablement désorganisé sa mise en œuvre. Elle porte aujourd'hui une responsabilité directe dans les retards constatés et soulève à juste titre des sérieuses interrogations quant à la gestion de ce dossier à l'époque.

M. le président, je suis informé par la *Central Electricity Board* que les sociétés de Belle Vue 2 et Belle Vue 3 n'ont toujours pas rempli les conditions prévues, les conditions

préalables, donc les *conditions precedent* dans leur PPA. Donc, ces projets enregistrent des retards répétés dans l'obtention de plusieurs autorisations essentielles, notamment –

- Pas d'*EIA* ;
- Pas de *LCP*, et
- Pas de *BLUP*.

M. le président, ces retards liés à des procédures administratives sont évoqués comme relevant des cas de force majeure au sein des dispositions des PPA. Sur cette base, le promoteur a sollicité et a obtenu une déclaration de force majeure pour une durée de six mois, suivie d'une période de *look and see* d'après les PPA de trois mois.

Je suis informé que la période de *look and see* pour le projet de 30 MW de Belle Vue 2 a pris fin le 31 octobre 2025. Donc, l'année dernière. Tandis que celle relative de 30 MW de Belle Vue 3 s'est achevée le 14 avril 2026, il y a quelques jours de cela. Compte tenu de la situation, mon ministère a sollicité et a obtenu, à cinq reprises, l'avis juridique de la *State Law Office*. Les implications juridiques et financières d'une éventuelle résiliation des contrats d'achat d'électricité ont été clairement établies.

M. le président, à l'heure où je vous parle, plus de trois ans se sont écoulés depuis la signature du PPA en février 2023 entre la *Central Electricity Board* et *Corexsolar International*. Pourtant, le promoteur ne dispose toujours pas d'*EIA*, du *Land Conversion Permit*, du *Building and Land Use Permit* ni des *wayleaves* liées à ces projets. Par ailleurs, la finalisation du financement demeure suspendue à l'obtention de l'ensemble des autorisations.

M. le président, comme je l'ai indiqué, pour Belle Vue 2 et Belle Vue 3, la majorité des *wayleaves* nécessaires à la mise en œuvre de ces deux projets se situent sur des terrains appartenant à Novaterra. À ce jour, les promoteurs n'ont pas obtenu les *wayleaves* requis auprès de Novaterra.

M. le président, le 1 octobre 2025, le promoteur a invoqué l'article 37A – le promoteur, Corexsolar – de la loi sur l'électricité de 2024 afin de tenter d'obtenir ces *wayleaves* par voie légale. Le 17 octobre 2025, Terra Group et Novaterra ont formellement rejeté la demande de *wayleave*, exprimant une opposition claire, explicite et sans équivoque. Le 17 novembre 2025, le promoteur a notifié à Terra Group et à Novaterra son intention de saisir l'*URA* à défaut d'accord dans un délai de 21 jours. Ce délai a expiré le 7 décembre 2025, l'année dernière, sans qu'aucune autorisation n'ait été accordée.

Le 8 décembre 2025, Novaterra a réitéré son refus catégorique et a confirmé son opposition à la demande des *wayleaves* ainsi qu'à toute démarche ultérieure du promoteur. Le 6 janvier 2026, cette année, Corexsolar a saisi l'*URA*. Le 16 janvier 2026, une demande de détermination de *wayleave right* a été déposée auprès de l'*URA*. Le dossier est actuellement en cours d'examen.

M. le président, la chronologie que j'ai mise en avant il y a quelque temps, met en évidence un point central : le refus constant, répété et formalisé du groupe Terra d'accorder les *wayleaves* indispensables à la réalisation des projets. Malgré l'activation des dispositifs légaux et plusieurs démarches successives du promoteur, aucune autorisation n'a été obtenue.

Les positions de Novaterra ont été claires, répétées et sans ambiguïté avec un refus explicite de toute demande de *wayleaves* ainsi que de toute démarche ultérieure. Dans ces conditions, M. le président, les projets de Belle Vue font face à un obstacle fondamental et définitif sur un élément essentiel de leur mise en œuvre. Il ne s'agit plus d'une difficulté administrative, ni d'un différend en cours de règlement, mais d'une impossibilité concrète d'obtenir les *wayleaves* nécessaires au vu du refus maintenu par le propriétaire foncier.

Dès lors, M. le président, ces projets ne disposent plus de base réelle de réalisation. Leur mise en œuvre apparaît compromise de manière structurelle. Ce qui fait que le projet est voué, à mon avis, à une mort naturelle.

Ceci dit, M. le président, il a été décidé, en toute responsabilité et après un examen rigoureux de la situation juridique et contractuelle, de demander de manière générale au *board* de la *Central Electricity Board* d'examiner la résiliation de ces deux contrats de Corexsolar.

Il ne s'agit pas d'une décision prise à la légère. C'est une décision dictée par la réalité des faits, par l'intérêt public et par la nécessité de protéger la crédibilité du système énergétique du pays, de la *CEB*. On parle ici de 60 MW. M. le président, la *CEB* mettra en œuvre les procédures requises conformément aux dispositions prévues dans les PPA.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Member!

Ms J. Bérenger: Je remercie l'honorable ministre. Peut-il nous dire combien de pénalités ont été appliquées jusqu'à l'heure et combien ont été effectivement reçues ?

Mr Assirvaden: Les pénalités qu'on a appliquées jusqu'ici, c'est deux fois R 30 millions. Donc, R 60 millions ont été appliqués. Et là, le promoteur a un dépôt à la *CEB*, de mémoire, autour de...

Ms J. Bérenger: R 210 million.

Mr Assirvaden: Autour de ce montant, oui.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes!

Ms J. Bérenger: Est-ce que ce dépôt sera retenu en cas de résiliation du contrat ?

Mr Assirvaden: Je me suis posé la question moi aussi. Le *CEB* m'a expliqué ; je vous dis légalement comment cela va se faire.

Donc, *the CEB shall first issue a notice of intended termination to the promoter*. Ce qui va être fait si le *board* prend la décision, comme je l'ai indiqué, ici. *The CEB shall grant the promoter 15 days' time to make a representation*, selon le PPA. *The CEB may, after the end of the 15 days period, whether or not in receipt of such representation, in its sole discretion, issue the termination notice*.

Pour répondre à votre question, en ce qui concerne *the development security*, on refer to *clause 6.2* du PPA qui dit que "*Development security is encashed when there is a seller default and in case of termination due to force majeure, the CEB shall release the development security*."

Donc, c'est au département légal et le dossier va aller à la *SLO* pour décider la marche à suivre à ce moment-là.

The Deputy Speaker: Last one.

Ms J. Berenger: Une précision pour plus de clarté. La *Central Electicity Board* n'avait-elle pas déjà donné son accord pour issue le *notice of termination ? Of intended termination ?*

Mr Assirvaden: Non, pas encore.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Third Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil!

DRAMA, MUSIC & ARTS PROMOTION – INFRASTRUCTURE

(No. B/430) **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.

Mr Gondeea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to the question, I wish to state unequivocally that this Government attaches the highest importance to the development of appropriate infrastructure for the promotion of drama, music and the arts amongst our youths.

It is true that given the prevailing situation, the construction of a new large-scale infrastructure cannot be undertaken indiscriminately and must be carefully prioritised within the national budgetary framework. However, while the current economic context requires prudence, this Government is taking concrete steps to prioritise and sequence projects in a responsible and sustainable manner, unlike in the past, where investments were not always aligned with national priorities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when this Government took office, the arts and culture sector was characterised by years of neglect. Key facilities, including the Serge Constantin Theatre (SCT), had remained closed and underutilised for prolonged periods, depriving an entire generation of young Mauritian of access to proper artistic platform. Decisive actions have since been taken.

The SCT has been partly rehabilitated and reopened in September 2025 and further investments are going on at both the SCT and Pointe Canon Open Air Theatre to expand access and increase capacity for youth engagement in the arts.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the same time, my Ministry is not waiting passively for new infrastructure to materialise. We are actively maximising the use of existing facilities including the Conservatoire Nationale de Musique Francois Mitterrand Trust Fund and its regional branches as well as four *Centres de Formation Artistique* situated at Paillotte, Mahebourg, Plaine des Papayes and Bel Air Rivière Sèche whilst continuing to examine how access to artistic training and practice may be further broadened.

In that connection, one of the avenues that we will explore is the use of the other government buildings and other regional facilities to bring drama, music and arts activities closer to the youth. This matter will be considered more fully in the context of the work of the National Arts Open Commission once set up, so that any such approach forms part of a coherent and sustainable strategy for the sector.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to seize this opportunity here to inform the House that my Ministry has already launched calls for drama Festival in Urdu and English language. The preliminaries are due to start in May 2026 with finals in June 2026.

In addition, the *Centres de Formation Artistique* are offering the following courses in artistic fields such as music, dance, drama and arts till the end of May 2026 and new courses will start in September 2026. Needful is being done at the level of my Ministry to recruit some 30 additional part-time instructors in all artistic fields to deliver the courses.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me be very clear, the issue at end is not only one of infrastructure but one of national urgency. In a context where our youths are increasingly exposed to social ills including drug abuse and delinquency, it would be irresponsible for my Ministry and this Government to remain passive. Arts and culture provide structured engagement, purpose and discipline and form part of a broader strategy to safeguard our youths and strengthen social cohesion.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government is also actively pursuing international partnerships including with India to secure the provision of musical instruments and technical support, thereby accelerating access to training without placing undue pressure on public finances. Furthermore, the forthcoming and NAOC will bring for the first time a coherent and strategic direction to the sector, ensuring that future investments in infrastructure are targeted, impactful and aligned with long-term national vision.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government is not only committed to building infrastructure when resources permit. It is already delivering results expanding access and correcting years of systemic neglect. The objective is clear – to ensure that every young Mauritian with talents in the arts is given the opportunity, the space and the support to develop their talent.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix!

VACOAS URBAN TERMINAL PROJECT – CONSTRUCTION – STATUS

(No. B/431) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the development and construction of the Vacoas Urban Terminal Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix, information as to where matters stand.

Mr Woochit: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to thank the hon. Member for this question regarding the development and construction of the Vacoas Urban Terminal Project.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the request for proposals for this project was launched on 13 February 2024 and closed on 14 May 2024. Since the closure of the bidding exercise, no letter of award has been issued, no promoter has been selected and no contractual agreement has been entered into.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for public procurement is governed by the strict principal of fairness, transparency, value for money and due diligence. In this context, I wish to emphasise that under the Clause 14 of the request for proposal – Government reserves the right to amend, vary or withdraw the process at any time without incurring any liability. Subsequently, in the absence of any award of contract, there exist no legal obligations towards any bidder nor financial liability accrued to Government. This position is fully in line with established procurement rules and supported by the legal advice.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am aware that correspondence and representations have been received from interested parties including joint venture entities. However, such exchange form part of a normal clarification process in any procurement exercise. They do not constitute any commitment, undertaking or promise to by Government nor do they confer any right or entitlement to any party.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the request for proposals set out stringent and comprehensive requirements. Bidders are required to submit preliminary conceptual designs, detailed business plans, feasibility studies and financial structures. They must also demonstrate the financial capacity to mobilise financing of the order of Rs800 million, provide audited financial statements and annual report for the last five consecutive years and show proven experience in project of similar scale and complexity.

Given the magnitude, complexity and financial implication of this project, it would have been premature and contrary to good governance, to proceed with any award without ensuring full compliance with these requirements and without a thorough evaluation in accordance with procurement rules.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government is therefore also undertaking a comprehensive reassessment of the project. This includes ensuring proper integration with National Transport Planning Framework, alignment with the requirements of key stakeholders such as the National Land Transport Authority and strict compliance with the bus station and taxi

stand requirements. It also involves a review of the technical specification and operational model as well as a reassessment of the financial structure to ensure long-term sustainability and value for money. This ongoing process explains why no further updates have been issued at this stage to certain stakeholders.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the position is clear. The project has not been cancelled; no promoter has been selected – the Government retains for discretion under the request for proposal. Any decision to proceed with taken only after the completion of all legal, technical, financial and administrative evaluation in full compliance with government policies.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Member!

Mr Lobine: Yes. May I ask the hon. Minister in as much as there is no clear-cut policy, whether this is being shelved or you are being ahead with the Vacoas Urban Terminal, may we know the timeframe as to what proposals Government will come forward because in this region, the lands that were being earmarked are being used for the time being to cater for traffic problems within the Vacoas Market Fair. So, is there any clear-cut policy in the near future for this Vacoas Urban Terminal, whether it is going or not?

Mr Woochit: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, far from any delay or inaction from the Ministry, this matter is being handled with the utmost diligence and responsibility. It will be in a very transparent and in the best of the public. By the way, if traffic condition is in Vacoas, we can clear with the Council, upon availability of fund, we can clear the land for the additional parking space for the market.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. The hon. Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes, carry on!

NTC – COUNTERFEIT SPARE PARTS PROCUREMENT – INQUIRY

(No. B/432) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the alleged procurement of counterfeit spare parts by the former management of the National Transport Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether an inquiry has been initiated thereinto and, if so, indicate where matters stand.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to first thank the hon. Member for her follow-up question on the NTC following PQs B/370 of 15 April 2025 and B/430 of 06 May 2005 during which I had replied that the Financial Crimes Commission was

carrying out an enquiry on the counterfeit spare parts procured by the former management of the NTC and that the enquiry was still going on.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House will recall my informing on the extreme mismanagement and corrupt practices then prevailing at the NTC which has resulted in the dire situation in which the corporation is today, both at operational and financial levels.

I am informed by the management of the NTC that one fifth of its fleet of buses is being kept off the roads due to breakdown and spare parts issues, although these buses are within the legal age of authorising them to be operational, that is, 21 years of age. We are talking about a hundred buses. That is why in November 2023, in PQ B/1405, during my days as an Opposition MP, I had questioned the then Minister of Land Transport on the alleged malpractices occurring at the NTC. The population will recall how the then Speaker had brutally and vehemently prevented me from addressing additional questions to the then Minister. The reason for then suppressing facts...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, the question is simple; whether there has been an inquiry and where matters stand.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, I am coming to it.

The Deputy Speaker: Can we please stick to the question?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes.

The Deputy Speaker: We do not want to go back to the ex-Speaker ...

Mr Osman Mahomed: Okay. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the General Manager of the NTC this morning that several spare parts items have been purchased by the then management at prices that range for more than three times, even going up to 25 times higher than current spare parts. Nobody in the House by any stretch of imagination could ever believe that an item could be acquired 25 times more than its normal price. This is sheer daylight robbery.

As a matter of fact, the NTC has provided me with a long list of such abusive purchases, which list is not exhaustive. I am tabling a list of eight items for which there are supporting documents for the information of the House. The long list is still being compiled but I have it with me anyway. I have also with me a list of 29 items where the NTC is still compiling like I said, supporting documents and wherein it appears that some items have been acquired more than 60 times, like I said. In addition, counterfeit spare parts were also

acquired at high prices equivalent to the price of genuine spare parts or some items even higher or repeatedly stated to me by hon. Jugurnauth himself in the domain, particularly on the purchase of crank shafts, which example I had mentioned in the House before. I have today with me supporting documents which prove that the crank shaft has been purchased four times more than its current market price, that is Rs365,000 each instead of Rs89,600 at current market price. This appalling situation of mismanagement and corrupt practices resorted to by the former management is the reason as to why 20-25% of the fleet today is off the road like I mentioned.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as per information provided by the NTC, a single supplier of spare parts, AB World Spare Parts Ltd has benefitted over Rs380 million of businesses between 2020 and 2024. It was the preferred supplier of the previous management under underlying reasons therefore for an easy guess. Based on the extremely abusive prices paid to that supplier as evidenced by documents I will table, the NTC has had to spend hundreds of millions of rupees more on spare parts than purchased. This money could have certainly been used more judiciously to acquire scores of new buses for the benefit of the NTC and of the travelling public. It is necessary to underline here that the former General Manager of the NTC, Mr G. R. R. has been formally charged with an offense for Public Officials using Office Gratification by the FCC in December 2025, in connection with a contract of procurement of bus tyres. I am tabling a copy of the communiqué issued by the FCC on 22 December 2025.

The communiqué also underlines that the matter has already been referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions. The House will surely take note that in spite of the fact that the NTC was plagued with corruption and an inquiry was initiated by the FCC against the former General Manager since May 2023, that is, way before the general elections of November 2024, the previous regime maintained Mr G. R. R. in post unscathed. I wonder why so much leniency was shown and no immediate measure taken to prevent any possible interference in the inquiry. I am going to finish soon. I even asked myself whether the motive for no financial accounts to be filed by the NTC for some ten years prior to 2025 was not meant to deliberately hide disturbing facts and figures.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the FCC is currently enquiring into the supply of counterfeit spare parts acquired during the period 2020 to 2024. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thanks. Who got a supplementary?

Ms Anquetil: I got two, please.

The Deputy Speaker: One by one. Let us hear the supplementary.

Ms Anquetil: *Thank you.* Je vous remercie, M. le président. L'honorable ministre a évoqué une très longue liste de la CNT comportant des prix excessifs, notamment pour des pièces de rechange prétendument contrefaites. Pourrait-il en déposer une copie de la liste complète ? Merci.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I had mentioned I will communicate the communiqué and the first list and the long list that the hon. Member has requested for is here with supporting documents.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, thanks. One last one.

Ms Anquetil: *Last one, thank you.* Merci, M. le président. Le ministre peut-il indiquer à la Chambre les mesures concrètes qui seront prises eut égard à ce grand préjudice causé à la CNT dont il porte la responsabilité en sa qualité de ministre ? Merci.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Well, like I mentioned in my substantive reply, there appears to be two cases, one for which it has already been lodged at the Financial Crimes Division of the Intermediary Court and the second one, the enquiry is still ongoing as regards the long list that I mentioned.

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

**VALETTA BYPASS – SPEED CAMERAS – PROJECTED INSTALLATION –
EXPECTED OPERATION DATE**

(No. B/433) Mr 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.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, you got the floor again!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, short answer.

Mr Osman Mahomed: I have ten PQs on me today, so, quite lengthy.

The Deputy Speaker: Try to be brief, straight to the point.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Okay. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that following a site visit on 24 April 2025 at the junction of Valetta bypass B6 and the Morcellement VRS 2 side road, the TMRSU proceeded with the installation of fixed speed camera along Valetta bypass. This decision was reached in consultation with the elected Members of Constituency No. 8 as well as village councillors and representatives from the Police to enhance road safety. I have to mention that hon. Venkatasami has always been following on this issue, time and again.

As such, the works order for civil works for the installation of speed camera was issued on 10 November 2025 for a value of Rs409,250.50 inclusive of VAT and the speed camera equipment was installed in December 2025 at the identified locus. The CEB subsequently completed the works by the installation of additional poles in February this year. I am further informed that the traffic signs for the speed camera were installed on 01 April 2026 and the road markings were completed on 10 April 2026.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to reply to the specific question of the hon. Member, I am pleased to inform the House that the speed camera is already operational since yesterday; Monday 20 April 2026. The speed limit for the area is 60 km/h. A communiqué has even been issued to that effect.

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

**ANSE RAFFIN, RODRIGUES – UNSTABLE BOULDERS – INQUIRY REPORT –
PREVENTION MEASURES**

(No. B/434) Ms M. R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the incident whereby unstable boulders rolled onto the coastal road near Anse Raffin, in Rodrigues, on 05 April 2026, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether an inquiry has been initiated into the causes thereof and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the outcome thereof and table copy of the report thereof, if any, and
- (b) whether consideration will be given for the planning of prevention measures for future works, including slope stabilisation and protective works, in close collaboration with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly that following the incident whereby unstable boulders rolled onto the coastal road near Anse Raffin, in Rodrigues, on 05 April 2026, a survey was conducted by the Deputy Chief Commissioner's office. The findings of the survey indicate that the embankment is unstable over a stretch of approximately 115 metres with an average height of about 15 metres. The instability has been attributed to prolonged landslide and erosion over time.

I wish to inform the House that the geotechnical unit of my Ministry as well as the Road Development Authority have not, as at date, received any formal request to investigate the matter. Nevertheless, my Ministry stands committed to carrying out the necessary investigations and providing appropriate technical guidance upon request from the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly that remedial works are being envisaged, including slope stabilisation through major earthworks and the construction of a masonry retaining wall.

I am further apprised by the Geotechnical Unit of my Ministry that given the geomorphological characteristics of the area, the risk of recurrence remains significant and further assessments would be necessary to determine appropriate long-term mitigation measures. These include –

- (i) detailed geotechnical surveys to identify high-risk zones;
- (ii) construction of retaining structures where necessary;
- (iii) the installation of rockfall barriers, and
- (iv) afforestation and vegetation reinforcement along vulnerable slopes.

The RDA has, on its part, indicated that it will continue to collaborate with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, under the existing framework of cooperation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry remains committed to working closely with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to ensure that appropriate measures are implemented to enhance the resilience and safety of road infrastructure in Rodrigues. As such, a team comprising officers from the Geotechnical Unit and the RDA would proceed shortly to Rodrigues for a survey.

Mr François: Just to extrapolate on what the hon. Minister is saying, will the survey be carried out only on this specific site or will they be looking at the other susceptible landslide or unstable terrains around the island?

Mr Guinness: I am sure the hon. Member knows that we have a Memorandum of Understanding between the RDA and the RRA. So, if the RRA requests a survey in any region, since the geotechnical team and the RDA will be going there, it will be with much pleasure that I will ask them to carry out the survey where necessary.

Mr François: If they do not do so, can I request same?

Mr Guinness: I beg your pardon?

Mr François: If they do not request, can I request it? There are some problem sites, like Grand Baie and Baladirou. Can you look into it as well?

Mr Guinness: You can send a formal request to the Ministry.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Third Member for Montagne Blanche & Grand River South East!

VAPING DEVICES – SENSITISATION & PREVENTION MEASURES

(No. B/435) Dr. R. Saumtally (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the vaping devices, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the measures taken or being envisaged to curb the said practice, including sensitisation and prevention programmes in educational institutions to raise awareness of the health risks and legal implications associated therewith.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mauritius initially regulated the consumption of vaping devices and e-cigarettes in 2008, through the Public Health (Restriction on Tobacco Products) Regulations 2008, by limiting the importation of such products strictly to personal consumption.

Subsequently, vaping has been prohibited since 2023. Under the Public Health (Restriction on Tobacco Products) Regulations 2022, vapes are categorised as Electronic Nicotine Delivery System and Non-Nicotine Delivery Systems, and these are banned. The

regulations clearly define vapes and extend prohibition to accessories used with devices, including filters and tubing.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House may wish to note that, globally, vaping devices exist as both disposable and non-disposable products. However, under the current legislation in Mauritius, no distinction is made between these categories, and both are prohibited.

The enforcement of the ban on the sale and import vapes multi-stakeholder effort, involving border control with the Customs Division of the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) as well as local enforcement by Public Health and Food Safety Inspectorate of my Ministry and the Mauritius Police Force.

I am further informed by the MRA that the number of passengers screened upon their arrival at the airport in 2025 were 27,443, and as at 15 April 2026, a total of 7,142 passengers had been screened.

The methods of detection applied regarding the import of vapes include the scanning of passenger luggage, cargo and courier consignments as well as the physical inspection and examination of such items. Additionally, intelligence and information sharing, together with this profiling, are used to support detection efforts.

The House may also wish to note that, as part of the enforcement efforts by the MRA, a total 4,927 vaping devices and accessories were seized and destroyed in 2025, while 1,155 units have been seized and destroyed as at 15 April 2026.

Additionally, at the level of my Ministry, a total of 59 squad operations were carried out by the Public Health and Food Safety Inspectorate in 2025, during which, 1,280 premises were visited. For 2026 and as at date, seven squad operations have been conducted, and 52 premises were visited.

With regard to part (b) of the question, my Ministry, through its Health Information, Education and Communication Unit, is actively implementing awareness and sensitisation campaigns in educational institutions on the harmful effect of tobacco use, including vaping. The programmes aim to educate students on both the health risk and the legal implications associated with tobacco products and vaping.

Sensitisation activities include –

- school-based awareness sessions and talks;
- collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Human Resource and other stakeholders, and
- development of informational materials, including a pamphlet on vaping, currently under preparation by the Tobacco Control Unit.

From January 2025 to date, a total of 662 awareness sessions has been conducted on the ill effects smoking and vaping, reaching an estimated 7,556 students across primary schools, secondary schools and Mauritius Institute of Training and Development institutions.

In addition, my Ministry, in collaboration with the Attorney General's Office, the World Health Organisation and local NGOs, has been conducting regular training sessions on tobacco regulations since 2023 to strengthen enforcement capacity.

I am also informed that mass media campaigns were conducted in 2024 with the emphasis on tobacco regulation and the ban on vaping. In 2025, six Health Information, Education and Communication Officers were trained on tobacco-related issues, including vaping. Additionally, vaping was addressed as part of tobacco cessation efforts and six radio and television programmes in 2025.

I would like to inform the House that for 2026, my Ministry will be holding a campaign focusing on the harmful effects on tobacco use with particular emphasis on illicit vaping and capacity building workshops.

A training workshop in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Human Resource will be held to further raise awareness on the consequences of tobacco and nicotine consumption with a specific focus on vaping. New sensitisation materials are currently being developed to address vaping among students and the general population.

My Ministry is also collaborating, through a standing committee, with the Ministry of Education and Human Resource to revise the School Management Manual (2009) so as to incorporate vaping as a key component of tobacco control policies in schools.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart!

PAEDIATRIC WARDS – PARENT’S PRESENCE POLICY

(No. B/436) **Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to children admitted in paediatric wards of public hospitals, he will state the policy regarding the presence of the parents at the bedside thereof, indicating whether his Ministry is in presence of complaints to the effect that fathers are not allowed thereat and, if so, indicate the remedial actions taken in relation thereto, if any and, if not, why not.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the policy of the Ministry of Health and Wellness is founded on the principles of family-centred and child-friendly care, which recognises the presence of parents or guardians contributes positively to emotional comfort, reassurance and recovery of hospitalised children. I am also informed that all children below the age of 16 years are admitted and managed by paediatric units.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as a general rule, one parent or authorised guardian is allowed to remain with the child at the bedside, subject to prevailing ward regulations infection, prevention and control measures, security requirements, the medical condition of the patient, and the need to preserve privacy, safety and comfort of other patients in the ward.

Paediatric wards are predominantly staffed by female healthcare personnel, who facilitate a supportive and appropriate environment for the care of admitted children. In line with the current practice, mothers are encouraged to stay with their hospitalised children in those wards to allow mothers to breastfeed their babies, thereby promoting child’s welfare.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the current health system, general wards are considered as common wards with common toilets and showers for all patients. As such, public hospitals do not have private wards with attached toilets and bathroom. In some wards, dedicated seating arrangement are available for only one accompanying parent, whilst in others, space limitations, ward configuration or ongoing clinical activity may require adjustment.

I am informed that allowing the presence of parents, including fathers or guardians, are addressed on a case-to-case basis by the Ward Manager, Nursing Administrator and hospital management, taking into consideration the best interests of the child, medical advice, ward circumstances and any special considerations. As such, appropriate flexibility is exercised whenever circumstances permit.

I am further informed that a complaint was received by the Acting Regional Health Director of Flacq Hospital regarding the stay of a father with a son aged 14 months on 12 April 2026. Given that no side wards were available at the Hospital, necessary arrangements were made to provide a suitable space to accommodate both father and his son in Cardiac Ward. However, the father refused the proposal and absconded from the hospital with the child. A precautionary measure was lodged at the Police Force by the Duty Manager on call and the Child Development Unit was informed accordingly. I wish to point out that in this particular case, as already mentioned above, only female nurses are looking after children.

In addition, there were mothers who are breastfeeding their children and, in these circumstances, it wasn't appropriate to allow the father to stay in the ward. Necessary arrangements were therefore made for the father to stay in another ward.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes!

Dr. Prayag: Would the hon. Minister confirm that this policy that they have is not apt for single fathers and maybe, he will also confirm whether this same father had sued the previous government, Ministry of Health in the past, and got money for that?

Mr Bachoo: I am not aware what the father did earlier. But one thing is clear, how can I allow, how can the government or the Ministry allow that the fathers to be in wards where mothers are breastfeeding their children, this is illogical. It cannot be accepted and nobody will accept and all the Superintendents of all the hospitals are unanimous on this issue. We have given the father the chance of staying in the cardiac ward. We offered him, he refused and then he absconded, he took the child and ran away. So, in such a case, he is an irresponsible parent and I don't have anything more to say on that.

Dr. Prayag: Would the hon. Minister agree that there are side wards in paediatric wards, side rooms for such cases and also in that case, if we follow this logic then male doctors should not be working in paediatric wards?

Mr Bachoo: I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I would request the hon. Member to visit Flacq Hospital. There are no side wards there. In that hospital, provisions are made. How can I allow a male to be with children, small kids where the mothers are breastfeeding their children. This is impossible, unacceptable, immoral and unethical. It can never be accepted.

The Deputy Speaker: You have made your point hon. Minister. The hon. Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka!

BEAU BOIS – CUT-OFF DRAIN PROJECT – PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/437) Mr P. Venkatasami (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the proposed implementation of a cut-off drain project at Beau Bois, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Land Drainage Authority, information as to where matters stand.

Mr Guinness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Land Drainage Authority that the region of Beau Bois was very severely impacted following several past flooding events. The primary cause of flooding in the area has been attributed to construction activities carried out along natural drainage paths without adequate consideration for storm water evacuation. Consequently, surface run-off originating from the upstream sugarcane fields flows towards the residential areas adversely affecting the region.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that a preliminary topographical survey of the region has been conducted by the LDA and the following proposed mitigation measures have been earmarked –

1. Cut-off drains upstream of the residential area, the construction of a cut-off swale drain is being proposed upstream of the residential area to prevent storm water from channelling into the residential area. The collected run-off will then be directed to a safe discharge point at the Rivulet Cresson, located some 100 metres from the B49 Road.
2. Ripailles – La Nicolière Road B49, upgrading of the existing road side drains to ensure adequate hydraulic capacity and fitted with metal grating where necessary for proper ingress of surface run-off. Upgrading of the culvert crossing the Ripailles – La Nicolière Road B49, next to Beau Bois Football Ground. Reprofile the road surface to direct maximum surface run-off to propose upgrading of road side drains and cross drains. Clean existing drain along the Ripailles – La Nicolière Road B49, where warranted to ensure proper functioning.
3. Lateral roads, Seeburuth Lane, Mungra Lane and Chady Lane. Construction of road side drains along the lateral roads with full metal grating modules and

required cross drains based on site conditions, directing storm water to a safe and proper discharge point. Reprofile the road surface to direct maximum surface runoff to the newly proposed side drains and cross drains.

4. Immediate measures undertaken by RDA, regular cleaning of existing drains along B49.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that the project is still at the inception stage at the level of the Land Drainage Authority and once approved by its board, the project will be implemented by the designated agency, that is, either the NDU, the RDA or the DICL.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes!

Mr Venkatasami: Will the hon. Minister consider to earmark fund in the next coming budget for this project?

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said, we are at the inception stage, obviously, once the design and everything will be ready, we will go for financial clearance.

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

NATIONAL LAND TRANSPORT AUTHORITY – BUS ROUTE 16D – DELAYS – REASONS & MEASURES

(No. B/438) Dr. R. Sauntally (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the implementation of Bus Route 16D, namely, Rose Hill via Belle Rose, Clémencia and Camp de Masque Pavé to be operated by buses operating along Route 16, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to the reasons for the delay thereof, indicating the –

- (a) timeframe set therefor and
- (b) immediate measures being envisaged to address the difficulties being faced by commuters in the said regions.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the NLTA that three buses owned by individual operators are licensed to provide bus services along route 16D (Rose Hill, Place Margéot – Central Flacq via Bel Air, Cité La Lucie, Belle Rose, Clémencia

and Camp de Masque Pavé). However, only one bus is effectively providing service on this route. This bus operates a single trip daily, departing from Central Flacq Bus Station at approximately 5.45 hours in the morning towards Rose Hill via Bel Air and Clementia. The three buses hold a dual licence also authorising them to operate along Road 15, that is, Rose Hill to Flacq via Quartier Militaire, which is a more lucrative road. Therefore, they focus on their operation on that route instead of 16D.

I am made to understand that the limited level of service along route 16D is mainly attributable to a very low passenger demand along the route including in localities as such Petite Cabane, Clémencia and Belle Rose, during the day.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following representations from the hon. Member and a letter dated 24 March 2026 from a representative of the Moka-Flacq Bus Owners Cooperative Society Ltd, operators serving along Route 16 and 16A, have expressed their willingness to operate along route 16D, which is part of your substantive question, on a daily roster basis.

In this context a meeting is being scheduled at the level of the NLTA with operators of Bus Routes 15 and 16, tentatively, on 23 April 2026, that is, day after tomorrow, to examine the proposal with a view to improving the frequency of operation and reliability of services along Route 16D. The timeframe for implementation will be determined following consultations with all stakeholders concerned. The NLTA will, however, take prompt remedial measures to ensure an adequate service along Route 16D.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is also to be noted that alternative public transport is available along Route 113A, that is, Port Louis, Victoria Square – Bel Air, which serves Camp de Masque Pavé, Belle Rose, Clémencia and Petite Cabane. Some shortcomings have also been reported on services along this route as well as these are being looked into and they are being looked into by the NLTA. Again the paucity of number of passengers in these localities being the main reason for the reluctance of bus operators to provide the required services.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the NLTA under the direction of my Ministry has intensified enforcement and crackdown operations across key regions to address irregularities in bus operations. Sustained monitoring with unannounced inspection are being effected on a regular basis with a particular focus on non-compliance such as route breaking and failure to operate scheduled services. Where breeches are committed, the NLTA is establishing contraventions and in case of recurrence, disciplinary actions against the license holders will

be initiated. These on-going crackdown operations would be further intensified to ensure strict compliance, restore discipline among operators and safeguard the reliability of public transport services for commuters.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to also inform the House that the forthcoming Fleet Management System for which tenders are currently being evaluated will be a game changer in bringing efficiency in our bus public service.

In addition, my Ministry is working on the Bus Services Bill which will regulate the services standards and operations of buses.

To end, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I also wish to reassure the hon. Member that in this context, due attention will be given to the services along Road 16 D. With the arrangements being made by the NLTA, the service will hopefully meet community needs.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Member.

Dr. Saumtally: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I want to bring to the attention of the hon. Minister of Land Transport that Route 16D namely, Rose-Hill via Belle-Rose, Clemencia and Camp de Masque Pavé, already exists on NLTA website, and is operated by buses of Route 16 D. Can the hon. Minister look into it, please?

Mr Osman Mahomed: I won't be surprised that it is so. Like I said earlier, there is low passenger demand for that particular route because there are almost no travellers but in the meeting that is going to happen day after tomorrow, I will ask the chairperson to particularly look at this issue.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle.

NOUVELLE FRANCE – WATER PUMP FAILURES – MEASURES

(No. B/439) 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.

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, la CWA m'informe que le nouveau réservoir de service de Nouvelle France a une capacité de stockage de 2500 m³. Elle fournit de l'eau à 3530 abonnés dans les régions de Nouvelle France, Grand Port Road, partie basse d'Union Park et de Savanne Road. Ces régions bénéficient d'une alimentation en eau intermittente. L'eau provient de deux forages à Nouvelle France et du réservoir de 16ème Mille.

La CWA a annoncé avoir pris plusieurs mesures pour améliorer l'approvisionnement en eau. Ainsi, afin de remédier rapidement aux pannes fréquentes de pompes survenues ces derniers mois, la CWA a remplacé la pompe défectueuse. De plus, pendant les périodes de coupure, à titre de mesure palliative et jusqu'à ce que l'approvisionnement en eau soit rétabli, la CWA fournit des camions-citernes aux consommateurs des régions de Nouvelle-France et d'Union Park selon les besoins.

M. le président, j'ai également appris que la CWA envisageait le forage de puits supplémentaires dans la région, qui seraient équipés de pompes de secours afin de maintenir un approvisionnement constant en eau en cas de panne d'une pompe sur ces sites.

À moyen terme, M. le président, la CWA procédera au renouvellement de la conduite principale sur une longueur approximative de 1,2 km, entre le commissariat de police de Nouvelle-France et le rond-point de Nouvelle-France, dans le cadre du programme de remplacement des tuyaux financés par la ligne de crédit indienne. Ce renouvellement permettra d'accroître l'efficacité du réseau parce qu'il y a beaucoup de pertes bien sûr, de distribution et le volume d'eau alimentant le réservoir. Ce projet devrait être achevé d'ici deux ans.

En outre, la possibilité de forer un nouveau puits en amont du réservoir de Nouvelle France est envisagée afin de compléter ledit réservoir. Ce n'est rien de définitif ce nouveau forage.

À terme, une fois la station d'épuration de La Marie modernisée, la CWA prévoit d'accroître les prélèvements d'eau du réservoir du 16ème Mille, alimenté par celui de La Brasserie. Ceci devrait améliorer l'approvisionnement en eau de la région Nouvelle-France.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr Seeburn: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House as to how effective and reliable the short-term measures would be, being given that the inhabitants of Nouvelle France have been deprived of water shortages on a regular basis?

Mr Assirvaden: Je voudrai dire a l'honorable membre que les pannes que nous avons eues, M. le président, nous avons eu trois pannes dans cette région de Nouvelle France. Il y a eu le 10 février, le 12 février, le 26 février. Donc, deux pannes que nous avons eues sont les problèmes d'électricité du CEB qui est arrivé le 10 et le 12, et le 26 février c'était en raison de fluctuation.

Vous savez dans les pompes que nous mettons soit sur le réseau soit dans les réservoirs – donc sur le réseau, les pompes sont abimées un peu plus rapidement. Donc, ce que nous avons fait, comme je l'ai dit dans ma réponse initiale, c'est que nous allons mettre deux pompes de secours à côté des pompes existants afin de maintenir en approvisionnement constant. Donc, bien souvent quand une pompe tombe en panne, cela prend du temps a la CWA pour intervenir. Donc, cela prend beaucoup temps et après avoir retirer l'eau, le réseau se retrouve à sec. Il faudra enlever l'air. Donc, cela prend beaucoup de temps, le *flushing* comme on dit dans le jargon. Donc, ce que nous faisons dans cette région c'est que nous mettons une pompe de secours pour que l'eau soit un peu plus constante.

Mr Seeburn: Being given that the long-term solution will take two years for implementation and the fact the hon. Minister has stated that for the short-term measures, there will be two additional new pumps that will be fixed so as to resolve the issue, do we know the time-frame for those two new pumps that will be fixed?

Mr Assirvaden: Ce sera fait assez vite parce qu'il n'y a pas que dans le long terme mais en moyen terme, nous pensons aussi faire des forages. La possibilité de forer des nouveaux puits en amont et aussi nous avons acheté, nous avons passé une commande pour 15 CPF au cout de R 320 millions. Les *containerised plant filters* que nous allons mettre dans les rivières tout autour de Nouvelle France pour améliorer la distribution. Mais il y a dans l'immédiat, les pompes, dans les moyen termes, les forages et dans le long terme le changement de tuyaux et aussi d'autres projets.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/441, B/450, B/458, B/473, B/485, B/489, B/491, and B/492.

The next question is the hon. Fourth Member for Rodrigues. Hon. Edouard.

**RODRIGUES – ELECTRIC VEHICLES – ENERGY CONSUMPTION &
RENEWABLE ENERGY USAGE**

(No. B/440) **Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to electric vehicles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to –

- (a) the estimated average daily energy consumption thereof in mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues Island, respectively, and
- (b) whether renewable energy is being used for the charging thereof and, if not, the measures being envisaged in relation thereto, indicating the timeframe set therefor.

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, en ce qui concerne la partie (a) de la question, je suis informé par le Central Electricity Board (CEB) que la consommation énergétique quotidienne moyenne estimée des véhicules électriques sur l'île Maurice pour le mois de mars 2026 s'élève à 21 723 kWh pour un total de 2 260 clients.

En ce qui concerne l'île Rodrigues, je suis également informé que l'infrastructure de recharge pour les véhicules électriques a été mise en service récemment, le 30 mars 2026, et que la consommation énergétique quotidienne moyenne correspondante pour le mois de mars 2026 est estimée à 3,5 kWh pour un client. On a seulement un client enregistré au CEB pour Rodrigues.

M. le président, le CEB gère actuellement trois programmes visant à promouvoir l'utilisation des énergies renouvelables pour la recharge des véhicules électriques, à savoir –

- (a) le programme CEB Solar PV pour la recharge des véhicules électriques et vous bénéficiez en même temps d'un time of use. Donc si vous utilisez l'électricité pour charge votre voiture à une heure tardive, un peu après 9hr du soir, donc vous avez un tarif plus bas ;
- (b) le programme CEB pour la recharge des véhicules électriques des entreprises ; donc les entreprises aussi ont ce programme qui permettent à leurs employés de charge leurs véhicules,
- (c) Nous avons le programme CEB pour les fournisseurs de services, les compagnies des voitures, offrant un service public de recharge de véhicules électriques.

Les objectifs des programmes d'énergies renouvelables mentionnés ci-dessus pour la recharge des véhicules électriques sont principalement pour réduire les émissions de CO2 dans le secteur des transports et de poursuivre la décarbonation du réseau électrique national.

Dans le cadre de ces dispositifs, les propriétaires de véhicules électriques sont autorisés à installer, depuis quelque temps, je l'ai annoncé il y a deux semaines de cela, les systèmes photovoltaïques PV d'une puissance maximale de 10 kW sur leurs toits, leur parking, leurs maisons, leur cours, comme ils veulent et ensuite injecter le surplus d'électricité dans le réseau. Donc celui ou celle qui veut installer pas plus que 10kW sur sa maison, sur son parking ou sur un terrain quelque part, donc ils ont qu'à informer le CEB, non pas demander la permission au CEB. Informer le CEB et vous faites l'installation.

Par ailleurs, un tarif heures pleines/heures creuses, ce qu'on appelle le tarif 150C a été mis en place afin d'encourager la recharge des véhicules électriques pendant les heures creuses, soit entre 21h00 et 4h le lendemain, donc quand la demande est moyenne.

M. le président, en ce qui concerne la partie (b) de la question, je suis informé par le CEB que 93 raccordements ont été effectués dans le cas de trois schémas comme je l'ai expliqué pour une capacité installée de 2768 kilowatts. Cependant, dans le cas de ces programmes, l'installation des systèmes photovoltaïques pour recharger les véhicules électriques est facultative.

Mon ministère, M. le président, modifiera prochainement ses programmes afin de rendre obligatoire l'alimentation de tous les véhicules électriques par l'énergie renouvelable. C'est un peu un faux débat. Vous avez une voiture électrique, vous parlez d'énergie renouvelable, mais quand vous prenez votre *charge*, on brûle du charbon ; on brûle de l'huile lourde. C'est un peu un faux débat.

C'est pour cette raison que nous avons l'intention, au sein du ministère, de modifier la loi pour que celles ou ceux qui achètent une voiture électrique ou qui possèdent déjà une voiture électrique sont obligés, dans un moratoire de quelque temps, de mettre des panneaux photovoltaïques pour *charge* leur véhicule.

Il convient de souligner, M. le président, que la CEB a récemment lancé le projet voltaïque solaire permettant en particulier, comme je viens de le dire, d'installer 10 kilowatts de système voltaïque avec un système de stockage de batterie. Ces programmes devraient relancer l'adoption d'énergie renouvelable dans toute la république.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue!

**MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE & ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS –
VACANCIES & RECRUITMENT MEASURES**

(No. B/441) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms whether, in regard to the vacant posts within his Ministry, he will state the number thereof grade-wise, indicating when same will be filled.

(Withdrawn)

**EX-CHA/EDC HOUSES – ASBESTOS ISSUES – INTER-MINISTERIAL
COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

(No. B/442) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Inter-ministerial Committee set up to look into all issues pertaining to Ex-CHA/EDC houses containing asbestos, he will state if the said committee has started meeting and, if so, indicate the work plan thereof.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister of Housing and Lands!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. At its meeting of Friday 10 April 2026, Cabinet agreed to the setting up of an Inter-Ministerial Committee to look into all issues pertaining to Ex-CHA/EDC houses containing asbestos.

The committee would be chaired by me and would comprise my colleagues the hon. Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, the hon. Minister of National Infrastructure, the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness and the hon. Minister of Local Government.

Unfortunately, the Inter-Ministerial Committee has not yet met. It has just gone through the Cabinet of last week, waited for confirmation, and that is the process. I am informed that in the meantime, Statistics Mauritius is carrying out a survey to determine *inter alia* the present number of Ex-CHA houses containing asbestos, the state of the buildings and profile of the house owners or occupiers. The preliminary findings are expected before the end of May 2026. The survey will provide updated and additional data for proper recommendations to be made to Government.

So, as the hon. Member would agree, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this survey being carried out is of utmost importance in order to be able to make an informed decision. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes!

Ms Savabaddy: Merci, M. le président. Merci au ministre pour sa réponse. Est-ce que le nouveau comité mis en place et qui sera désormais présidé par le ministère des Terres et du Logement, par le ministère de l'Environnement, entre autres, prendra en considération le travail déjà commencé par le comité qui a été présidé par l'ex *Junior Minister* ? D'ailleurs, c'est le ministre même qui me l'avait. Qu'en sera-t-il des recommandations déjà faites ? Merci.

Mr Mohamed: Well, as I have already explained, all such recommendations will also be taken into account when we are to make our report and recommendations. However, what is of utmost importance, as I am just repeating that part, is that we need to be able to have a proper survey to determine the exact state of affairs of this whole situation.

Without that survey, we will be just as though we are shooting in the dark. I do not want to be put in a situation or put Government in a situation where I am just coming up with theory. I want to be very practical in the approach. This is precisely what the committee wants to do. So, this survey will be of help in order for us to be able to assess the situation.

Now, the last survey that was carried out was back in November 2022. There were still around 1,560 out of 3,113 EDC houses. So, this survey has to be updated, and there are additional data that we need in order to be able to make a decision. But as I have said, the survey is going to be ready by next month. So, that is a good thing for us to proceed.

Ms Savabaddy: Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, do you have a question?

Ms J. Bérenger: Merci. Une des principales préoccupations pour les habitants des maisons en amiante, c'est d'avoir une alternative, un endroit où ils peuvent habiter quand leurs maisons seront détruites.

Étant donné que l'honorable ministre est ministre des Terres et du Logement et responsable de la NHDC, peut-il nous confirmer si le nouveau comité interministériel prendra en considération la recommandation selon laquelle la priorité doit être donnée aux habitants des maisons en amiante pour des maisons NHDC ?

Mr Mohamed: I have gone through the questions that were asked in this Assembly some time back. If I am not mistaken, the former, former Deputy Prime Minister had answered a question to the very same hon. Member, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The question is, as it stands, all NHDC and NSLD houses are for those who do not own property. So, to be able to change that policy – because I guess this is what the hon. Member has been trying to get at for many years now – is to give priority to those that have the EDC houses and to give them NSLD houses.

So, the answer that was given then was no. This is one of very few areas where I agree with the former Minister of Housing. The answer is no.

We will not be able to put them in a situation where we give priority to those who own houses. The issue is that they have to have houses reconstructed. While I agree that those houses that need to be reconstructed, there is a cost to it. But we will get to the bridge and cross it when we get there.

But as it stands right now, I am not ready to take a policy decision of giving priority to people who already own a house and to give them priority over those who do not own a house and have been waiting for many, many years.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, one question. It is your question.

Ms Savabaddy: J'ai encore une question.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes! You have the floor.

Ms Savabaddy: Thank you. Est-ce que le ministre des Terres et du Logement peut confirmer à la Chambre et aussi aux habitants dont les maisons sont amiantées, est-ce qu'ils auront une subvention provenant de l'État ? Merci.

Mr Mohamed: You see, if I were to give you an answer with regard to that today, what would therefore be the point of having the Inter-Ministerial Committee? The whole point of the Inter-Ministerial Committee is to take stock of the survey being carried out, as I have said, take into consideration all reports and works that have been done by all parties, and then make recommendations to Cabinet. It is only then that I will be in a position to come up with a formula as to what the solution would be.

So, right now, it would be really premature for me to go as far as pronouncing myself on that issue.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, one last question.

Ms J. Bérenger: En réalité, le *grant* actuel est de R 130,000, ce qui n'est absolument pas suffisant pour pouvoir reconstruire une maison. Les matériaux de construction coûtent beaucoup plus cher. Le ministre m'a donné la même réponse que l'ancien ministre, mais le ministre reconnaît-il que l'État a une responsabilité pour donner une alternative à ces habitants, pour leur donner une nouvelle maison ? Puisque, dans le passé, ce sont des maisons toxiques qui leur ont été données par l'État.

Donc, aujourd'hui, reconnaît-il la responsabilité de l'État dans cette démarche de leur donner une alternative ?

Mr Mohamed: Once again, when I was put in the presence of the issue of asbestos houses, I made it a point of reading all reports that exist: the expert reports that have pronounced themselves on the toxicity or the non-toxic element of those houses.

I see that politicians for many years now have been pronouncing themselves as though it is a fact that those are toxic houses. But I am in possession of other reports that basically do not confirm that. So, I want to proceed with prudence and not with an alarming attitude where I get people to start getting scared, and simply promise them money when, in fact, there was no need for it. So, let us proceed in a very dispassionate manner, even though it is a very important issue.

Let us analyse the experts' reports. What is the status? Is it toxic, or is it not? If it is, it will be put before Cabinet with the report. Then, Cabinet will decide what the situation is. But what I am not ready to do is to say today that Government gave houses that were toxic to people. That I am prepared to say is not true.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. Next question! Hon. Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue!

SKIPPER'S LICENCE – ISSUE, RENEWAL & REJECTION – PROFILE ASSESSMENT

(No. B/443) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the Skipper's licence, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tourism Authority, information as to –

- (a) the number thereof, category-wise –
 - (i) issued;
 - (ii) renewed, and

- (iii) applications therefor rejected, over the past five years, and
- (b) whether a profiling assessment is conducted prior to the issue thereof.

(Withdrawn)

ROAD TRAFFIC ACT & REGULATIONS – FINES – DIGITAL PAYMENT

(No. B/444) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the payment of fines under the Road Traffic Act and Regulations, he will state where matters stand as to the provision of facilities for payment thereof through internet banking and mobile applications.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the outset I wish to inform the House Road Traffic Act was amended in September 2019 through the Road Traffic (Amendment No. 3), Act No. 24 of 2019 with a view to facilitating the electronic payment of fixed penalty notices. It was also announced in the Budget Speech 2022/2023 of the then hon. Minister of Finance that the payment of road traffic fines would be offered online. However, the Road Traffic (Amendment No. 3) of 2019 was not proclaimed as enhancement of both IT system of the Police Department and the Master and Registrar of the Supreme Court was in progress.

In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in his report for the financial year 2024/2025, the Director of Audit has observed that the revenue from fixed penalty notices served by the police officers were collected at District Courts and credited as fines under the control of the Judiciary instead of a revenue item for the Mauritius Police Force. Therefore, the Director of Audit recommended to digitalise the whole process of raising fines and payment of same. The reform is expected to enhance efficiency, transparency and proper revenue tracking.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regard of the main question, I have been informed that in February this year by the Master and Registrar of the Supreme Court that the system for online payment of fixed penalty notices on the Supreme Court portal is technically ready to accept online payment of fixed penalty notices through mobile banking apps, Internet banking facilities, debit and credit cards or MauCAS account transfers.

The Police Department has also informed that their IT system is ready. They are proposing in parallel to look into the possibility to use the beSafeMoris mobile app for payment of fixed penalty notices – hon. Dr. Ramtohul is aware of what I am saying.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that the amendments brought to the Road Traffic Act of 2019 are not fully aligned with those introduced by the Road Traffic (Amendment) Act of 2025 in January this year in relation to the reintroduction of the Penalty Point System.

Therefore, Commissioner of Police has recommended that a new piece of legislation be enacted to make provision for online payment of fixed penalty notices in line with the Road Traffic (Amendment) Act of 2025. My Ministry has initiated consultations with the hon. Attorney General's Office in that respect.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes. Do you have a question?

Mr A. Duval: I have a question. I wanted to ask the hon. Minister, whether he would consider amending the law to allow for the payment of fixed penalty beyond the 28 days limit as it is now, impossible after 28 days which means that you have to go to Court and that only burdens the Court with even more work, when it could be and that is the question, whether the hon. Minister would consider allowing for payment after even with a penalty system imposed for a higher amount to be paid so long as you get to do it before it is fixed on cause list of the Court, it would be, I think, in the interest of your Ministry and justice itself?

Mr Osman Mahomed: As the law stands, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if the 28 days period are exceeded, the fines and the points are both doubled – as per the amendment brought in December last year.

So, there will have to be amendment to the Road Traffic Act once again for that to occur.

Mr A. Duval: If I may, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, yes.

Mr A. Duval: I understand but the issue is once you fail to pay within the 28 days, you have to go to Court. You have to wait for the notice to be issued to you, the summons after months, sometimes years and you cannot pay even though, for whatever reasons you may have neglected to pay within the 28 days. So, as far as the payment is concerned, whether he proposes now, especially for those offences which do not fall under the Penalty Point System, whether he proposes to bring amendments, so to allowed that we can pay at any time even if there is the introduction of a penalty as I said so long as you can do it.

Mr Osman Mahomed: We will look into it.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Members with the Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/446, B/449, B/454, B/455, B/456, B/460, B/464, B/465, B/468, B/469, B/472, B/475, B/476, B477, B/478, B/480, B/481, B/482, B/483 B/484, and B/486.

Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

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

Mr Mohamed rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Electronic Transactions (Amendment) Bill (No. V of 2026) was read a first time.

At this stage, Madam Speaker took the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Please be seated.

Yes, hon. Attorney General!

Second Reading

THE CERTIFICATE OF CHARACTER BILL

(No. II of 2026)

Order for Second Reading read.

(4.23 p.m.)

The Attorney General (Mr G. P. C. Glover, SC): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Certificate of Character Bill (No. II of 2026) be read a second time.

Let me start by saying this, Madam Speaker, I make no apology for what will be a lengthier than usual intervention in support of this Bill. The Certificate of Character Bill is yet another piece of the puzzle we are building for the benefit of the people.

One may wonder what this Bill has to do with the rule of law or access to justice for that matter. But then it would be missing the point which is that this Bill is in fact a liberating piece of legislation. It is a necessary step to promote social reintegration for persons who have had a brush with the law and who continued to carry the stigma of a criminal conviction, which always weighs heavily on the convicted person whether with regard to his entrenched right to work, his right to free movement and of course one must never forget the indirect effect on his family.

Before turning to the details of this Bill, it is useful to begin with two simple benign questions. First, what is a Certificate of Character, and second, why does it matter.

A Certificate of Character or a *certificat de caractère* is an official document issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions certifying whether a person has a criminal record. It is still often referred to as *certificat de moralité* or even in common parlance, we hear that a person *pe attan gagn so moralité* – he or she is waiting for that valuable document, although a literal translation from the kreol might lead to another concept altogether.

This Certificate, by whatever name called, is nowadays almost always required for employment, for further studies, for visa and immigration procedures and for a range of other official purposes. For many people therefore, it is not an abstract legal document, it is the paper that stands between them and a job, a seat at university, the possibility of travelling abroad or the possibility of a new start in their lives. That is why this Bill matters and why it has been eagerly awaited.

Madam Speaker, prior to 2006, there was no legislative framework governing so called Certificates of Character. These were issued under an administrative practice which had developed over time. In 2006, the Certificate of Morality Act provided, for the first time, a basic statutory framework. That Act introduced, subject to certain exceptions, a cutoff period of ten years in relation to crimes and misdemeanours. It also provided that a person who had been granted a free pardon under section 75 of the Constitution would be deemed never to have been convicted of the relevant offence, but the Act, for example, made no provision for the Director of Public Prosecutions to delegate his powers.

In 2012, the Certificate of Character Act repealed the earlier law and introduced a number of changes. The title was changed from ‘Certificate of Morality’ to ‘Certificate of Character’ and rightly so, because the law should not pretend that it is the universal judge of morality. The law deals in legal consequences and it should do so with clarity and restraint.

The 2012 Act reduced the cutoff period applicable for certain less serious offenses from 10 to five years. It allowed the Director of Public Prosecutions to delegate his powers to the Commissioner of Police or another officer. It extended the categories of persons who are deemed never to have been convicted. It also introduced a three-month limitation period for repeat applications subject to certain conditions in order to reduce unnecessary administrative burden. Those changes were essential and useful then but with hindsight, they did not go far enough.

Madam Speaker, the present law, the 2012 legislation, has remained in important respects, unduly harsh. It has caused real hardship to people convicted of less serious offenses because convictions would continue to appear on their certificates in circumstances where that disclosure serves little public good but causes lasting private damage. People have been denied jobs. People have been denied access to university. People who had paid their debt to society have found that society was still presenting them with a bill. That is not good policy. It is not very wise and, in many cases, it is just not just. A criminal sentence, Madam Speaker, is imposed by a court according to law but once that sentence has been served, the punishment has been meted out. A second social punishment is not helpful. Justice is not served if a minor mistake becomes a lifelong civil disability in practice.

Madam Speaker, the rule of law is not only about sanctions. It is also about proportion, fairness, and the conditions of reintegration. A society is made safer, not more dangerous when people who have offended and who have done what the law required of them to pay their dues are given a fair opportunity to work, to study, to support a family and to live as citizens rather than permanent suspects. I put the question fair and square, Madam Speaker, how shall we prevent reoffending if we tell someone that there is no path for him to lead a reformed life?

Rehabilitation, Madam Speaker, is not softness. It is social intelligence; it is also basic justice. This is why the hon. Prime Minister promised, earlier in our mandate, that the current law would be changed and we are today honouring that promise. This Bill therefore repeals the existing 2012 Act and replaces it with a more just, more coherent and more humane framework. Its object is clear; to reduce unnecessary barriers to employment, social reintegration for persons convicted of offences, whilst preserving proper safeguards for the protection of society. In other words, it seeks the right balance between second chances and public safety.

One of the problems with the present law is that certain convictions may continue to appear on a certificate for life, even where in any meaningful sense, they should be treated as spent. That defeats the very idea of a spent conviction. Now, if the law recognises that after a certain period of time and subject to certain conditions, a person should be allowed to move on, then the certificate should reflect that reality. Clause 5 of the Bill addresses that issue. It provides that no conviction will appear on a person's Certificate of Character where that person has been granted a free pardon, has been discharged absolutely or conditionally or falls within the categories set out in that clause, subject, of course, to the exceptions for serious offenses provided for in the First Schedule.

Thus, subject to that caveat, a conviction will no longer appear where either the person has been given only a fine not exceeding Rs50,000 instead of the current threshold of Rs5,000 and two years instead of 5 years have elapsed since the date of conviction. Or secondly, whether or not he has also been fined, been sentenced to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years and ten years have lapsed since the date of that conviction. And thirdly, the offense was committed whilst a person was still under the age of 18. That last provision is particularly important. A civilised legal system does not deny that young people make mistakes but neither should it decide that a mistake made in youth must follow a person forever into adulthood. If we speak seriously about children reform and the possibility of redemption, then the law must speak seriously too. However, Madam Speaker, it is important to stress here that these new parameters will not apply to those serious offenses listed in the First Schedule to the Bill. Convictions listed there will continue to appear on the Certificate of Character indefinitely.

This Bill, Madam Speaker, also addresses discrimination in employment. Clause 4 provides that where a person's Certificate of Character specifies that he has been convicted of a crime or misdemeanour, his employer shall not discriminate against him where that offense is unrelated to the nature of his employment and a prospective employer shall not discriminate against him where that offense is unrelated to the employment for which he is being considered. That is obviously a sensible provision. A criminal record is not a magic answer to every employment question. Relevance matters, context matters, not every past offense bears on every future occupation. To say otherwise, is simply to replace judgement with reflex.

Clause 12, Madam Speaker, makes the necessary consequential amendment to the Equal Opportunities Act so that this protection is clearly reflected there as well. It provides

that no employer or prospective employer shall discriminate against another person, where that person's certificate of character specifies a conviction which is not related to his employment or to the employment for which he is being considered. Here, may I add, for good measure, that the Chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Commission was consulted in relation to that amendment.

Clause 7, Madam Speaker, deals with the mode of application for a certificate of character. It also provides for regulations to be made by the Attorney General, in consultation with the Director of Public Prosecutions, in relation to matters connected with the application process. That is entirely proper, the mode of application being essentially administrative. It must be workable, efficient and capable of adjustment when practical experience shows that improvement is needed. Not every administrative detail belongs to the body of an act.

Now, let me turn to the First Schedule of the Bill which lists the serious offences which will continue to appear on a certificate of character. Generally, there has been a policy decision, Madam Speaker, by the Government to keep certain offences on the First Schedule, and, consequently, on certificates for life. These are serious offences such as offences against children, aggravated assaults, murders, terrorism, trafficking in persons, manslaughter, rape, dangerous drugs offences, etc.

However, the Schedule has been revised for three principal reasons –

- First, the current schedule refers to several provisions of the law which have already been repealed. To that extent, it is outdated.
- Secondly, a number of serious offences, which plainly ought to appear on a certificate of character, are not presently included.
- Thirdly, and importantly, the current schedule is not user-friendly. It often refers only to sections of enactments without indicating in ordinary language the offences to which those sections relate.

The new First Schedule corrects those defects. It no longer refers to repealed laws. It broadens the list of serious offences where this is necessary for the protection of society. It adds, in a third column, a description of the offence concerned so that the Schedule can be

understood, not only by lawyers with a statute book open in front of them, but by ordinary citizens reading the law as it should be read – plainly.

Madam Speaker, the list of serious offences has been revised as follows –

Clause 9 of this very Bill, which criminalises tampering with, forging or fraudulently altering a certificate of character has been included.

Secondly, the Child Protection Act with its corresponding sections has been removed, given that this Act has, since 2020, been repealed by the Children’s Act of that same year. Accordingly, a number of provisions under the Children’s Act 2020, which had not been included when that Act came into operation 6 years ago, have now been included, thereby plugging a significant gap.

Thirdly, previously, all offences under the Dangerous Drugs Act were considered to be serious offences, and any offence under that Act had to remain on the certificate of character for life. Even a small fine of Rs5,000 for possession of a very small amount of *gandia* for personal use or for smoking *gandia* would remain on the certificate of character for life. In effect, that was a lifelong sentence for a minor charge, and that was very unfair. It was important, in our view, to carve out from offences on the Dangerous Drugs Act that type of offence.

So, today, a fine of up to Rs50,000 for the possession of a dangerous drug in a minimal quantity for personal use or for smoking would eventually disappear from the certificate of character after two years.

Fourthly, sections 16 to 20 of the Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Act, for example, misuse of fake profile, cyberbullying, cyber extortion, revenge pornography and cyberterrorism have been added to the list.

Sections 3 and 4 of the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act and the Prevention of Corruption Act have been removed since they have been repealed and replaced since 2023 by the Financial Crimes Commission Act. Accordingly, the relevant sections under the Financial Crimes Commission Act have been added to the list.

Sections 58, 59, 64, and 65 of the Representation of the People Act, that is, illegal payment, corrupt withdrawal of candidature, bribery and treating and undue influence, which are considered to be serious offences, have been added to the list.

Causing death by careless driving when under influence of alcohol, drug or intoxicating substance, in breach of the new section 123D of the Road Traffic Act, is now considered to be a serious offence, serious enough to be included in that schedule, Madam Speaker.

Lastly, all the sections of the Criminal Code have been reviewed. Some have been removed either because they have already been repealed or because are considered to be less serious offences, given the sentence provided, and some new sections of the Criminal Code have been added. For example, we have sections 52 to 56, 76A, 85, 87, *et j'en passe*, which have been removed since they no longer exist.

Offences such as enticing away servants, pawnbroking and money lending without a lawful authority, hindering judicial sale, disturbing a religious ceremony, involuntary homicide, wounds and blows, taking part in an unlawful assembly have been removed since they are not as serious as warranting that they remain on that list.

Here, Madam Speaker, I must add that amendments will be brought, at Committee Stage, to reflect the fact that after careful review it is now being proposed that some further offences do not deserve to be on the First Schedule list of serious offences, while others ought to be included on that list. Last night, because of that, I have circulated to all Members of the House a new amended schedule with all the changes tracked so that they can follow what will happen at Committee Stage on the next occasion.

One of the offences which would not remain on that list is, for example, simple larceny. A very common offence which young offenders may commit and whose consequences stay with them for life. At the same time, more serious cases of larceny, such as larceny with violence and larceny by night breaking, will remain on the First Schedule. This, Madam Speaker, is a concrete example of the balancing exercise which we are doing here between rehabilitation and keeping society safe.

Madam Speaker, the Bill also brings consistency between the English and French versions of the certificate itself. A comparative reading of the present forms reveals unnecessary differences and some inaccuracies. There are also discrepancies in the

explanatory notes and grammatical and structural defects in the French text. These have all been addressed in the Second and Third Schedules to the Bill.

Madam Speaker: Wow!

Mr Glover: The Bill also extends the validity of a certificate from three months to four months. It is a modest amendment, but a useful, practical improvement.

Now, Madam Speaker, before I conclude, I wish to say a word about the suggestion that I have read about in the press, made in some quarters, that there was no need for a new bill and that a few amendments to the existing Act would have sufficed. I do not share that view.

The Bill before the House runs to nearly 29 pages. The current law is 14 pages long. If we had proceeded by amendment, the amending legislation would itself have been longer and more cumbersome than the Act being amended. Almost every section of the existing law would have had to be amended or repealed. New provisions would have to be inserted. All three Schedules would effectively have to be repealed and replaced. At some point, Madam Speaker, one must choose between patch work and comprehensive legislative drafting.

This Bill chooses clarity. When a statutory scheme is being substantially re-worked, clarity is better served by repeal and replacement than by a long trail of textual surgery.

Madam Speaker, this Bill has been prepared through close collaboration between my Office, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Law Reform Commission. I, here, place on record my appreciation for their work and their inputs.

The reform before this House, Madam Speaker, today, is a practical act, but it is also something more than that, it reflects a view of justice. A view that the law must protect society, certainly, but also a view that the law must leave room for amendment of life, not only amendment of statutes. A fair legal system is one that punishes where punishment is due but does not continue to punish when the demands of justice have already been met.

That in essence, Madam Speaker, is what this Bill seeks to do and with those words, I commend the Bill to the House.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. It has to be seconded. Thank you, hon. Minister of Agro-Industry.

Dr. Boolell rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Maybe it would be wise to break for tea now. Then you can make your speech, hon. Leader of the Opposition.

At 4.46 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.23 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Yes, please be seated.

We are playing musical chairs? Yes, alright!

Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(5.23 p.m.)

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr G. Lesjongard): Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to intervene on the Certificate of Character Bill and I shall be brief and to the point, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Mr Lesjongard: Allow me at the very outset, Madam Speaker, to say that we support the principle behind the Bill. We believe in rehabilitation and we believe in second chances, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, we recognise that a criminal record, particularly for minor, in relation to offences which have taken place a long time back to create some impediments to employment, housing and most importantly, dignity, Madam Speaker. These barriers, if left unaddressed, may paradoxically increase the risk of reoffending.

We also, Madam Speaker, acknowledge the Bill's stated objective is specifically to reduce these barriers and facilitate social integration which is necessary for our society.

Now, let me start by highlighting some positive measures which render this legislation less stringent and which will help abate if not, eliminate those impediments I mentioned earlier. Firstly, Madam Speaker, the increase in the fine threshold for eligibility from Rs5,000 to Rs50,000. Secondly the waiting period which has now been reduced from five to two years, Madam Speaker. Lastly, the fact that with this upcoming legislation, persons sentenced

to imprisonment of up to 3 years may receive a clean certificate after 10 prime three years. Also, Madam Speaker, we note that youth offences committed under 18 are now automatically excluded from disclosure and these are, like I said, positive aspects of this piece of legislation.

It is also to be noted that Clause 4 of the Bill introduces, like earlier the hon. Attorney General stated, a statutory prohibition against employment discrimination where a conviction is not related to the role. Now, Madam Speaker, although this is a positive step, it suffers from an intrinsic defect in the way it has been formulated and its application is like to be unpractical and may lead to an inconsistent approach. Let me explain, Madam Speaker.

First of all, legislative process on paper does not automatically translate to actual liberation on the ground. The critical question before this House today is not whether this Bill is less stringent but whether, it will ultimately achieve its aim of effectively reducing the barriers to employment and social integration.

Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, the answer is no as this Bill carries unintended disadvantages. Let me illustrate what I just said by referring to the following clauses of the Bill and I will refer to the clause I mentioned earlier, that is Clause 4 which deals with non-discrimination and the employment barriers because I believe that this Clause is structurally ambiguous, Madam Speaker.

The Bill as it is, prohibits discrimination only where a conviction is not related to employment yet, we note that this Bill provides no criteria, no guidance and no fast-track adjudication mechanism. Employers are thus left to make complex legal judgements in isolation and its unintended but natural result would be an utter confusion and lack of understanding in giving effect to that particular clause.

Madam Speaker, I fear that without as statutory code of practice from the Equal Opportunities Commission and an accessible complaints process, this provision runs the risk of being symbolic only. Worse, Madam Speaker, employers' uncertainty may lead to overcompliance thereby rejecting all applications with disclosed convictions or informal background checks that bypass the certificate altogether.

Madam Speaker, let me now turn to Clause 6 of the Bill which deals with the administrative capacity and the role of the Director of Public Prosecution. This Clause centralises the issuance of Character Certificate by the office of the Director of Public Prosecution. Although this may enhance consistency, on the other hand, it raises serious

capacity concerns, Madam Speaker. The Director of Public Prosecution constitutional mandate is prosecution, not high-volume administrative certification.

Madam Speaker, I fear that if there is a surge in application submitted to the DPP's office, this might give rise to processing delays and create a new bureaucratic barrier, Madam Speaker. It goes without saying that going through the red tape would, in fact, obstruct progress and hinder efficiency.

Madam Speaker, the Bill correctly notes that a free pardon under section 75 of our Constitution results in a clean certificate but we must be precise. This Bill's mechanism is not a pardon; it is what is referred to as an administrative spent conviction whereby certain convictions become spent or are not disclosed after a period of time. Madam Speaker, this is a totally different concept. Any attempt to combining the two risks compromising and eroding the solemn constitutional prerogative of mercy which the House should know, is reserved for exceptional cases of injustice or extraordinary rehabilitation.

Furthermore, Madam Speaker, the exercise of the prerogative of mercy in Mauritius has, in recent years, been the subject of public debate concerning transparency and accountability.

Madam Speaker, I strongly believe that the time has come to consider legislative or procedural reforms to ensure that the advice of the Commission on the prerogative of mercy and the reason for the President's decision is made public but having said that, it should be subject to necessary safeguards for privacy and national security. You may feel able to agree that this would be a major step in increasing public confidence in the system.

Madam Speaker, the Bill introduces a QR Code verification and a dedicated digital platform. Although this is a positive step, unfortunately, it raises a series of questions as it lacks explicit data governance provisions. For example, who controls access to the underlying database? How will spent convictions be securely archived or deleted? What are the safeguards in place designed to prevent misuse by authorised authorities? The Bill does not provide any formal appeal mechanism for individuals who believe their certificate incorrectly discloses a conviction.

Madam Speaker, let me conclude, like I said, I will be brief, by saying that the measure of a just society is not only how it punishes wrong doings but also how it offers a pathway back to citizenship for those who have erred and served their debts. This Bill, no doubt, like I

said earlier, represents a step in the right direction but, Madam Speaker, a step taken without safeguards and without practical enforcement mechanism, will fall short of its promise.

I am done, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you very much.

Now, we have the hon. Minister of Labour.

(5.33 p.m.)

The Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations (Mr R. Uteem): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, when I listen to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, he always fails to justify why in the past 10 years that his government was in power, they did not do anything. And now, when this Government is trying to do something, he is always criticising us.

Let me remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition, as far back as 08 September 2015 when his party was in power, MSM was in power, this is what the hon. Attorney General then said, the question was about when would amendment to the Certificate of Character Act be proposed, he stated –

“My Office has started consultations with relevant stakeholders in relation to the amendments to be brought to the Certificate of Character Act.”

That was 2015.

Then 2016, same Attorney General, said that –

As stated in the Government Programme, legislation will be coming to Parliament. We are envisaging possibly even avoiding stigma by maybe looking into equal opportunities. It is being amended as well. But legislation will be forthcoming.

Again, hon. Members will note that in line with the Government Programme, legislation will be forthcoming because we are very concerned with the present state of affairs as well. It goes on and on like this. Every time, Members of the Opposition had asked questions about the Certificate of Character. They kept saying the same thing each time.

On 13 June 2017 – that was the former MSM Attorney General – I wish to assure the House that amendment to both the Certificate of Character Act – and, as I have said, there are other acts as well. I will mention them shortly – they will be brought to this House by the end of this year, time permitting. That was back in 2017.

So, they keep saying that they will amend and that they will bring changes, but they never did! So, it is this Government who is coming with the appropriate legislative change to correct an essential unfairness.

Madam Speaker, according to Statistics Mauritius, as at June 2025, out of 5,078 adult convicts admitted in prison in 2024, some 3,728 were reoffenders who had been imprisoned in the past. That is 73.4% of convicts tend to reoffend.

In an article published by the lecturers from the University of Technology in Mauritius entitled “Trends in Incarceration and Recidivism in Mauritius –Raising the Alarm,” the authors identified the main challenge for rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-detainees as the Certificate of Character, which was an obstacle for gaining employment.

This is why, Madam Speaker, the main purpose of the Bill is precisely to reduce barriers to employment and social integration of person who have been convicted of an offence.

But it is not only about employment. You know, when I was practicing a few years ago, a student came to see me. The student wanted to apply for a seat in university. He had excellent grades, but he was very concerned because he had smoked in public. And because he had smoked in public, he had a fine, and because of that fine, he was at risk of not securing a seat in a university outside of Mauritius. We did what we had to do, which was a petition to the President through the Commission on the Prerogative of Mercy.

We managed to secure a pardon, but it takes time, and it costs. Another student came to see us only three years ago. She was apprehended for shoplifting. Although she has always claimed to be innocent, somehow, she was not represented. She found herself, on the same day, in front of a court, pleading guilty and getting a fine for larceny. Then, she decided to get married. Because she was getting married to a foreigner, she was not going to get the necessary visa or the necessary residence permit because of that incident, of which, she has always claimed to be innocent.

Again, we had to go through the same system of applying to the President through the Commission of Prerogative of Mercy to get a parole. Today, with this law, we are changing it. Today, with this law, any offences committed by a juvenile before the age of 18 will be expunged from the Certificate of Character. It will not appear anymore. Petty offences like larceny will no longer appear on the Certificate of Character. Previously, even if you had only a fine, if it was larceny, it had to appear in your Certificate of Character.

So, there are other offences, for example, drug related offences; smoking cannabis, *gandia*; small possession of *gandia* for consumption; a lot of people have been caught with that. As they say, *erreur de jeunesse*. But that stigma stays with them all along, throughout their life. There was no remission, no possibility of expunging this conviction, however mundane it may look today, from the Certificate of Character.

So, I commend the hon. Attorney General because he did a real balancing act when he came up with this legislation. There are serious offences that are in the First Schedule; serious offences that will appear on your Certificate of Character what come may. Even if you have only a fine, even if you did not have imprisonment, it will always be there because society recognises the seriousness of that offence. That is very important. I will tell you why.

Let us suppose tomorrow, someone is applying to the Ministry of Gender Equality to be a foster family or for adoption and that person was convicted for sexual assault over a juvenile or any other crime against a child many years ago. Obviously, this is a very material consideration to be taken into account when deciding whether to allow that person *la garde*, to become the foster parent of a minor child.

If I am a banking institution and I am going to employ someone who is going to deal with money, I need to make sure that that person has not been convicted of an offence involving dishonesty. Similarly, if someone is going to travel outside of Mauritius, another country would want to know if that person in Mauritius had been convicted of a serious offence like terrorism or other activity which may put the security of their country in jeopardy.

So, this is the balancing act – making sure that in the First Schedule, we have a list of major offences. That list has been updated because since 2012, there have been new legislations. So, we need to include those new offences that have been created.

Then, what this schedule does is it removes certain offences that we consider are no longer serious offences. To give the example already quoted by the hon. Attorney General, possession of drugs or offences of larceny. Then, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition rightly pointed out, the major change in this legislation is that, for the first time, a person who has been sentenced to imprisonment up to three years, other than a major offence in the First Schedule, that person will have a chance to have a Certificate of Character not mentioning his conviction for imprisonment after 10 years. That is a big relief for a lot of people who have spent their time, their conviction.

Now, the hon. Leader of the Opposition takes exception to Section 4, which deals with equal opportunity when someone looks for employment. May I remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition that a similar provision already exists under the Equal Opportunities Act. The major difference between the provision that exists under the Equal Opportunities Act and what we are introducing is that under the Equal Opportunities Act, you cannot discriminate against someone who has been convicted of an offence that is irrelevant. The term used in the Equal Opportunities Act was “irrelevant” to the job. A job that you have applied for or the job that you are already in.

Now, there was an amount of subjectivity when you use “irrelevant.” The employer can always say, for you, it may not look irrelevant. But for me, subjectively, it is very relevant that you smoked *gandia* 15 years ago. Now, you are replacing that subjective element with an objective criterion, which is, the offence must not be related to the job. So, even if you had smoke *gandia* in the past, if whatever job you are going to do has absolutely nothing to do with the *erreur de jeunesse* that you have done. You cannot be discriminated against.

Now, the hon. Leader of the Opposition says that the law does not provide for any sanction. Again, because he does not know how this works. This law works hand-in-hand with the Equal Opportunities Act and Equal Opportunities Act already provides any employee, worker or prospective employee who feels that he has been discriminated on the basis of a conviction, he has to apply to the Equal Opportunities Commission, who carries out an investigation. Then the Equal Opportunities Commission refers the matter to the Equal Opportunities Tribunal and it is the Equal Opportunities Tribunal who has the power to sanction including imposing fines and sending people to jail and other remedial action. So, there is absolutely no reason to include all these provisions again in the Certificate of Character Act because they are already in the Equal Opportunities Act.

Then, the hon. Leader of the Opposition talks about QR code, talks about data protection, talks about all these lacks of security and safety. But if the hon. Leader of the Opposition had taken the time to look at the existing law, the existing Certificate of Character Act of 2012, he would have found out that these provisions already exist in the law. Already, you do an application online, electronically, and already, if you look at the schedule, you will see the QR code – it is already operating like this. So, nothing has changed. If anything, things would improve. He is saying that the DPP does not have the staff but that is why the DPP has the power to delegate.

In fact, if he had gone through the system, if he had taken the time, to ask the people how do we get a Certificate of Character, he would have found out that today, it is the police who has the greatest responsibility because whenever there is a conviction, there is a central database at the police. So, the police prosecutor is for one who would take the conviction, the report and send it to the centralised system, not the DPP. The DPP does not have record. So, whenever there is someone who applies for a Certificate of Character, the DPP is going to ask the police to retrieve the information from the database of the police which is in a secured location with all the necessary protection including data protection. So, it is not the DPP. So, I am just informing the hon. Leader of the Opposition because, obviously, he has no clue about how a Certificate of Character is applied, how it is delivered.

Madam Speaker, I am not going to be long. I wish to put on record my sincere thanks for the hon. Attorney General to bring this very important legislation not even two years into our mandate and I have no doubt that with this piece of legislation, a lot of people who have been denied access to a job, who have been denied the ability to be reintegrated, to be reinserted in society, will have a second chance.

Thank you.

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

Now, we have hon. Dr. Ms Daureeawo.

(5.49 p.m.)

Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac):
Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to contribute to the debate on the Certificate of Character Bill. I have carefully sent to all the hon. Members in this House and it appears that it is clear that at its heart, Madam Speaker, this Bill asks an important moral and social question – whether one single mistake after years have passed, after punishment has been served should continue to block a person from decent work, dignity and a place in society. This Bill, Madam Speaker, answers this question, at least in part, by saying no. What we are called to consider is not whether consequences should ensue, – they should, of course, – but whether those consequences should endure indefinitely without regard to time, reform or rehabilitation.

Madam Speaker, I have listened to hon. Uteem who has shared his experience as a Barrister and I will also admit that during my years of practice at the Bar, I have witnessed individuals who have been, for too long, trapped in a cycle of rejection, not because of who they are today, but because of who they were once. So, this this is why, Madam Speaker, to me, personally, I consider this Bill to be humane and a very meaningful reform. I have witnessed opportunities denied, families strained to breaking point. Consequences have been denied always, Madam Speaker, just because of that single piece of document known as the Certificate of Character. Each attempt by many people because of one single mistake end up the same way, denied, dismissed or discarded and this is why, Madam Speaker, I say that second chances must be real. They should not be merely spoken about.

I am sure we have all in this House seen and witnessed so many people and families who have gone through the quiet devastation caused not by a court of law but the lingering shadow of a document, the Certificate of Character. Recently, the LGSC recruited and we all know how many could not secure the job, not because they were not competent, not because it was related to the job but because their Certificate of Character showed that they had a criminal record.

So, of course, I am not saying that justice must lose its seriousness. This is not what I am saying. I am saying that justice must not lose its humanity, and as the hon. Leader of the Opposition rightly pointed out, a just society must know how to punish wrongdoing but it must also know when to build, to allow a human being to rebuild.

This Bill to me, – congratulations to the hon. Attorney General – recognises that justice must evolve beyond punishment and embrace rehabilitation. It acknowledges that those who have shown genuine remorse, rebuilt their lives, served their sentence, deserved more than perpetual exclusion. They deserve a real opportunity to reintegrate into society.

It is finally about ensuring that one mistake does not become a lifelong sentence. You would agree with me, Madam Speaker, that the human impact can be big. We have seen it in our Constituency recently, when people could not secure a job. I recall myself, hon. Uteem gave the example of possession of cannabis ruining people's life for the purposes of consumption. You gave the example of a small larceny and I remember meeting a young guy in his early 30s who had been involved in a tragic accident. He was driving at the time; he deeply regrets what happened. There was no question of alcohol or intoxicating substance, to him, it was a moment of poor judgement that led to the tragic loss of life. That person was so

traumatised by what happened, Madam Speaker, that he stopped driving altogether. When he met me, he was by now a dutiful son, a responsible husband, a devoted father but yet he explained to me how, because of what that one single document, his life was defined forever. He could not get a decent job and people misjudged him.

This made me reflect, Madam Speaker, we have all been asking questions here. This made me reflect, how can we speak of rehabilitation if we deny reintegration? How can we as a society and even as legislators speak of reducing unemployment while quietly shutting the doors to people willing to work? This is why, I reiterate, I welcome the Bill's expressed protection against discrimination in employment and for prospective employment. This is, to me one, of the most socially constructive parts of the Bill.

Too often – the hon. Leader of the Opposition recognises this fact – too often, exclusion from work has been one of the greatest barriers to real reintegration and rehabilitation. And I think you will all agree with me, if we want safer communities, we must also want pathways back to lawful work and self-respect. A society that leaves no room for redemption should not be surprised when it struggles to achieve rehabilitation.

I am not saying, of course, Madam Speaker – maybe people might misinterpret – that we should remove proper safeguards. They should be here and let us be clear, this Bill does not wipe away serious crimes. Serious crimes will still remain on the Certificate of Character through the First Schedule and the hon. Attorney General has stated what offenses will remain in the First Schedule and on the Certificate of Character. I am citing a few –

- offenses involving children;
- terrorism, and
- major criminal code offenses.

Such that it is clear, dangerous offenders will not benefit from this reform but for those who have committed lesser offenses, those who have reformed, rebuilt; this Bill gives them something profoundly important: a second chance and a genuine one.

So, this Bill, Madam Speaker, reflects an important shift. It is a more proportionate approach distinguishing between seriousness and lesser offending. It distinguishes between risk and rehabilitation and it distinguishes between permanent danger and genuine reform. I have also gone through section 5 of the Bill which is the major central reform clause. I will not go through it again. Some may say this is leniency. It is not leniency. This is fairness. And

I also welcome the section regarding young offenders. This is fair and forward looking, Madam Speaker, because we have to agree that youngsters do make mistakes but they also have the capacity to change. And if we want a balanced approach, that is the correct one, one that protects society while also investing in the potential of our youth.

So, while support in principle, Madam Speaker, is good, I want to scrutinise the details. I only have one remark and I do not know if the hon. Attorney General will be able to consider that through the regulations. There is a broader point we have to reflect on; it is the efficiency of our system, Madam Speaker. So, this is why I will urge the hon. Attorney General through the regulations to impose a deadline within which the certificates will be issued following an application by a citizen because at the end of the day, Madam Speaker, when we say that a system that aspires to fairness should also aspire to timeliness.

So, I will not be longer than that. I will sum up by saying that, while urging careful attention to safeguards in implementation, I support this Bill because to me, Madam Speaker, it reduces barriers to employment, it promotes social integration, family stability, reduces reoffending and ultimately creates a safer and more inclusive society. I cannot end without congratulating the hon. Attorney General and the Government for coming forward with this reform and as we say at the end of the day, a country is not judged only by how firmly it punishes and condemns wrong doings, Madam Speaker, but also by whether it leaves room for reform, responsibility and return. I commend the Bill to this House. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you very much. We are doing very well from the time point of view. Hon. Baboolall!

(5.59 p.m.)

Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to participate in the debate.

Madam Speaker, the Certificate of Character Bill 2026 seeks to repeal and replace the longstanding Certificate of Character Act 2012. I thank the hon. Attorney General for bringing in the Bill. This is a way forward.

Madam Speaker, at the outset, we acknowledge that updating outdated legislation is a necessary function of this House. The 2012 Act has served for over a decade. However, the current system has at times proven fragmented, inconsistent and vulnerable to delays and misuse. That said, this Bill goes beyond mere modernisation, it fundamentally reshapes how we treat individuals with criminal convictions in our society.

Madam Speaker, in this Bill – as has already been enlightened by my learned friend barristers as well – clause 4 proposes non-discrimination in employment. Clause 5 which is one of the main clauses, subsection (1)(a) to (g) relates to Certificate of Character with no criminal record but the offenses should not fall under the First Schedule. Clause 6 is where the Certificate of Character will be issued with criminal record if none of the circumstances in clause 5 are applicable. There is also a consequential amendment by clause 12 in relation to the Equal Opportunities Act.

Madam Speaker, the Certificate of Character is not merely an administrative document. For many citizens, it is a gateway to employment, education, travel, immigration and professional licensing. Under the previous law, all convictions could appear on the certificate, often creating permanent and disproportionate barriers, particularly for minor offenses. For many individuals, this document determines whether they are afforded a second chance.

Madam Speaker, we support measures that enhance public trust and national security. Integrity in public life and employment is essential. However, legislation must strike a careful balance between safeguarding society and protecting fundamental rights. While we support this principle of the Bill, there remain some questions that merit clarification.

Madam Speaker, our society believes in second chances. A person who has paid his or her debt to society should have a realistic opportunity to rebuild their life. Clause 5 introduces reforms aimed at reducing barriers to employment and social reintegration for individuals with minor convictions who have demonstrated good conduct. This reflects the principles of fairness, proportionality and rehabilitation.

Madam Speaker, legislation must not only protect society, it must strengthen it and society is not strengthened by permanent exclusion but by responsible reintegration. The Bill does not clearly define an outline on how to rehabilitate people. Madam Speaker, clause 6 raises some concerns. If not carefully administered, the system risks creating what we may perceive as a way of perpetual punishment. A certificate regime that continues to heavily penalise individuals without adequate mechanisms for review, expungement or meaningful rehabilitation may ultimately increase recidivism rather than reducing it.

Madam Speaker, the Bill also strengthens anti-discrimination protection by amending section 10 of the Equal Opportunities Act. Employers would be prohibited from refusing employment solely on the basis of a conviction unrelated to the job offered, provided there is

no real risk to the employer's operation or reputation. This is a progressive step but not without setbacks.

Madam Speaker, public safety concerns must also be addressed. While easing restrictions on minor convictions promote reintegration, certain sectors, particularly financial institutions and positions requiring high level of trust may require greater transparency. The Bill is largely silent on how such sectors are to balance non-discrimination with legitimate risk assessment. This tension requires clearer legislative guidance to specific risk sectors. It is of utmost importance to discuss whether certain sectors like banking, child care and elderly care should have specialised access to full records as the current Bill's general less intrigant approach might not account for the high level of trust required in these specific roles.

Madam Speaker, balancing these rehabilitative goals with public safety and the concerns of employers draws a robust line of reasoning on the reputation against reintegration. Tensions are inherent in the Bill.

The reputational risk loophole may emerge. This could allow employers to bypass the anti-discrimination intent of the Bill by claiming any past conviction, however minor, that harms their corporate image.

Madam Speaker, another area requiring some clarifications concerns the prerogative mercy under Section 75 of the Constitution. Clause 5 recognises that a person who has been granted a free pardon may obtain a certificate without criminal record.

However, some questions arise –

- Can an individual apply immediately to the Commission on the Prerogative of Mercy following sentencing without waiting for the lapse of the time required under clause 5?
- Does clause 6 imply that a certificate with criminal records remains for life? Can a pardon not be granted in these circumstances?
- Does it stop someone from applying to the Commission on the Prerogative of Mercy?
- If ever a free pardon is granted, where do we draw the line in relation to this Bill? How does this interact with the judicial review by the DPP?

Madam Speaker, in *De Boucherville Roger F P v State* 2009 SCJ 5, the Supreme Court reaffirmed principles established in *Poongavanam v The Commission on the Prerogative of Mercy* 1999 SCJ 396, holding that decisions of the Commission are amenable to judicial review where constitutional breaches occur. The court recognises the quasi-judicial nature the Commission's functions and emphasises that its power must be exercised with rigour, integrity and honesty.

Madam Speaker, given that the Commission may effectively alter court-imposed sentences, the safeguards surrounding its decisions are fundamental to preserving the separation of powers and public confidence in the justice system. There are growing discussions internationally about strengthening oversight mechanism over executive pardon powers to ensure appropriate checks and balances. This is a golden opportunity to address this issue as well because this Bill will directly or indirectly affect the Commission on the Prerogative of Mercy.

Madam Speaker, while the Bill allows for the omission of convictions involving up to three years of imprisonment, it requires a 10-year clean record. On the other hand, it can also be argued that decade is too long for someone trying to re-enter the work force immediately after serving the time, potentially leading to recidivism due to lack of opportunity if there is no rehabilitation programme.

Madam Speaker, governance must evolve with a modernising nation. The Certificate of Character Bill 2026 reflects an effort to modernise our legal framework and protect civil liberties. Its objectives are commendable. However, clarity, safeguards and precision are necessary.

Madam Speaker, we support the Bill in relation to ensure that the certificate of character system protects society, promotes responsible second chances and upholds the dignity and rights of all Mauritians, and for us to have a better criminal justice system.

Madam Speaker, with those observations, I commend the Bill to the House. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Babajee!

(6.09 p.m.)

Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, let me, first of all, thank the Attorney General for this commitment to introduce this Bill to this House.

Before starting, let me remind everyone here that before 2006, there were no laws in regards to moral certificate. It is only this Prime Minister, hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, who brought the Certificate of Morality Act 2006. It is only after six years, 2012, again with the Labour Party, the Certificate of Character Act was introduced, repealing the other one.

From 2014 to 2024, the previous government had 10 years to adjust and review all the defects, but nothing was done. As my colleague just said, hon. Reza Uteem, every time laws were being introduced, proposals and everything, but nothing was done. But today, the present Attorney General got the courage to bring it within two years in power. We need to thank him for this courageous decision.

Madam Speaker, today, I give my full and unequivocal support to the Certificate of Character Bill, a piece of legislation that goes to the very heart of justice, fairness and human dignity in our republic. This debate invites us to reflect not only on law, but on the values that underpin our society: compassion, fairness, and the belief in human redemption.

The proposed repeal of the Certificate of Character Act 2012 and its replacement with a more balanced and humane framework mark a decisive step towards restoring dignity and opportunity to those who have long been defined and confined by their past mistakes. For too long, a document intended to reflect a person's character has instead function as a lifelong barrier. A single conviction, often for minor offence, has trailed individuals for years, if not decades, closing the door to employment, limiting access to education and obstructing meaningful reintegration into society. This Bill recognises a simple yet profound proof: people can change.

Madam Speaker, under the new provisions, individuals who have committed minor offences or offences resulting in small fines or short-term imprisonment will no longer carry that burden indefinitely. After reasonable and just periods, such records will no longer appear on certain certificate of character. This is not about erasing wrongdoing. It is about

recognising growth. It is about acknowledging rehabilitation. And above all, it is about granting second chances.

We must, in particular, Madam Speaker, consider the impact on our youth. A mistake made before the age of 18 should not cast a shadow over an entire lifetime. Youth is a time of learning and sometimes of error, but ensuring that such mistakes do not permanently stain a young person's future, we give them the opportunity to rebuild, to contribute and to succeed.

Yet, Madam Speaker, what have we seen in the last 10 years, from 2014 to 2024? We got synthetic drugs coming in our society. We got all those youngsters consuming those synthetic drugs, getting caught with those drugs or getting caught with cannabis. This is the reason why he took this decision today to facilitate those people's rehabilitation in our society.

Under the abled leadership of our Prime Minister, this Government has demonstrated a clear commitment to build a fairer and more inclusive society. One that balances accountability with compassion and discipline with opportunity.

Madam Speaker, one thing we need to ask is: is this justice like it is now, or is it a system that punishes not once, but repeatedly? We must confront an uncomfortable reality. When we deny individuals a fair opportunity to reintegrate, we do not merely punish them, we marginalise them. We risk pushing them towards despair, exclusion, and in some cases, towards the very path we seek to prevent.

A young graduate denied employment despite merit may lose hope. A reformed individual, repeatedly rejected, may feel abandoned by the system, and in that void, the dangers of social evils, drug abuse, dependency or criminal influence become ever more real. As my neighbour just said, how many people were rejected for work at the LGSC? Just to collect refuse, some people were denied a job only because of their certificate of character.

Madam Speaker, there are deeply troubling cases of students who during their formative years committed minor infractions. Today, they are educated, reformed and ready to contribute. Yet, they remain excluded because their Certificate of Character continues to reflect those past errors.

This Bill represents a compassionate and principle shift in our legal framework. It affirms that justice must not end at punishment, it must extend to rehabilitation and

reintegration. It is fundamentally unjust that individuals who have been granted a free pardon or who have been discharged, whether absolutely or conditionally should continue to suffer the consequences of those offences through administrative barriers.

This Bill corrects that imbalance. Let me be clear. This reform does not weaken the rule of law, Madam Speaker, it strengthens it. Because true justice is not only firm, it is fair. It does not only punish but it also restores.

Madam Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. Attorney-General for bringing forward this timely and necessary reform. It reflects a clear understanding of the lived realities of our citizens and a genuine commitment to building a more inclusive and equitable Mauritius. Behind every certificate, Madam Speaker, lies a human story, a story of error, yes, but also of growth, of effort and of determination to do better.

Let us not allow the mistakes of the past to become permanent barriers to the future. Let us instead affirm through this Bill a principle that is both simple and powerful, that a person is more than their worse mistake. Let this House send a clear and unwavering message today – Mauritius believes in second chances. Mauritius believes in fairness and Mauritius believes in its people.

Madam Speaker, I wholeheartedly support this Bill. I commend it to the House.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Yes, hon. Ramdass!

Mr Ramdass: Madam Speaker, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Mr Mohamed rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 28 April 2026 at 11.30 a.m.

Dr. Boolell rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. The House stands adjourned!

At 6.18 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 28 April 2026 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MAURITIUS' SDDS+ STATUS UPGRADE – MEASURES & BENEFITS

(No. B/408) 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)

INDIAN OCEAN MARITIME SECURITY – BILATERAL AGREEMENTS & STRATEGIC COOPERATION

(No. B/409) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the current strategic importance of the Indian Ocean as a maritime route and as a potential source of raw materials, including of Gas Oil and Mogas, he will state the bilateral agreements entered into by the Government of Mauritius, if any, to ensure the security of the Indian Ocean and, if so, give details thereof.

(Withdrawn)

SAINT LOUIS POWER PLANT – TURBINES PROCUREMENT – CORRUPTION ALLEGATIONS – ARRESTS & INTERROGATIONS

(No. B/411) 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 inquiry initiated into allegations of corruption in relation to the procurement of turbines for the Saint Louis Power Plant of the Central Electricity Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand, indicating the names of the persons arrested and interrogated under caution in connection therewith as at to date.

(Withdrawn)

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD – DEPUTY CEO (MR S.M.) –
APPOINTMENT & CONTRACT RENEWAL**

(No. B/413) 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)

HUMAN TRAFFICKING – REPORTED CASES & COMBAT MEASURES

(No. B/414) Dr. Ms R. Daureawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to human trafficking, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the –

- (a) number of reported cases thereof over the past two years indicating the number of prosecutions initiated in connection therewith and the outcomes thereof, and
- (b) additional measures taken or being envisaged to combat same, indicating the mechanisms put in place for the protection of the victims thereof.

(Withdrawn)

REPUBLIC OF CONGO (BRAZZAVILLE) – OFFICIAL VISIT – OUTCOME

(No. B/415) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to his recent official visit to the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), he will state the outcome thereof, indicating the bilateral meetings held in connection therewith.

(Withdrawn)

CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO – PROPOSED SOVEREIGNTY TRANSFER – CONSULTATIONS

(No. B/416) 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 proposed agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius concerning the transfer of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia, and the reported shelving thereof by the United Kingdom, he will state whether he proposes to have consultations with the President of the United States with a view to securing his approval for the said transfer of sovereignty to Mauritius.

(Vide Reply to PNQ)

RACING DOPING CASE – MR D. S. – INQUIRY & OUTCOME

(No. B/417) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the case of Mr D. S. tested positive for cocaine following a test carried out on or about 18 October 2025, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to whether the Racing Stewards of the Horse Racing Integrity and Doping Unit has initiated an inquiry thereinto and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**GOLDEN VISA SCHEME – PROPOSED INTRODUCTION – POTENTIAL
SUCCESS & RISKS**

(No. B/418) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of the Golden Visa Scheme, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Economic Development Board, information as to –
 - (i) whether the potential success and risks thereof particularly, regarding compliance with the Financial Action Task Force standards, and
 - (ii) the estimated yearly number of Residence Permits to be issued thereunder have been assessed, and
- (b) state whether same will represent an accelerated pathway to permanent residence or Mauritian citizenship.

(Withdrawn)

AIRPORT HOLDINGS LTD. – STRATEGIC PARTNERS

(No. B/419) 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)

NEW COURT HOUSE – MAINTENANCE CONTRACT – DETAILS

(No. B/445) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Attorney General whether, in regard to the New Court House, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether a maintenance contract has been awarded in relation thereto and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the name of the contractor, and

- (b) whether water leakages during rainfall and poor air-conditioning have been reported thereat and remedial measures being taken, if any.

(Withdrawn)

**FOREIGN WORKERS' RECRUITMENT – AUTHORISED AGENCIES –
MONITORING MECHANISMS**

(No. B/446) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to foreign workers, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –
- (i) current number of agencies authorised for the recruitment thereof, indicating whether the list thereof will be tabled together with the names of the beneficial owner/s in each case, and
 - (ii) number of licences refused, suspended or revoked over the past three years, indicating the reasons therefor, and
- (b) state the monitoring mechanisms in place to prevent abuse, the charging of illegal fees and collusion in the recruitment thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**PESTICIDES REGULATORY OFFICE – OFFICERS POSTING – REDUCTION
REASONS**

(No. B/449) 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)

**WATER SUPPLY – MUDDY/MURKY WATER COMPLAINTS – REMEDIAL
MEASURES**

(No. B/450) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to water supply, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to whether it is in presence of complaints to the effect that same is muddy or murky and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) reasons therefor, and

- (b) remedial measures being taken in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

**MINORS LOITERING/BEGGING – REPORTED CASES – RESCUE &
REHABILITATION MEASURES**

(No. B/451) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to minors found loitering and/or begging on public streets, she will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –
- (i) number of reported cases thereof, and
 - (ii) reasons therefor, indicating, in each case, whether same is attributable to abandonment and/or having been driven out by family members, and
- (b) state the measures being envisaged for the timely identification, rescue and rehabilitation thereof.

Reply: As regards part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that from January 2025 to date, 11 cases of minors found loitering and/or begging on public streets have been reported to my Ministry through the Hotline 113, the Police, hospitals and the Family Support Services.

Out of the 11 cases, 4 were for child mendicity and the remaining cases were cases of abandonment by family members.

Concerning part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that 4 minors have been placed in Residential Care Institutions, 6 minors have been placed with a family member (Mother/Grandmother/Aunt/Grandfather), 1 minor is currently in Rodrigues under the care of a maternal aunt.

Officers of my Ministry carry out surveillance and outreach operations, in collaboration with the Police, to ensure prompt identification of minors found loitering and/or begging.

Once identified, immediate protective actions are taken; Emergency Protection Orders are applied for these minors who are removed from unsafe environments and referred to appropriate institutions, including Residential Care Institutions, where they are provided with accommodation, security and psychological support.

Concurrently, additional measures are taken such as –

- (a) Identification of the parents and rehabilitation of the minors, where possible;

- (b) Referral of parents to the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity for financial support as appropriate;
- (c) Networking with any NGO whose mission is to cater for children found loitering and/or begging.

Furthermore, I wish to point out the importance of parental responsibility in the upbringing of our children. In this regard, my Ministry remains committed to supporting families by offering comprehensive programmes geared toward parents, which aim to guide and empower them in better understanding and fulfilling their roles.

My Ministry had implemented through the Parental Strength Circle, under the Parental Empowerment Programme, a community-based project, in collaboration with an NGO in Olivia, where a group of mothers supports children left unattended in the region. This initiative has demonstrated how empowerment translated into practical, child-centred solutions. By addressing children's daily needs and structured support, families are strengthened leading to community resilience.

Such types of projects with NGOs will be strongly encouraged.

My Ministry, together with NGOs, the Ministry of Health and Wellness, the Mauritius Police Force, and community partners, also run awareness campaigns to protect children. These campaigns target primary and secondary school students, young people, parents, and educators on issues such as child abuse and minors found loitering or begging on the streets.

I wish to inform the House that the Ministry will be relaunching the District Child Protection Committee. This Committee will bring together people at district level to work on addressing the issues of loitering and/or begging children and welfare in their communities, amongst other protection issues.

CAMBRIDGE EXAMINATIONS – MAURITIAN CANDIDATES' PERFORMANCE – REMEDIAL MEASURES

(No. B/454) 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 envisaged to address same, and
- (b) responsibility of the different authorities, particularly, the Quality Assurance and Inspection Division, in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

FLEET MANAGEMENT SYSTEM – PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/455) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the proposed implementation of the Fleet Management System, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

**CONSTITUENCY NO. 8 – WATER PIPE LAYING WORKS – ROADS
REINSTATEMENT**

(No. B/456) Mr G. P. Venkatasami (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to water pipe laying works carried out in Constituency No. 8, Quartier Militaire and Moka, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, the list of roads concerned therewith, indicating the ones which have not been thereafter reinstated, indicating the reasons and timeframe set therefor.

(Withdrawn)

APPEAL COMMITTEE – PENDING APPEALS – REMEDIAL MEASURES

(No. B/458) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the Appeal Committee of his Ministry, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number and type of appeals pending before the Board thereof over the past two years, indicating the –

- (a) timeframe set for the consideration thereof, and
- (b) measures being envisaged to address the delays in determining the appeals.

(Withdrawn)

**ALALILA PLATFORM – TAXI OPERATORS REPRESENTATIONS – ACTIONS
TAKEN**

(No. B/460) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the introduction of the Alalila platform powered by Uber in Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to whether –

- (a) it is in presence of representations from some taxis operators regarding same, and
- (b) the approval of the Authority was sought and obtained prior thereto and, if so, indicate the conditions attached thereto and, if not, indicate the actions that will be taken in relation thereto, if any.

(Withdrawn)

**RENEWAL ENERGY TRANSITION – WIND ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE –
DEVELOPMENTS**

(No. B/461) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to our objective to accelerate our energy transition in terms of renewable energy sources, he will state the existing wind energy infrastructure in Mauritius, indicating the –

- (a) future proposed developments thereof;
- (b) targets set therefor, and
- (c) challenges and opportunities thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**VACOAS-PHOENIX – NEW DRAINS CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS – PERIOD
SEPTEMBER 2025 TO APRIL 2026**

(No. B/462) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the construction of new drains within the township of Vacoas-Phoenix, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of projects approved therefor since September 2025 to date, indicating the number thereof in respect of which funds have been allocated, further indicating in each case, the date of allocation of contract.

(Withdrawn)

BOIS DES AMOURETTES – CREMATION GROUND – ROAD REINSTATEMENT

(No. B/464) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the cremation ground at Bois des Amourettes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether consideration will be given for the reinstatement of the road leading thereto and of the facilities provided thereat.

(Withdrawn)

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE – ISLAND-WIDE NETWORK COVERAGE –
IMPROVEMENT MEASURES**

(No. B/465) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the rolling out of Artificial Intelligence, he will –

- (a) state whether increased pressure on bandwidth requirements, particularly, in respect of mobile data is being anticipated, and
- (b) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the measures being envisaged by mobile network operators to ensure adequate network coverage island-wide, particularly, in areas currently experiencing low to no coverage thereof.

(Withdrawn)

KOREK MOBILE APPLICATION – PUBLIC ACCESS – FACILITATION

(No. B/466) Mr C. Lukeeram (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the KOREK mobile application, he will state the measures, if any, undertaken by his Ministry to facilitate public access thereto and the use of the e-government services available thereon.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/420)

ROSE BELLE – FOOTBALL GROUND – ACCESS FEES

(No. B/468) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the access fees to the football ground at Rose Belle, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Sports Council, information as to whether consideration will be given for the reduction or the waiver thereof.

(Withdrawn)

TWAHA ACADEMY – MINORS AGGRESSION ALLEGATIONS – INQUIRY

(No. B/469) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the alleged cases of aggression and ill-treatment of two minors at the Twaha Academy, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Family Support Unit, information as to whether an inquiry has been initiated thereinto and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof and the measures taken in connection therewith.

(Withdrawn)

MEDICATIONS – REGISTRATION – ALTERNATIVE PROCUREMENT

(No. B/470) Dr F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to medications, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Pharmacy Board, information as to the number of applications for registration thereof awaiting approval over the 12-month period ending 01 March 2026, indicating –

- (a) in each case, the name of the medication and of the importer concerned therewith, and
- (b) whether, on account of non-availability thereof on the market, alternative means for the procurement thereof were sought, particularly for use in public hospitals.

(Withdrawn)

LE MORNE HERITAGE TRUST FUND – OFFICE SPACE – RENTAL FEE

(No. B/471) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the Office of Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the rent payable therefor.

Reply: In regard to the Office of the Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund (LMHTF), I wish to inform the House that the Trust Fund is currently occupying office space of an extent of 187 square metres, located on the first floor of a building at Avenue des Filaos, Coteau Raffin, La Gaulette, at a monthly rental of Rs44,568.

I am further informed that, since 2018, the Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund had been operating from two separate locations, namely with an office of 107.7 square metres at Avenue des Filaos, Coteau Raffin, and another office at Hennessy Court, Port Louis, at monthly rentals of Rs29,000 and Rs45,540, respectively.

This arrangement was clearly not appropriate and did not reflect sound management practices for a UNESCO World Heritage Site of such national importance. It is not acceptable that the majority of staff, including the Director, were operating approximately 45

kilometres away from the Le Morne Cultural Landscape, thereby affecting proper supervision, coordination, and the effective management of site operations.

This situation also led to fragmented operations and placed an unnecessary financial burden on public resources through the maintenance of multiple office spaces.

Upon being apprised of this situation, I gave clear instructions for the relocation of staff closer to the Le Morne Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site, so as to ensure more effective on-site management, improved coordination, and a more efficient use of public funds.

Since an additional office space of 79.6 square metres, adjacent to the existing premises at Coteau Raffin, was vacant, the Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund proceeded with the rental of this space at a monthly cost of Rs 15,568 for a period of one year, in order to accommodate additional staff following the relocation. This has enabled Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund to make a savings of Rs29,972 monthly on rental fees.

With regard to the lease agreement for the initial office space at Coteau Raffin, I am informed that the initial lease awarded in 2018 expired in 2020 and was subsequently renewed for a period of three years up to 2023. Thereafter, several interim renewals were effected and as at 28 February 2025, the lease is on a month-to-month basis.

Such an arrangement is not in line with established good governance practices for a public body, as it does not provide the necessary stability and clarity in contractual obligations.

I have, therefore, given instructions for this situation to be regularised in strict compliance with existing procedures governing the rental of buildings. The Board of the Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund has accordingly initiated the necessary steps to review and formalise the terms and conditions of the lease agreement, including its duration, in order to ensure transparency, accountability and value for money.

BOIS PIGNOLET, MAIN ROAD – WATER LEAKAGE – REMEDIAL ACTIONS

(No. B/472) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the water leakage along the main road at Bois Pignolet, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the causes thereof, indicating when same will be remedied.

(Withdrawn)

CULTURAL DESK – PROPOSED SETTING UP

(No. B/473) Mr C. Ramkalawon (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the proposed setting up of a cultural desk that would act as a one-stop shop for concert organisers and artists, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY– CULTURAL COOPERATION – MOU

(No. B/474) 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.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Cultural Cooperation between my Ministry and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the period 2026-2029, which was approved by Cabinet on 20 March 2026, is being pursued with a view to establishing a structured and renewed framework for collaboration in the cultural sector.

I am informed that a previous MOU between my Ministry and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, covering the period 2015-2018, was not renewed upon its expiry, as no initiative was taken by the previous Government to maintain a formal and structured framework for cultural cooperation with Rodrigues. This Government, unlike the precedent one, took the initiative to sign a MOU on cultural cooperation with Rodrigues for period 2026-2029 as it is our policy to strengthen national cohesion, promote the creative economy and ensure inclusive cultural development across the Republic.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the implementation of this MOU is expected to ensure equitable opportunities for artists from Rodrigues and practitioners through a structured and institutional approach. In particular, the MOU provides for clearly defined mechanisms whereby –

- (i) Artists and cultural practitioners from Rodrigues will be given opportunities to participate in exchanges, events and activities at national, regional and international levels;
- (ii) Access will be provided to capacity-building initiatives, including workshops, training programmes, seminars and knowledge-sharing platforms, thereby enhancing skills development;
- (iii) Collaboration between the parties will facilitate access to existing infrastructure, technical expertise and networks available;
- (iv) Collaborative activities and exchanges will be undertaken in areas such as museums, archives, genealogy, libraries and traditional practices thereby contributing to the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, and
- (v) Annual action plans to be jointly agreed will promote the creative industries and support artists in deriving sustainable economic benefits from their work.

Furthermore, the MOU provides for collaboration in copyright and related rights, as well as joint cultural productions and exhibitions thereby ensuring that artists and practitioners from Rodrigues are involved in the cultural landscape at national, regional and international levels.

Through these measures, the MOU will ensure that artists and practitioners from Rodrigues benefit from enhanced access to opportunities and contribute meaningfully to the development of an inclusive and dynamic cultural sector across the Republic.

MAURITIUS POST LTD – FINANCIAL SITUATION – REASONS & REMEDIAL MEASURES

(No. B/475) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the Mauritius Post Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the current financial situation thereof, indicating the –

- (a) reasons therefor;
- (b) impact thereof on the employees, and
- (c) measures being envisaged to address same.

(Withdrawn)

PETIT RAFFRAY – MULTI-PURPOSE SPORTS ARENA – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/476) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to Petit Raffray Village, he will state whether consideration will be given for the construction of a Multi-Purpose Sports Arena equipped with full facilities thereat.

(Withdrawn)

SAINT-CROIX SOCIAL WELFARE CENTRE – NEW BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/477) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the demolition of the building housing the Saint-Croix Social Welfare Centre to make way for a Multi-Use Games Area project, she will state whether provision has been made for the construction of a new building to house the said centre and, if not, why not and, if so, where matters stand, indicating the reasons for the delay in the implementation thereof and the expected start and completion dates thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS & RODRIGUES – PIG BREEDING – PORK & PORK PRODUCTS – MARKET DEMAND

(No. B/478) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to pig breeding, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of pigs currently being reared in mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues Island respectively, indicating in each case, the –

- (a) yearly market demand for pork and pork products and import sources thereof, and
- (b) facilities available and support provided to the pig breeders.

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUES – DIRECTOR OF AUDIT REPORT – STRUCTURAL REFORMS – EVALUATION MECHANISMS

(No. B/480) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms whether, in regard to the shortcomings noted by the Director of Audit in his last report in respect of Rodrigues Island, he will state whether consideration will be given for the introduction of structural reforms, capacity building

programmes, and appropriate follow-up and evaluation mechanisms with a view to enhancing the efficiency of public officers in the discharge of their duties thereat.

(Withdrawn)

GRAND BAY WATERFRONT – MASTERPLAN PREPARATION & IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/481) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the Grand Bay Waterfront, he will state whether consideration is being given for the preparation of a Masterplan for the development thereof under Public Private Partnership and, if so, indicate the expected timeframe for the preparation and implementation thereof and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

MINISTRY OF GENDER – POST OF PSYCHOLOGIST– SCHEME OF DUTIES

(No. B/482) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the post of psychologist at the level of her Ministry, she will state the –

- (a) scheme of duties and qualification requirements therefor, and
- (b) current number thereof.

(Withdrawn)

FISHERMAN REGISTRATION CARD – CERTIFICATE OF CHARACTER – PREREQUISITE

(No. B/483) 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 to hold a clean Certificate of Character for eligibility thereto.

(Withdrawn)

CLIMATE CRISIS – SOCIAL PROTECTION – VULNERABLE PERSONS

(No. B/484) Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the social protection of vulnerable persons against the impact of climate crisis, he will state the –

- (a) measures in place or being envisaged to mitigate the effects thereof and assistance provided to those affected thereby, and
- (b) mechanisms for –
 - (i) the sustainable financing thereof;
 - (ii) the rapid disbursement of funds in case of climate-related disasters, and
 - (iii) ensuring long-term financial resilience in the post-disaster period.

(Withdrawn)

DRUG ADDICTION AMONG ADOLESCENTS – PUBLIC HEALTH DATA & MEASURES

(No. B/485) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to drug-related health conditions, he will state the number of adolescents admitted in public health institutions therefor over the past five years on a yearly basis, indicating if an assessment of the drug-addiction level of adolescents in Mauritius has been carried out and, if so, indicate the measures being implemented or envisaged to address same.

(Withdrawn)

GRANT-AIDED PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS – TEACHER REDUNDANCIES

(No. B/486) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to teachers employed in Government grant-aided private secondary schools, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof who have been or will be declared redundant in the current academic year –

- (a) giving a breakdown thereof by school and by subject, and
- (b) indicating the reasons therefor.

(Withdrawn)

NPF & NSF– FINANCIAL POSITION & INVESTMENTS

(No. B/489) 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)

SECONDARY SCHOOLS – SYNTHETIC DRUG CASES & PREVENTIVE MEASURES

(No. B/491) 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)

ELECTRICITY TARRIF INCREASE 15% – HOUSEHOLDS IMPACT

(No. B/492) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the announced 15 percent increase in electricity tariffs as from May 2026, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to –

- (a) whether an assessment of the impact thereof on households and small businesses has been carried out, indicating the measures being envisaged to mitigate the impact thereof on vulnerable consumers, and
- (b) the number of households having has their electricity supply disconnected over the past year on account of non-payment of bills.

(Withdrawn)

MAPUTO PROTOCOL ON WOMEN’S RIGHTS – IMPLEMENTATION – ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

(No. A/25) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the

implementation of the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights, she will state whether an action plan has been developed in relation thereto for the –

- (a) safeguarding of the rights of women with disabilities to freedom from violence, including sexual abuse, discrimination based on disability and the right to be treated with dignity, and
- (b) establishment of measures commensurate with the physical, economic and social needs of women to facilitate their access to employment, professional and vocational training, and participation in decision-making.

Reply: Mauritius remains committed to the implementation of the Protocol on the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol). Its objectives are being pursued through existing legal, policy, and institutional frameworks promoting gender equality, non-discrimination, and inclusion.

Although, there is no standalone action plan specific to the Maputo Protocol, its provisions are operationalised through national frameworks, in particular the National Gender Policy (2022–2030).

As regards the safeguarding of the rights of women with disabilities, the Policy adopts a rights-based and inclusive approach and addresses intersecting forms of discrimination, including disability. Gender Cells established across 54 Ministries/Departments with designated Gender Focal Points, ensure gender mainstreaming, coordination, and monitoring of gender-related initiatives.

In addition, the Ministry provides protection and support services through a network of twelve Family Support Services dispersed across the island, namely psychosocial counselling, crisis intervention, case management, legal referrals, and follow-up in cases of violence and abuse. Shelter services, in collaboration with NGOs, are also available to women and children in distress, including victims of violence.

Hotline services and digital reporting mechanisms facilitate access to assistance, while awareness and outreach programmes continue to address stigma, discrimination and harmful social norms. These measures collectively contribute to the protection and dignity of women, including women with disabilities.

Concerning measures commensurate with the physical, economic and social needs of women to facilitate their access to employment, vocational and professional training, and participation in decision-making, the Ministry has implemented a range of targeted initiatives under the National Gender Policy (2022–2030), approximately 59% of whose recommendations have already been implemented.

An employment-related Gender Focal Point has been designated at the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations, working in close collaboration with the Ministry to strengthen coordination on women's economic empowerment.

Women are also encouraged to benefit from services provided through eight (8) Women Empowerment Centres and one (1) Wellness Centre, as well as through 483 Women's Associations registered with the National Women's Council. These structures provide leadership, communication and self-assertiveness training, literacy and digital skills programmes, and vocational training in dressmaking, handicraft and related income-generating activities, thereby enhancing employability and participation in decision-making.

Furthermore, the National Women Entrepreneur Council supports women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship development. As at date, 1,479 women entrepreneurs are registered with the Council, which provides business counselling, business plan support, skills development in digital marketing, ICT, finance and management, mentoring and incubation support, as well as access to trade fairs, exhibitions and business-to-business networking opportunities.

In addition, the "Men as Allies" project, launched in November 2025, engages men and boys in promoting gender equality and positive masculinity. Currently, 50 champions are active across 13 regions, supported by 25 mentors. Moreover, 10 training sessions have been conducted, reaching approximately 500 participants.

These initiatives contribute to enhancing the economic autonomy, employability, entrepreneurship, and participation of women, including women with disabilities, in community and decision-making spaces. Government remains committed to strengthening these interventions to further advance gender equality and inclusion.