



**EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY**

**DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**(UNREVISED)**

**FIRST SESSION**

**TUESDAY 26 MAY 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. Mrs Marie Arianne Navarre-Marie	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare
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. John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen	Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection
Dr. the Hon. Kaviraj Sharma Sukon	Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research
Hon. Sayed Muhammad Aadil Ameer Meea	Minister of Industry, SMEs and Cooperatives
Dr. the Hon. Mahend Gungapersad, PDSM	Minister of Education and Human Resource
Dr. the Hon. Avinash Ramtohl	Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Lutchmanah Pentiah	Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms
Hon. Ranjiv Wochit, OSK	Minister of Local Government
Hon. Mahendra Gondeea, OSK	Minister of Arts and Culture

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Deputy Speaker	Hon. Vedasingam Vasudevachariar Baloomoody, GOSK
Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Hon. Mohamed Ehsan Juman
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**MAURITIUS**

**Eighth National Assembly**

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**FIRST SESSION**

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**Debate No. 11 of 2026**

**Sitting of Tuesday 26 May 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**

- (a) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Mauritius Revenue Authority for the year ended 30 June 2025.
- (b) The Reports dealing with the Activities and Financial Position of the Prime Minister's Relief Fund for the Financial Years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025, and the Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Prime Minister's Relief Fund for the year ended 30 June 2025. (In Original)

**B. Ministry of Financial Services and Economic Planning**

- (a) The Financial Services (Family Office) Rules 2026. (Government Notice No. 62 of 2026)
- (b) The Financial Services (Financial Services (Family Office) Rules 2020) (Revocation) Rules 2026. (Government Notice No. 63 of 2026)

**C. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade**

The Fonds de Solidarité Africain (Privileges and Immunities) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 61 of 2026)

**D. Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection**

The Consumer Protection (Price Label) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 60 of 2026)

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS****BANK OF MAURITIUS – KEY RATE INCREASE – ANTICIPATED ECONOMIC EFFECTS**

**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 decision taken by the Monetary Policy Committee of the Bank of Mauritius on 20 May 2026 to raise the Key Rate by 25 basis points from 4.50 per cent to 4.75 per cent per annum, he will state the anticipated effects thereof on households and on the different sectors of the economy.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, let me at the very outset stress that the Bank of Mauritius is now totally independent to carry out its roles and functions as stipulated by the Bank of Mauritius Act. Unlike the previous Government, there is now absolutely no interference from the Ministry of Finance or the government bodies in the policies and operations of the Bank of Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, we all know the extent of the interferences and the directives given by the previous Minister of Finance to the Central Bank. The consequences of such interferences have been very, very damaging and were a direct threat to the very stability of the banking system and the financial system as a whole. We are still having to deal with these consequences.

Madam Speaker, since coming into office, we have re-established the total independence of the Central Bank and the Monetary Policy Committee. We have given the Bank of Mauritius the space to carry out its primary objective, which is to maintain price stability and promote orderly and balanced economic development.

Madam Speaker, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) met on 20 May of this year and unanimously voted to raise the Key Rate by 25 basis points, that is, from 4.50 per cent to 4.75 per cent per annum.

Recent increases in energy prices have raised inflation worldwide and introduced fresh upside risks to inflation trajectories. Under the baselined scenario worked out by the Bank of Mauritius that assumes an average oil price of USD 90 per barrel – it is not USD 90 at the

moment – the resolution of the conflict and a complete reopening of the Strait of Hormuz by the end, hopefully, of June of this year, headline inflation is projected to rise around 5.5 per cent in calendar year 2026. This, Madam Speaker, is well above the previous forecast of 3.6 per cent and above the upper end of inflation target range of 2.5 per cent.

Core inflation, which excludes volatile items such as the prices of fuel and food products, stood at 6.1 per cent for the month of April 2026, that is, on a year-to-year basis. This measure indicates underlying inflationary pressures arising mainly domestically.

Madam Speaker, let me explain the main source of this inflationary pressure.

The Bank transferred a total amount of Rs97 billion to the Government during the period 2019 to 2024. In addition to the Rs3.5 billion remitted to the National Property Fund prior to 2019, these transfers, coupled with the amount of Rs81 billion that the Bank printed to finance the Mauritius Investment Corporation, created a situation of massive liquidity.

This, in turn, contributed to the high levels of inflation that the country experienced and to the significant depreciation of the rupee. At the time, inflation had risen above 11 per cent. Excess liquidity was at an all-time high, around Rs90 billion in August 2023. The inflation rate reached a peak, as I said, of 11.3 per cent in February 2023, while the rupee depreciated; you know, since 2014 to 2024, it depreciated by 46 per cent against the US dollars. Between December 2019 to the end of December 2024, it depreciated – because we are talking about this period – by 30 per cent against the US dollars.

Furthermore, an overly accommodative monetary policy stance of the Bank of Mauritius during this period led to wide interest rate differentials between instruments denominated in rupees and those denominated in US dollars. This contributed to the significant weakening of the rupee and fuelling inflationary pressures.

Madam Speaker, in making the decision to raise the Key Rate by 25 basis points, I am informed that the Monetary Policy Committee of the Central Bank took into consideration the macroeconomic implications that the recent escalation of geopolitical tensions and the US-Iran conflict, for small and highly open economies such as Mauritius, have wide macroeconomic implications.

The MPC weighted the risk of inflation of higher international fuel prices, increased freight, increased transportation costs and exchange rate pressures against the risk posed to the domestic economic outlook.

While headline inflation remained unchanged at 4.2 per cent between March and April 2026, year-on-year inflation showed a notable increase to 3.6 per cent in April from 2.7 per cent in March, primarily, again, driven by rising energy prices and some second-round effects.

Core inflation, which indicates the underlying price pressures in the economy, remained elevated. On a year-on-year basis, core inflation rose to 6.1 per cent. Domestic generated inflation, particularly services inflation, continued to contribute substantially to price pressures, although imported inflation, driven by higher energy prices and elevated freight and logistic costs, has strengthened.

I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that in the inflation expectation survey conducted in March 2026, the near-term inflation expectations have drifted upwards, that is, in line with the expectations of higher fuel and other supply costs.

The outlook for inflation is influenced by fuel prices passed through persistent core inflation and geopolitical development with risks firmly tilted to the upside.

It is necessary to act in a timely and measured manner to preserve price stability, mitigate the risk of a second-round inflationary effects becoming embedded in the economy, and safeguard macroeconomic stability over the medium-term.

Madam Speaker, as regards the impact of the increase in Key Rate on households, it would depend on whether the household, of course, is a net debtor or a creditor, a net saver.

I am informed that at the end of March 2026, households held rupee loans amounting to Rs202.2 billion. The weighted average interest rate that they paid on their outstanding loans was 6.8 per cent.

Therefore, if we assume for a moment that a household has a loan of say Rs500,000, an increase of 25 basis points in the Key Rate, if fully reflected by the banks on the interest rates

that they charge, will entail an increase of Rs1,250 per annum in the amount of interest rate repayments. The same increase would be applicable to corporates who have loans.

Madam Speaker, on the other hand, households held transferable deposits for an amount of Rs457.1 billion as at the end of March 2026. Interest rate on rupee deposits was between 2.95 per cent to 3.4 per cent.

Assuming that banks will fully reflect the increase in the Key Rate, the interest rate that households will earn on the saving deposits will also increase by 25 basis points.

Madam Speaker, as regards the impact on the economy, the increase in the Key Rate will help dampen inflationary pressures, support the Mauritian rupee, and prevent runaway inflation.

We must not underestimate the damage that inflation can do to an economy. We know the experience of many countries such as Argentina in the past, Zimbabwe and other countries that have experienced inflation exceeding 1000 per cent per month.

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

**Mr Lesjongard:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. *M. le Premier ministre, il est inutile d'aller chercher des excuses qui remontent à 2019. Ce coup de massue-là on le reçoit maintenant, Madame la présidente.*

Since the hon. Prime Minister in his reply stated that the Bank of Mauritius has a mandate to contain inflation and maintain price stability, will the hon. Prime Minister inform the House why, up to now, there are no measures to support the population that is suffering from an unprecedented increase in the cost of living?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, the hon. Leader of the Opposition surely knows what happened before. You are saying that we are talking about the past. But we are now reaping the consequences of the past. You printed money. You gave money left, right and centre to win elections, which you did not win. That is the consequence of what is happening.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question! No comments, please!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Speaker, since the economy is shrinking with a lower growth, that is, from 4.9 in 2024 to 3.5 in 2025, and forecasted to decrease by 2.8 this year, does the

hon. Prime Minister realise that an increase in the cost of credit amid slowing economic activity would further contract the economy of this country?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, would the hon. Leader of the Opposition want us to allow inflation to go up and prices to increase? That is the question you should be asking yourself.

**Mr Lesjongard:** *Non, non*, my question is very relevant, Madam Speaker.

*(Interruptions)*

**An hon. Member:** *Nepli ena question?*

**Madam Speaker:** Third question!

**Mr Lesjongard:** The hon. Prime Minister should be relevant in his reply, Madam Speaker. Has Government taken into consideration that an increase in the cost of money, that is, higher interest rates, will further affect households, businesses and the government in terms of debt burden?

**The Prime Minister:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition, I do not know what to say to his answer. It is a stake answer trying to catch headlines. If interest rate had not gone up, do you realise that the rupee would have depreciated further?

**Mr Lesjongard:** It has depreciated.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** The cost of items would have increased. This is basic economics! Do you realise this is what would have happened?

**Mr Jhummun:** *Koz CEB.*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Jhummun! I cannot hear the hon. Prime Minister if you speak.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Speaker, let me come to another very important sector. SMEs are facing compounded pressures due to decisions taken by this Government –

- higher borrowing costs from the repo rate increase now;
- reduced cash flow from the lowered VAT threshold;
- elevated input costs from currency depreciation and freight disruptions, and also
- weakening consumer demand.

Unfortunately, hon. Prime Minister, up to now, there is no real support that has been extended to SMEs, and this is an urgent concern. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House what rapid and urgent measures Government will take to prevent massive job losses in the SME sector?

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, he is confusing a lot of things at the same time. We have done things for the SMEs. Do not think we have not done anything.

**Mr Lesjongard:** What have you done?

**The Prime Minister:** But wait for the budget; maybe we will do more. I cannot tell you about budgetary...

**Mr Lesjongard:** No, you said that you have done; I cannot wait for the budget!

**The Prime Minister:** We have. You do not seem to know, but we have.

Now, again, Madam Speaker, we have to do a balance between inflation and growth. Inflation is the worst enemy. It is a tax on people, on everybody. This is what we have to control first of all. This is the objective of the Central Bank. Inflation must be controlled.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Which has not been achieved!

**Madam Speaker:** Question, please!

**The Prime Minister:** 11.3% at your time!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Speaker, the Bank of Mauritius December 2025 Financial Stability Report indicates that household debt has reached Rs281 billion. With debt servicing consuming 17.9 of household income, and now we have a repo rate which has been increased to 4.75, and you stated that in your reply, a core inflation at 6.1. And also, we should add to that an increase in electricity tariff of 15%.

**Madam Speaker:** Where is your question?

**Mr Lesjongard:** Will the hon. Prime Minister agree that the financial resilience of many households in this country has reached its limits? Would he inform the House what quantitative threshold would trigger emergency measures to prevent household distress from escalating into systemic risk?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** First of all, I said in my reply at the beginning that interest rates are not determined by Government, but it is determined by the Monetary Policy Committee of the Central Bank. That is why we have made them independent so that politicians do not interfere and make matters worse, as you did at your time.

Now, I think you mentioned high core inflation. Let me tell you, it is different from headline inflation. High core inflation was already very high because of what you did – printing money, excess liquidity in the system. This resulted, as we know, in the depreciation of the rupee. The rupee depreciated by 46%, Madam Speaker, from 2014 to 2020, against the dollar. You have given increases; money was spread around. This is the consequence; you get excess liquidity in the system. This is what we have to correct, and we will correct.

**Ms Anquetil:** Excellent!

**Madam Speaker:** Next question!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Decisions to support the population is taken by Government, Madam Speaker. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware, Madam Speaker, that households are suffering, like we say in our language, *pe bizin ris diab par lake* with the high increase in fuel, electricity and food essentials, and now an increase in repo rate to 4.75%.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition probably is, on purpose, not remembering what they did with the excess liquidity; they printed money – not one cent; billions of rupees. They have given money away. This is what caused the excess liquidity in the system. You have to fight it. You cannot fight inflation with mirrors. You have to fight inflation by acts.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question! Question! Do not give me that smile!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Speaker, under the previous Government, borrowers received temporary financial support to offset additional loan burden following repo rate increases. Will Government consider a similar compassionate measure, Madam Speaker?

**The Prime Minister:** You managed to do that because you were printing money. That is what they did.

**Mr Jhummun:** *Akoz sa linflation inn...*

**Mr Lesjongard:** Printing money *la disk la in raye sa*, Madam Speaker.

*(Interruptions)*

With property prices outstripping income growth prior to this repo rate increase and also with mortgage rates rising alongside construction costs, you will agree, Madam Speaker, that home ownership is becoming increasingly unaffordable for low-income earners, young professionals and especially the middle class. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether there has been an impact analysis of mortgage defaults on bank stability and what measures will Government take to mitigate the impact?

**The Prime Minister:** The repo rate has just been increased, Madam Speaker. We will certainly look at all these. But the fact remains that the first core duty of the Bank of Mauritius has to be to fight inflation.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question!

**Mr Lesjongard:** He is again irrelevant, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, despite foreign exchange market interventions and two repo rate interventions since February 2025, the rupee now trades above Rs47 per USD, which is a historic high while foreign currency deposits have surged to 1.9 billion USD. Will the hon. Prime Minister confirm that this trend signals eroding public confidence in the Mauritian rupee?

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I should remind the Leader of the Opposition again. He is misleading the country.

**Ms Anquetil:** Exactly!

**The Prime Minister:** You do not seem to realise that there is a time lag. When you take an economic action, there is a time lag. We are now suffering from what you did for 10 years. He is talking about the depreciation. 46% against the dollar from 2014 to 2024. How does he explain that?

**Mr Jhummun:** *Piroman p deklar pompier.*

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Speaker, the Mauritian economy advanced by only 2.7 per cent year-on-year in the fourth quarter of 2025, the weakest since 2021. With the Bank of Mauritius projecting further moderation to 2.8 in 2026 amid persistent inflationary pressures, does the hon. Prime Minister accept that the economy risks entering a technical recession if current trends persist, Madam Speaker?

**The Prime Minister:** This is what the hon. Leader of the Opposition wishes. This is why we are fighting. This is what you are wishing. We know how the MSM operates. If this country gets worse, so much better for them. They think they will come back. They will not!

**Mr Jhummun:** *Profet maler!*

**Madam Speaker:** Your friend has asked for a supplementary. Will you allow him?

**Mr A. Duval:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is conscious that the Bank of Mauritius is attempting to control inflation, whilst the IMF is saying itself that inflation is being driven by international fuel and food prices, and therefore that such monetary fiscal measures, the imposition of the higher key rate is not going to do anything to reducing fuel and food prices, unless Government comes with targeted measures urgently to reduce VAT, firstly, to cap it like it has been said, and secondly, to allow parallel importation? That is where Government should be acting instead.

**The Prime Minister:** That is something else, but, obviously, I hope the hon. Member of the Opposition knows that there is a war actually which is pushing all these prices up.

**Mr A. Duval:** Yes, this is what I am saying.

**The Prime Minister:** So, you do not want us to do anything?

**Madam Speaker:** Yes?

**Mr Lesjongard:** In the same vein, Madam Speaker, given the unprecedented cost of living facing Mauritian households, will the hon. Prime Minister reconsider the phased withdrawal of CSG linked allowances and instead, reinstate or recalibrate these supports, particularly for those households not on the Social Register of Mauritius?

**The Prime Minister:** If I could laugh, I would laugh because they introduced CSG. You introduced it. Now, you want us to take it out immediately.

**Ms Anquetil:** *Fer komik!*

**Mr Lesjongard:** No, that is not my question!

**The Prime Minister:** But why did you introduce it in the first place?

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Speaker, I think the hon. Prime Minister has not understood my question. I am asking to reinstate the CSG allowance.

**The Prime Minister:** And allow things to go back to what it was before? No! The answer is no!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Last question, Madam Speaker. Mauritians are growing frustrated, believing that this Government is out of touch and does not grasp how serious the cost-of-living crisis is in this country. Does the hon. Prime Minister believe that public perception is misplaced or does he acknowledge that more decisive, empathetic and targeted action is required to help the population make both ends meet?

**The Prime Minister:** I am not saying it is not. It is. We all know it is. We are suffering the consequences of 10 years of MSM, plus now the war, which is now putting us in difficulty. You cannot defy economic gravity with impunity, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Another question from your friend. Yes.

**Mr A. Duval:** Thank you. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister how much is inflation estimated to fall now with this increase in repo rate? If we can have the estimates to see if that is going to have any impact at all on the economy.

**The Prime Minister:** What is more important, Madam Speaker, is not the inflation. It is the expectation of inflation rate. That is what drags an economy; what people expect the inflation rate to be. We have to wait and see.

**Mr A. Duval:** So, you don't know!

**Madam Speaker:** Okay, good. That is it. Thank you very much. PMQT now.

Yes, hon. Etwareea?

#### **FINANCIAL YEAR 2025-2026 – PUBLIC DEBT RISE – CREDITORS**

**(No. B/782) 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 public debt, he will state whether same is on the rise beyond the estimated figure for financial year 2025-2026 due to the actual global geopolitical tension and imported inflation and, if so, give the list of the creditors in relation thereto together with the corresponding sums borrowed, in each case.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, at the time we left office in December 2014, the public sector debt-to-GDP ratio – I am talking about December when we left office – stood at

58.8 per cent, that is, below the 60 per cent that is in force in many European countries. However, the previous Government's irresponsible fiscal stewardship resulted in a sharp increase in the debt ratio reaching 87.7 per cent by December 2024. In absolute terms, the public sector debt increased from Rs238 billion in December 2014 to Rs608.2 billion in December 2024, that is, an increase of Rs370 billion.

To conceal their deliberate, I must say, irresponsible and reprehensible act, they suspended the statutory debt ceiling and set a new higher limit of 80 per cent of GDP instead of the 60 per cent that it was. Yet, the debt ratio, Madam Speaker, went beyond the roof, well above the 80 per cent limit, which they set themselves. It went beyond that, but they kept quiet. They did not do anything about this, as if Alice in Wonderland.

Due to the precarious fiscal situation that we inherited, with a high stock of debt coupled with a huge deficit, we had to embark on a fiscal consolidation programme.

In the 2025-2026 Budget Estimates, it was projected that the public sector debt would amount to Rs679.7 billion as at the end of June 2026, which would represent about 88.3 per cent of GDP.

Public sector debt is estimated at Rs675.4 billion as at the end of March 2026, compared to Rs661.1 billion at the end of December 2025. This represents, Madam Speaker, an increase of Rs14.3 billion over this period, that is, up to March 2026.

The increase in the debt level is explained mainly by –

- higher central government debt of Rs11.1 billion, resulting from the expenditure of Rs56 billion exceeding the revenue of Rs46 billion during the quarterly period January to March 2026. The main contributors being the payment of salary compensation and basic pensions, and
- higher debt of public enterprises of some Rs3.2 billion, mainly due to higher overdraft facilities of Rs1.5 billion and Rs1.1 billion mobilised by the CEB and the STC to cope with the rising working capital and foreign exchange requirements driven by the rise in international oil prices due to the conflict, as I said, in the Middle East.

Madam Speaker, the level of public debt is expected to exceed the estimated figure for the Financial Year 2025-2026 due to the following reasons –

- i. There would be a shortfall in revenue of around Rs10 billion due to the delay in the ratification of the Chagos Treaty;
- ii. With the conflict in the Middle East, real GDP growth is now expected to be lower than projected. This will obviously have a negative impact on Government revenues;
- iii. Government revenues will be lower in view of the expected slower growth in consumption, which is in line with the Government's strategy to move away from a consumption-driven economy and a high import content to an investment-led growth model. In addition, the relatively weak dollar during the first semester of the fiscal year has negatively affected VAT receipts, and
- iv. Adjustments in the implementation of some budget measures in order to protect the most vulnerable, and support growth and investment.

Madam Speaker, as I previously stated in reply to a Parliamentary Question, the Ministry of Finance has implemented a series of measures to contain expenditure in order to mitigate the impact of lower revenue on public finances.

With regard to the creditors, additional borrowing requirements will be met primarily through issuance of Government Securities.

Madam Speaker, Government is firmly committed to reducing the budget deficit and placing the public sector debt on a more sustainable path through strong fiscal reforms and enhanced governance. In this regard, as announced in the Government Programme and the 2025-2026 Budget Speech, a Fiscal Responsibility Act will be introduced to establish a stronger rules-based fiscal framework, promote greater transparency and accountability in public finances, and reinforce sound public financial management practices, and prevent the disaster that we had when the previous government was here.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes? Do you have a supplementary? Yes!

**Mr Etwareea:** Oui. Merci pour la réponse, M. le Premier ministre.

I would like to know whether the debt issue is a subject of discussion with the IMF. What is the message given by the IMF to the Mauritian Government?

**The Prime Minister:** I met with the IMF. They have just published the Article IV Report. They are very satisfied with the measures that we took to try to prevent debt from increasing.

**Madam Speaker:** Okay. Yes, hon. A. Duval!

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

May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he agrees that he has been able to manage the deficit so far firstly, with considerable taxation which has been imposed, greater revenue through taxation and secondly, spending has been reduced because hardly any budgetary measures have been implemented to date, and therefore, does he consider that this is a sound fiscal policy given that it is being done at the cost of economic growth, which the Prime Minister said, himself, is projected to be at a record low of 2.8%, a record low for Mauritius next year?

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, Prime Minister!

**The Prime Minister:** It is because we have these economic constraints, Madam Speaker. But I did say it is a balance. Again, on one side, the debt; but also, the growth. We must not take measures that actually stifle growth completely.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles!

#### **ELECTORAL COLLEGE – PROPOSED SETTING UP**

**(No. B/783) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the proposed setting up of an Electoral College for the nomination of the President of the Republic and of the Speaker of the National Assembly, he will state where matters stand.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, as announced in the Government Programme of 2025-2029, the Government is determined to revitalise democratic principles, reinforce sound

governance, and pursue constitutional reforms designed to enhance public confidence in the autonomy of state institutions.

In this line, the Constitutional Review Commission Bill has been introduced in the National Assembly – we are going to debate it today – with its main object to establish a Constitutional Review Commission, responsible to examine and make recommendations on Constitutional Reforms, such as the protection of fundamental rights and the consolidation of democracy and institutions.

The Bill, Madam Speaker, also provides, *inter alia*, for the different powers and functions of the Commission which covers strengthening of the protection of fundamental rights, enhancing privacy safeguards, introducing principles such as freedom of information, improving institutional governance through the creation of a Senior Officials' Appointment Committee which will

make recommendations to the Government on the appointment of heads of major public institutions.

Furthermore, the Constitutional Review Commission will look into our proposal to set up an Electoral College for the election of the President of the Republic.

There is no proposition to set up an Electoral College for the election of the hon. Speaker of the House.

**Madam Speaker:** Okay, next question! Dr. Ms Daureeawo, you have no more questions?

**Dr. Ms Daureeawo:** No.

**Madam Speaker:** Okay, next question! Yes, hon. Jhummun!

#### **BETTING TAX – PUNTERS & BOOKMAKERS – POTENTIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**(No. B/784) 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 betting, he will state whether his Office is in presence of representations for the removal of the betting tax on punters and for the imposition of a higher tax rate on the net yield of bookmakers and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether a study has been carried out or is being envisaged to assess the potential impact thereof, if implemented, on the reduction of illegal betting and increasing Government revenue.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, a betting tax and a levy are imposed on betting activities in respect of horseracing and foreign football matches. Currently, a 14 per cent betting tax on gross stakes, that is, a total amount played net of refunds and cancelled bets is paid by a punter. Furthermore, a 2.5 per cent levy on gross gambling yield, that is, a total amount played net of betting tax and winnings is paid by a bookmaker.

I am informed, Madam Speaker, by the Ministry of Finance that proposals were made at the level of the Gambling Regulatory Authority from operators and trainers for the removal of tax on punters and for the imposition of a higher tax rate on the net yield of bookmakers. The operators believe that the high rate of betting tax on punters may be the root cause for high-level illegal betting in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, may I remind the House that in September 2014, I had set up a full-fledged Commission of Inquiry on Horse Racing in Mauritius to look into all aspects of horse racing, including any financial malpractices, impropriety, illegal betting, illicit flow of funds, in the organisation of betting and ill-gotten gains from fraud in relation to horse racing. These are often interconnected, and the presence of a large illegal market reduces revenue for licensed bookmakers and stakeholders, creating a cycle that undermines the integrity of the whole industry.

The Report of the Commission of Inquiry – I am talking about the Parry Report – highlighted that, and I quote –

“Much evidence was presented about the possible size of the “illegal market” being at least as large, if not larger, than the legal market – the truth is no-one knows. However, the Commission considers the lack of official will and effort to combat the illegal market and the huge loss of revenue to the Exchequer from the loss of taxation

(estimated up to MUR 800 million in 2015 at the time the report was drafted) to be alarming and totally unacceptable”.

Madam Speaker, as soon as we took office in November 2024, this Government set up a High-level Committee under the chairmanship of the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service to conduct a regulatory review of the legal framework governing horse racing, including the Gambling Regulatory Authority Act.

Subsequently, in June 2025, the Gambling Regulatory Authority Act was amended to ensure that the Authority performs as a credible regulator of the gaming and betting industry and operates in a fair, transparent and accountable manner. The amendment also strengthened the provisions regarding illegal betting, money laundering and tax evasion. To combat illegal betting –

- A Horse Racing Integrity Division was set up;
- Specialists staff were recruited;
- A new cell of *Police des Jeux* is now attached to the Authority;
- The capacity of the GRA staff has been strengthened on enforcement and field inspection;
- An Inter-Agency Coordination Committee was set up to enhance effectiveness in detection of illegal activities and enforcement of the provisions of the law, and
- A bookmakers’ licence for those operating outside the racecourse was re-introduced.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Finance and the GRA are contemplating the enlistment of a consultant to undertake a study and advise on the holistic approach for the framework of addressing illegal betting.

The matter relates to taxation, and therefore, any change will be dealt with in the forthcoming budget.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, hon. Jhummun?

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

**RODRIGUES – MONEY LAUNDERING & ILLICIT FINANCIAL FLOWS –  
TRACKING & COMBATING MEASURES**

(No. B/785) Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the tracking and combating of money laundering and illicit financial flows in Rodrigues, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the measures, including investigations and inquiries, initiated into reported cases thereof, indicating in each case where matters stand, and
- (b) state what further actions are being envisaged in connection therewith.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, we have adopted a unified national security policy encompassing legislative and investigative frameworks to track and combat money laundering and illicit financial offences.

I am informed by the Financial Crimes Commission (FCC) that as at 22 May 2026, 7 cases relating to Money Laundering Offences in Rodrigues were reported. 4 of these cases were reported to the then ICAC, and 3 to the FCC after its coming into operation in March 2024.

Out of the 7 cases, 6 are currently under investigation while one has been completed and referred to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

As regards cases reported to the Police, since 2020, inquiries on two cases of alleged money laundering have been completed by the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit of Rodrigues and have been referred to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

In regard to part (b) of the question, extensive awareness and sensitisation campaigns on financial crimes, asset recovery, declaration of assets and unexplained wealth investigations have been carried out by the FCC in Rodrigues with Departmental Heads of Commissions, public bodies and other relevant stakeholders between December 2025 and May 2026.

Furthermore, a Financial Crimes Prevention Review is currently being conducted on the various schemes administered by the Commission of Agriculture and Natural Resources with the objective to identify, mitigate and address the potential risks of financial crimes. The Commission is planning additional prevention review focussed on the issuance of permits and licences in Rodrigues.

Additionally, Madam Speaker, the operational capacity of Law Enforcement Officers is being further strengthened through training in anti-money laundering, which is being conducted jointly by the FCC and the Police Training School.

In this respect, 3,573 Police Officers of all ranks, including 140 from Rodrigues, have been trained since 2020 to date.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, one question!

**Mr François:** Yes, Madam Speaker, just for the sake of clarification purposes. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister, over and above the reported cases in Rodrigues, whether he is agreeable to request the concerned authorities to carry out further necessary investigations and enquiries into suspected cases? They are not reported but suspected cases thereat. We need to protect Rodrigues.

**The Prime Minister:** Of course, we need to protect Rodrigues. I think, if there are complaints, they will certainly look into them.

**Madam Speaker:** Okay, next question! Hon. First Member for La Caverne and Phoenix.

#### **SILVER BANK – FCC INQUIRY – SENIOR OFFICERS (MRS S. H. & MRS U. S)**

**(No. B/786) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the inquiry initiated by the Financial Crimes Commission in relation to Silver Bank, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to whether senior officers thereat, namely Mrs S. H. and Mrs U. S., have been interrogated under warning by the said Commission in connection therewith and, if so, indicate whether they are still in post thereat and the reasons why they have not been requested to step down pending the outcome thereof.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 14 May 2026, an Italian national reported an incident which occurred at Ganga Talao at around 13.30 hours.

**Madam Speaker:** No, that is not the one. B/786 - Silver Bank!

**The Prime Minister:** Can you repeat the question? I do not think I have it.

**Madam Speaker:** Can we keep it pending? Let us keep it pending. It is all right.

Let us have the Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles...

**The Prime Minister:** No, I have the answer.

**Madam Speaker:** Okay!

**The Prime Minister:** As I have already stated in my reply to Parliamentary Question B/716 last week, Madam Speaker, there was a major deficiency in the supervisory role of the Bank of Mauritius during the 10-year rule of the previous Government.

The inadequate regulatory oversight by the Bank of Mauritius, together with the dysfunctional Boards of four banks and ineffective internal credit assessment at the level of these banks, have allowed these banks to approve excessively risky loans.

I have also enumerated a number of measures that we are taking to strengthen the independence of supervision at the Bank of Mauritius. The Bank of Mauritius has already initiated actions to review its internal operations, and it is also seeking the technical assistance from the Reserve Bank of India to improve processes, to train the staff of the Supervision Department and to investigate previous shortcomings. The Bank of Mauritius Act and the Banking Act will also be reviewed.

With regard to the inquiry initiated by the Financial Crimes Commission in relation to Silver Bank Ltd, I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that –

- (a) On 15 April 2026, the Financial Crimes Commission recorded a statement from Mrs S.H., Director of Supervision. The statement was not taken under warning;
- (b) In a letter dated on 05 May 2026, the FCC convened Mrs S. H. once again, in relation to the inquiry on the Silver Bank Limited. The FCC informed her that she may wish to be accompanied by a counsel of her choice. According to

information obtained from the Bank, for Mrs S. H., the interview has not yet been held, and

- (c) Mrs U.S., the second Director of Supervision, has informed the Bank of Mauritius that she has not yet been called to give any statement to the FCC in relation to the Silver Bank Limited enquiry.

I am also informed, Madam Speaker, by the Bank of Mauritius that in January 2025 the Conservator appointed by the Bank of Mauritius at that time had, upon instruction from the Bank, reported alleged fraudulent activities at the Silver Bank Limited to the Police.

In view of the elements which have come to light, and to further investigate the conditions under which the licence of Silver Bank was granted, I am informed that the Board of the Bank of Mauritius has decided in March 2026 for the institution of an independent firm, full-fledged forensic audit into the matter.

The Terms and Conditions of Employment of the Bank stipulate that whenever it is known that an employee of the Bank has committed a criminal offence, the First Deputy Governor shall forthwith refer the case to the Commissioner of Police for appropriate enquiry and action.

In addition, the Terms and Conditions of Employment at the Bank of Mauritius provide that an employee may be interdicted from the exercise of the powers and functions of his or her office pending the outcome of a police enquiry.

In view of the serious shortcomings which are known to which we have alluded in this House, it is understood that officers who were directly involved in granting the licences to Silver Bank ought to have at least been transferred from that department and allow the investigation to proceed in all transparency. But that onus is on the Bank of Mauritius.

The Bank of Mauritius, I am told, is closely monitoring the progress of the FCC enquiry and remains committed to upholding the highest standards of integrity, accountability and good governance within the banking sector.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, Mr Lobine, are you alright?

Yes, next is Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles.

**GANGA TALAO – TOURIST ASSAULT (14 MAY 2026) – INQUIRY**

(No. B/787) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Ganga Talao, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand regarding the inquiry initiated into the assault of a tourist thereat on 14 May 2026, and
- (b) state whether he is in presence of representations from socio-cultural and religious groups for the declaration thereof as a spiritual sanctuary/park and to restrict access thereat as well as protect the sanctity thereof.

**The Prime Minister:** I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, on 14 May 2026, an Italian national reported an incident which occurred at Ganga Talao at around 13:30 hrs. The complainant reported that he, together with another Italian national, were consuming snacks in the car park when two individuals approached them and informed them that the consumption of non-vegetarian food at Ganga Talao was not permitted. An argument ensued, following which the complainant alleged that he was assaulted and that some of his personal belongings were forcefully taken by the two individuals and thrown into nearby bushes.

Police officers from the Grand Bassin Police Post proceeded to the site upon being informed of the incident. The two suspects, including one Police Officer not on duty, were arrested on the same day and detained at the Midlands Police Station. The suspects were provisionally charged on 15 May 2026, before the District Court of Savanne for the offence of “Larceny with aggravating circumstances”. They were subsequently released on bail with conditions. Police enquiry into the matter is ongoing.

As regards part (b) of the question, may I remind the House that after the gross disrespect that was shown at Grand Bassin by the former Attorney General and Minister of Agriculture, I had said and you had also said, hon. Member, that we should make that area a spiritual park. Actually, the previous Government, due to the public outcry, tried to correct matters and to preserve the sanctity of the Ganga Talao. They have made it a Spiritual Sanctuary, but it should be safeguarded and the whole area has to be properly managed. My

Office has also received representations regarding its preservation, management and safeguard of its sanctity.

To this effect, I wish to point out that I had a meeting with the representatives of the Sanatan Dharma Temples Federation on 07 May 2026, during which several matters were discussed, including Ganga Talao. I have reassured the Federation that necessary action will be taken to preserve the sanctity of Ganga Talao and relevant guidelines will be issued.

I have also requested the Minister of Arts and Culture to develop appropriate guidelines to establish a comprehensive framework for the management, protection and preservation of the sanctity of Ganga Talao, and he has to do this in consultations with relevant stakeholders. The Ministry of Arts and Culture has already conducted several meetings on that matter.

The House will appreciate that, Mauritius being a secular State, access to a spiritual sanctuary cannot be restricted. At the same time, it is imperative that all visitors comply with the established practices, that is, regarding behaviour and dress code, in order to preserve the sanctity as well as uphold the cultural and religious significance of such sites.

In this respect, I am informed by the Ministry of Tourism that it is collaborating with the Ministry of Arts and Culture on sensitisation campaigns for both local and international visitors to these spiritual sites.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, alright.

Mr Caserne, Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue.

#### **POLICE CELLS – NON-OPERATIONALITY – REASONS**

**(No. B/788) 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 Police Cells, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof currently non-operational, if any, and, if so, indicate the reasons therefor.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that as at 22 May 2026, out of a total of 269 Police cells, twenty-eight are currently, temporarily non-operational and the reasons are as follows –

- (i) 4 cells in Bambous, 1 cell in La Gaulette and 3 cells in Mahebourg Police Stations are not operational due to repairs being made to the sewage systems, and
- (ii) 20 cells in Vacoas Detention Centre are not operational due to maintenance works on the CCTV Cameras thereat.

I am further informed that the sewage works at Bambous, La Gaulette and Mahebourg Police Stations are expected to be completed by the end of May of 2026. As regards the maintenance of the CCTV cameras at Vacoas Detention Centre, the works are expected to be completed by 15 June of this year. The cells will thereafter be operational.

Madam Speaker, the conditions of the Police cells are regularly reviewed by the Police to ensure that they comply with the national human rights standards.

Furthermore, the National Preventive Mechanism Division of the National Human Rights Commission regularly visit Police cells so as to examine the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty with a view to ensuring their protection against torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in accordance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture to which, I should add, Mauritius is a party. They also submit recommendations regarding the review, upgrading and maintenance of Police cells following which, the Police undertake remedial action.

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you. Yes, hon. Ramdass.

This will be the last question, I think.

## **BANK OF MAURITIUS – MONEY PRINTING ALLEGATIONS – ACTIONS TAKEN**

**(No. B/789) 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 Public Notice dated 12 May 2026 issued by the Bank of Mauritius in respect of allegations of money printing to the tune of Rs 83 billion, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to the actions, if any, taken or being envisaged in relation thereto.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, let me start by setting the record straight. The allegation made by the former Minister of Finance that the Bank of Mauritius has printed and transferred Rs83 billion to Government is entirely false, unfounded and malicious. Either this or he does not understand how the system works.

On the contrary, I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that under the previous Government, the bank printed a total of Rs181.5 billion with part of the amount remitted to the Government and the remainder used to finance the Mauritius Investment Corporation. Again, let me say, it is Rs181.5 billion that they printed. This is the consequence of what we are seeing today.

A total amount of Rs97 billion was remitted to the Government during the period 2019 to 2024 as follows –

- Rs18 billion in December 2019 for repayment of external debt;
- Rs15 billion in April 2020 through the subscription of a 5-Year Government of Mauritius Bond;
- Rs55 billion in the month of August 2020 and September 2020 as a one-off contribution to the budget, and
- Rs9 billion to the Development Bank of Mauritius Limited, the Industrial Finance Corporation of Mauritius Limited and the State Investment Corporation Limited through lines of credit.

Furthermore, an additional amount of Rs3.5 billion was remitted to the National Property Fund through a line of credit prior to 2019.

In addition, the Mauritius Investment Corporation Limited was fully financed by printing of money to the tune of Rs81 billion.

Madam Speaker, the previous Government amended the Bank of Mauritius Act twice –

1. In 2019, through the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2019 to allow the Bank to remit printed money to Government for the repayment of external debt. This had never, never happened before.

2. In 2020, through the COVID-19 (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020, they allowed the Bank to remit printed money again to Government to finance the budget deficit.

Clearly, Madam Speaker, the Central Bank was directly financing government expenditure by printing money. This amounted to the monetisation of the budget deficit in its purest forms. The funds in question did not originate from accumulated reserves as repeatedly asserted by the former Minister of Finance, but rather from the sheer creation of new money by the Central Bank itself.

Worse still, Madam Speaker, the MIC was created initially at the means to support systemic companies but turned out to be a vehicle through which vast sums were channelled to associates and beneficiaries closely connected to the former Minister of Finance. This financial monstrosity has weakened the balance sheet of the Central Bank and constitutes a potential contingent liability to Government.

As I have previously stated, Madam Speaker, the reckless printing of money by the previous administration of the Bank of Mauritius has had devastating consequences on our economy. Excess liquidity in the banking sector reached record levels. The inflation rate peaked, as I said earlier, to 11.3 per cent in February 2023. The rupee depreciated significantly, as I said, 46 per cent from 2019 to 2024. And excessive consumption fuelled by substantial amount of money created led to a dramatic increase in the visible trade deficit.

The printing of money weakened the Bank's balance sheet and diminished its ability for effective monetary policy implementation.

Madam Speaker, this was the disastrous *bilan* of the previous Government and the legacy of the former Minister of Finance. Yet, today, he has the audacity to claim that under this Government, the Bank of Mauritius has printed Rs83 billion. Such a statement is not only false, but also reflects a blatant attempt to distort the facts and mislead the public. That is what they are doing.

**Mr Jhummun:** *Action. Bizin ena enn action contre li.*

**The Prime Minister:** There is. This is sheer intellectual dishonesty. It potentially leads to the conclusion that the former Minister perhaps does not understand basic monetary economics.

This, Madam Speaker, cannot be accepted or condoned and must be met with appropriate actions in the interest of truth and public accountability.

I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that it has taken a number of actions to dispel any doubts that may have arisen from these unfounded allegations of money printing by the former Minister of Finance. These are as follows –

- (a) The Bank has properly issued a public notice wherein it firmly refuted the allegations and clarified that there were no money printing and transfer to the Government in 2025;
- (b) Through the Public Notice, the Bank informed all stakeholders and the public in general that information on monetary developments, which clearly shows that there was no money printing by the Bank, could be easily accessed into its Monthly Statistical Bulletin published on its website, that is, the Bank's website;
- (c) The Bank has provided all media houses with the relevant data along with an explanatory text to ensure that they have accurate information and to help them avoid any misinterpretation in their analysis of the matter, and
- (d) The Bank has maintained a regular communication with media houses and provided them with any further clarifications required on the matter.

Madam Speaker, I am also informed by the Bank of Mauritius that after consultations with their legal team, it has made a statement to the Central CID on 16 May 2026 on the very serious, false and malicious information by the former Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Members:** Bravo!

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, as an International Financial Centre, our reputation is a key asset that underpins investor confidence and sustains economic stability. It is highly irresponsible for the former Minister of Finance to cast doubt in the minds of the public just for the sake of political gain. We must not and will not tolerate any such unfounded allegations or misinformation that could undermine the confidence in our institutions and financial system.

**Ms Anquetil:** Très bien!

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, one question.

**Mr Ramdass:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Obviously, these gratuitous allegations have been made with a view to undermine public confidence.

**Madam Speaker:** No statement!

**Mr Ramdass:** Other than the communiqué, the Public Notice and the matter having been reported to the CID, would the hon. Prime Minister invite the Bank of Mauritius to take appropriate civil action against this gentleman in order to avoid acts and doings of this sort in the future?

**Madam Speaker:** Advice for civil action?

**The Prime Minister:** They have already reported the case, as I said, and I believe they will be calling him.

**Madam Speaker:** Okay, time is up.

The Table has been advised, Members, that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/791, B/793, B/794, B/795, B/796, B/799, B/801 and B/803.

Thank you very much. We have time for a few questions. I would call on hon. First Member for Savanne.

#### **BLACK RIVER DISTRICT - SCAVENGING SERVICES - CONTRACTORS**

**(No. B/804) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to scavenging services in the Black River District, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) name of the contractor/s;
- (b) value thereof;
- (c) number of lorries available;

- (d) number of staff deployed, and
- (e) areas covered.

**Mr Woochit:** Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the District Council of Black River that two contracts for street cleaning, refuse collection and disposal, including the carting away of post cyclonic waste within the District Council area, were signed on 29 May 2025 for the period of 01 June 2025 to 31 May 2026.

The contracts were divided into two lots, namely –

- Lot 1 awarded to Maxi Clean Company Limited, and
- Lot 2 awarded to Atics Ltd.

I am further informed that the contracts provide for twice weekly refuse collection services covering household refuse and green waste. They also include the collection of bulky wastes and cyclonic wastes whenever required. In addition, the contractors are responsible for herbiciding, spraying, mowing, lopping of branches up to 6 metres, cleaning of open drain and river banks, as well as sweeping activities throughout the district.

With regard to part (b) of the question, Madam Speaker, I am informed that the contract awarded to Maxi Clean Company Limited for lot 1 amounts to Rs87,780,000, excluding VAT, representing Rs7,315,000, excluding VAT per month, for the period of 01 June 2025 to 31 May 2026.

The contract awarded to Atics Ltd for lot 2 amounts to Rs77,280,000 excluding VAT, representing Rs6,440,000, excluding VAT per month, for the same period. The total value for both contracts, therefore, stands at Rs165,060,000 rupees, excluding VAT.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that under the terms and conditions of the contracts, Maxi Clean Company Limited provides five tipper lorries and five compactors for lot 1, whilst Atics provides four tipper lorries and four compactors for lot 2. Accordingly, a total of nine tipper lorries and nine compactors are placed at the disposal of the council.

I am informed that in the event of any mechanical breakdown, the contractors are contractually required to provide replacement vehicles so as to continue continuity of service delivery without disruption.

With regard to part (d) of the question, I am informed that a total workforce of 258 personnel is currently deployed under both contracts. The manpower includes supervisors, foremen, refuse collectors, sweepers, drain cleaners, drivers, bush cutter and pole pruner operators, lawn mower operators, as well as herbicide sprayer.

Madam Speaker, I am also informed that supervision and monitoring of the works are carried out by the Health Inspectorate of the Black River District Council. Any shortcomings observed are formally communicated to the contractors for immediate remedial action and where necessary, penalty clauses are applied in accordance with the contractual provision.

With regard to part (e) of the question, I am informed that the areas covered under lot 1 operated by Maxi Clean Company Limited are –

- Albion;
- Gros Cailloux;
- Canot;
- Petite Rivière;
- Riche Lieu;
- Bambous, and
- Flic en Flac.

The areas covered under lot 2 operated by Atics Ltd are –

- Case Noyale;
- Petite Rivière Noire;
- Baie du Cap;
- Cascavelle;
- Tamarin;
- Grande Rivière Noire;
- La Gaulette;
- Le Morne, and
- Chamarel.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed that both contracts are due to expire on 31 May 2026. Approval has already been obtained from the Central Procurement Board for an extension up to 25%, representing a maximum period of three months and both contractors have agreed for the contract to continue on a month-to-month basis based on the under same terms and conditions so as to ensure that there is no disruption whatsoever in refuse collection and scavenging services within the District Council.

In parallel, a new tender exercise for the period of three years, which will include segregation at source and enhanced service delivery requirements, is being finalised.

I am informed that the bidding documents have already been vetted by the Central Procurement Board and the new procurement exercise will be launched shortly.

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you. Yes, one question!

**Mr Babajee:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. In regards to lot 2 as per the reply the hon. Minister gave, I would like to know how many big and small lorries we have for Atics, if he has the information?

**Madam Speaker:** I doubt he will have that. You know, basically, we will have to think about if it is proper to ask the Minister such questions. We will have to think about that. Can we keep that for next time? Please find out.

**Mr Woochit:** I do have it, but it is not about that...

**Madam Speaker:** Okay. Let us just have it in writing. You table it.

**Mr Babajee:** Can I ask, Madam Speaker?

**Madam Speaker:** One more? Okay!

**Mr Babajee:** Will the hon. Minister consider bringing some small lorries in lot 2 area as all the roads are narrow. We have a lot of complaints that the lorries cannot access these roads.

**Madam Speaker:** I am sure you will consider, hon. Minister.

**Mr Woochit:** Madam Speaker, I take note of the request of the hon. Member. I will communicate the request to the council. I can ensure that this issue is addressed in the forthcoming tender exercise.

**Madam Speaker:** Of course. Yes!

**Mr Jugurnauth:** Madam Speaker, will the hon. Minister consider carrying the works inhouse in the future?

**Madam Speaker:** Not privatisation, you mean? Yes!

**Mr Woochit:** You know, the council makes its own decision by the full council meeting.

**Madam Speaker:** Exactly!

**Mr Woochit:** So, I take note.

**Madam Speaker:** Exactly!

**Mr Woochit:** And I can convey the request to the respective council.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Members, I feel very strongly about these questions on local government. I am not sure it is proper. We will deal with this later.

Hon. First Member for Vacoas & Floréal!

### **MRS M. M. B. – MISSING BANGLADESHI EMPLOYEE – INQUIRY & LABOUR CONDITIONS**

(No. B/805) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to Mrs M. M. B., a Bangladeshi worker reported missing by the Bangladesh High Commission, he will state whether –

- (a) she was recruited to work for a company or an individual, and
- (b) his Ministry is –
  - (i) inquiring thereinto, and
  - (ii) is in presence of any report of abuse, exploitation or breach of labour laws connected thereto.

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Speaker, at the outset, I wish to declare my interest in the matter as Mrs M.M.B. used to work as carer for my mother who is 80 years old. My mother is a heart patient and she lives alone with my father who is 85 years old. In 2023, my mother fractured her shoulder and collarbone, and was advised by her doctor to recruit a carer to stay with her.

On 10 April 2023, my mother submitted an application for a work permit to the Ministry for the employment of Mrs M.M.B. as carer for a period of three years. I am

informed that the application was processed in line with prevailing procedures at the Ministry, and a work permit was issued on 20 June 2023, authorising Mrs M.M.B. to take up employment as carer for a period of two years.

On 30 May 2025, my mother applied for the renewal of the work permit of Mrs M.M.B. for a period of two years and same was renewed by the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry in line with the General Notice Number 1514 of 2022 regarding delegation of powers for the grant or refusal of an application for permits regarding non-citizen in cases where the Minister is not exercising his powers on grounds of conflict of interest.

In line with established practice which predated my appointment as Minister, I was not involved at all in the renewal exercise.

On 06 April 2026, my mother informed my Ministry that Mrs M.M.B. had, on 03 April 2026, at around 8 o'clock at night, left her house and had since not come back. I wish to point out, Madam Speaker, that it was my mother who informed my Ministry that Mrs M.M.B. was missing, and not the Bangladesh High Commission, as is suggested in the wording of the PQ.

In line with existing protocol, the Special Migrant Workers Unit of my Ministry conducted an inquiry into the matter and informed that there were no outstanding dues payable and there was absolutely no complaint made against the employer and no case of ill-treatment or exploitation had been detected regarding that worker. The work permit of Mrs M.M.B. was, therefore, cancelled and the PIO was informed accordingly.

I am informed that the Police have, up to now, not been able to trace out the whereabouts of Mrs M.M.B., but she is still in the country.

Madam Speaker, in 2023, the then government decided to put a ban on the recruitment of new foreign workers from Bangladesh as there was a high number of missing Bangladeshi workers in the country as reported by the Passport and Immigration Office. In fact, there is a well-organised network whereby some foreign workers destined for one employer are lured to leave their employer to work for other employers against promise of higher pay.

When the present Government took office in November 2024, there were around 3,940 illegal foreign workers in the country. Following the recommendation of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on work permit issues, various measures were introduced to facilitate the recruitment of foreign workers, which led to a considerable reduction in the number of missing workers.

As there was a high demand for Bangladeshi workers from different sectors and the number of Bangladeshi workers without valid permit had been reduced to 1,412 as per report of my Ministry, Government on 05 September 2025 agreed to allow the recruitment of new Bangladeshi workers in the bakery, textile, printing, as well as in other scarcity areas.

Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, since we have resumed the recruitment of Bangladeshi workers, the number of workers reported missing by their employers has doubled to 2,819, out of which I am informed by PIO 2,219 are Bangladeshi, that is, close to 80% of missing workers today, are from Bangladesh.

I wish to inform the House that the issue of illegal workers had been previously raised in other Parliamentary Questions including PQ B/151 and B/158 addressed to the hon. Prime Minister on 31 March 2026 regarding overstaying and missing foreign workers. In his reply, the hon. Prime Minister had informed the House that the Commissioner of Police had been requested to strengthen the crackdown team in collaboration with other units and branches of the Police, including SMF.

Also, in another Parliamentary Question B/670 for the Sitting of 12 May 2026, I highlighted the fact that the Police never arrest nor prosecute any employer who illegally employ migrant workers without a valid work permit including missing foreign workers. Whenever there is a crackdown operation, it is only the illegal workers who are arrested and prosecuted without any legal action taken against the employers.

Madam Speaker, I have personally taken up this matter with the Police and the High Commissioner of Bangladesh on several occasions as the missing foreign workers are vulnerable. They have no protection under the Workers' Rights Act, no proper accommodation facilities, and they can be easily exploited and become victims of trafficking in person. My Ministry is closely monitoring the situation with the Passport and Immigration Office.

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you. Yes.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Je vous remercie. Madame la présidente, ce cas est bien bouleversant. L'honorable ministre peut-il confirmer que l'employée en question se serait enfuie de la résidence de son employeur en passant par la sortie destinée à l'évacuation des ordures ? Et si c'est le cas, peut-il confirmer qu'un/une travailleur étranger dont le permis de travail est lié à un employeur spécifique conserve néanmoins sa pleine liberté de mouvement en vertu de la loi ?

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Speaker, I have been informed that according to the Police report, which has been communicated to my office, there is one witness who actually saw Mrs M.M.B. leave the house by the back door and go into a taxi with a man from Bangladesh. I would like to answer to the second part of the question, no, it is totally illegal for a worker to stay in Mauritius without a valid work permit. He has to be deported; and that is the point I was making. The Police only arrest the foreign workers and do not go after the employers who employ these illegal workers.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, second.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Je ne parlais pas de contrat de permis valide ou pas. Je parlais de liberté de mouvement. Il est interdit selon la loi d'enfermer un employé ou une employée, n'est-ce pas ?

Donc, je viens sur ma deuxième question supplémentaire. Le ministre a mentionné un grand nombre de travailleurs venant du Bangladesh qui sont portés disparus, qui sont portés manquants. Comment explique-t-il que le High Commission du Bangladesh ait émis un communiqué spécifiquement pour cette travailleuse étrangère ? Il a dit un peu plus tôt qu'il s'est récusé de toute implication ministérielle dans ce cas. Comment peut-il expliquer donc, que le High Commission du Bangladesh a sorti un communiqué spécifiquement pour cette employée ?

**Madam Speaker:** Vous êtes au courant?

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Speaker, I think I was very clear. I said that in 2025, when my mother applied to renew the work permit after two years. So, we are talking about a worker who has been working with her for three years now - three years working with her. I was not involved at all with the renewal. But I have had conversation with the High Commissioner, not on one occasion, but on several occasions, not about this particular person, but about the high prevalence of workers from Bangladesh who run away. We have cases of Bangladeshi workers coming to Mauritius and right from the airport they are taken away by some mysterious people and never even set foot in the company, in the textile company or construction company where they are working. I say it again, the problem is with the Police never prosecuting illegal Mauritian employers who prey on the victims, on these illegal, missing Bangladeshi workers.

**Madam Speaker:** I am sorry. What about the *liberté de mouvement*? Let us clear this.

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Speaker, before any foreign worker comes to Mauritius, they have to sign an agreement with their employer. This agreement is vetted by my Ministry. So, in that Ministry, we make sure that all the rights that are applicable to a Mauritian worker is extended to a migrant worker. So, the number of hours which a migrant worker can work will be in accordance with the applicable remuneration order that is applicable to any other worker or local worker. So, there is absolutely no discrimination between a Mauritian worker and a foreign worker. And I will go even further, that there have been cases where my Ministry has reported to the Police cases where certain employers were illegally retaining the passport of their migrant workers, which is totally illegal, and my officers have reported these cases to the Police.

**Madam Speaker:** Okay, your last question.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Il a été déploré que cette employée était maintenue enfermée illégalement.

**Madam Speaker:** Question? Question?

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Est ce que l'honorable Ministre aurait...

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Speaker, I have a strong objection. I want this lady to withdraw whatever she just said! She said that this worker was kept housed and prevented from going out. That is an absolute lie! It is extremely, extremely shameful coming from a girl who was used to be an MMM to talk like this on my mother.

Shame! Shame!

*(Interruptions)*

**Hon. Members:** Shame! Shame!

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Cela fait partie de...

**Mr Uteem:** Shame! We are not like you. We were not colonial! *Pena disan kolon dan mo disan mwa! Pena disan kolon dan mo disan mwa!*

**Madam Speaker:** Chut!

**Ms J. Bérenger:** *Mwasi mo pena disan kolon!*

**Madam Speaker:** Oh, I do not think it is the time to do this.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** So cheap! So cheap!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Uteem:** *Koman to fer avek dimounn tou otour de twa! Al diman...*

**Ms J. Bérenger:** .... *descendant travayer nou...*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Members! Hon. Members, will you, please, behave, all of you?  
Hon. Members!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Member, stand up if you want to speak. Stand up!

Listen, listen. First of all... One moment! First of all, listen to me. You made an averment that this person was locked up. Is that what you did?

**Ms J. Bérenger:** C'est dans le domaine public. C'est affiché dans la presse et dans les médias.

**Madam Speaker:** Donc, quand c'est dans les médias, vous répétez?

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Mais si ce n'est pas... Madame la Speaker... si ce n'est pas vrai, il n'a qu'à...

**Madam Speaker:** Okay, time is up!

**Ms J. Bérenger:** C'est dans le domaine public. C'est mon devoir de venir mettre dans le...

**Mr Mohamed:** If I may, on a point of order.

**Madam Speaker:** Okay, let us have a third party.

**Mr Mohamed:** A third party who will try to calm things down. Just to make it clear, on a point of order, the hon. Member has just stated that she is referring to the media and the press. The Standing Orders say you cannot. Full stop.

**Madam Speaker:** That is true.

**Mr Mohamed:** So, therefore, if she bases herself on the press, she has to withdraw everything.

**Madam Speaker:** Okay, one moment. I am going to raise now. When I come back after teatime, I will give a ruling on this point.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I will not accept that he called me “*disan kolon*”.

**Madam Speaker:** I do not think that was proper. Will you, please, withdraw?

**Mr Uteem:** I withdraw, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, both of you, please, withdraw.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Okay, I withdraw.

**Madam Speaker:** Now we go for lunch, and I will give a ruling after teatime – if I can still speak.

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

*On resuming at 2.35 p.m., with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please be seated! Hon. Members, B/806 has been withdrawn.

So, I call upon the hon. Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes!

**FERTILISER SUBSIDY SCHEME – FINANCIAL YEAR 2025-2026 – AMOUNT  
EARMARKED – PLANTERS’ REQUESTS**

**(No. B/806) Mr R. Beehook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the Fertiliser Subsidy Scheme, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Small Farmers Welfare Fund, information as to the total –

- (a) amount earmarked thereunder for the current financial year, indicating the amount thereof disbursed as at to date, and
- (b) number of requests received from small planters, indicating the number of beneficiaries and number of requests pending as at to date.

*(Withdrawn)*

**DRAPERS AVENUE, QUATRE BORNES – EXCESSIVE SPEEDING –  
COMPLAINTS – SPEED BREAKERS INSTALLATION**

**(No. B/807) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to Drapers Avenue in Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, information as to whether it is in presence of complaints regarding excessive speeding

along same and, if so, indicate whether consideration will be given for the installation of high-raised speed breakers thereat.

**The Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection (Mr M. Yeung Sik Yuen):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this Parliamentary Question.

I am informed by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of the Ministry of Land Transport that the stretch of road along Drapers Avenue extending from Sir Virgil Naz Avenue to Belle Rose Avenue in the vicinity of Restaurant Venise, is a two-way carriage way of width varying from 5 to 5.5 metres over an approximate length of 480 metres. It is predominantly characterised by continuous residential properties on both sides. I am further informed that the TMRSU received a petition dated 6 February 2026 from the residents of Drapers Avenue, Belle Rose, requesting the installation of speed humps and speed breakers along this road, deploring serious concerns regarding excessive vehicular speeding and pedestrian safety. The TMRSU initially assessed the feasibility of installing raised speed tables along this stretch of road.

However, pursuant to a site visit conducted on 21 May 2026, recommendation has been made for the installation of three rubber-based road humps, together with appropriate traffic signage due to the inadequate drainage system in the area. These traffic calming measures are intended to curb speeding and improve road safety for local residents, pedestrians and other road users.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am advised that the Ministry of Land Transport has already initiated the procurement procedures for the acquisition of these rubber-based road humps and that the TMRSU has been directed to prioritise and expedite the implementation of these safety measures as soon as the contract is awarded. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, hon. Member?

**Ms Anquetil:** Je vous remercie, M. le président. Au nom des résidents de Drapers Avenue et à la suite de leur pétition, je remercie l'honorable ministre pour sa réponse. L'honorable ministre pourrait-il indiquer à la Chambre dans quel délai les résidents pourraient espérer l'installation des ralentisseurs surélevés ?

**Mr Yeung Sik Yuen:** I believe very soon, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the procurement procedures have already been launched. It is a question of one or two months.

**Ms Anquetil:** Une dernière?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Okay, last one.

**Ms Anquetil:** *Je vous remercie, M. le président.* Would the Minister inform the House whether consultations will be held with the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes and local residents of Drapers Avenue prior to the installation of high raised speed breakers? Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** And the MPs.

**Ms Anquetil:** Sorry?

**The Deputy Speaker:** And the MPs as well.

**Ms Anquetil:** And the MPs as well. Thank you.

**Mr Yeung Sik Yuen:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the TMRSU that the engineer informed one of the local petitioners already. However, during the site visit, the latter could not come for the site visit. Concerning the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, in fact, before the installation, wayleave from the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes will be sought.

**Ms Anquetil:** Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. The hon. Second Member for Savanne and Black River!

#### **BEAU VALLON SKATE BOARD PARK – CONSTRUCTION COST – HEALTH & SAFETY MEASURES**

**(No. B/808) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Beau Vallon Skate Board Park, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) construction cost thereof;
- (b) health and safety measures in place thereat, and
- (c) current state thereof, indicating whether same is fit for use.

**Mr Nagalingum:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Beau Vallon Skate Board Park is managed by the Mauritius Sport Council. This park became operational in April 2024. The scope of work for the period was the construction of a changing room,

bicycle, motocross and skateboard tracks. The total cost of the project amounted to Rs9,272,698.50 including VAT.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding part (b) of the question, I am informed that the MSC has implemented the following key health and safety measures –

- The right use of protective equipment including – but is not limited to – a strap helmet, knee and elbow pads and wrist guard is mandatory;
- Should the users fail to wear the protective equipment, the management of the park reserves the right to restrict access to them;
- Participation in any activities at the park under the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs is prohibited;
- Only one person can use the ramp at a time, and
- The use of motorised or electric equipment is strictly prohibited.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that since the inauguration of the park, the skating facility has been underutilised. Regarding part (c) of the question, I am further informed by the Mauritius Sports Council that the skating infrastructure has been showing visible signs of wear and tear since last year. Additionally, part of the metal barricading structures located in the upper park area leading to the skate zone have been damaged due to acts of vandalism. Thus, following the identification of potential safety hazard, the facility is presently considered unfit for use and has been temporarily closed. A comprehensive evaluation is being carried out by the new management of the MSC to determine the overall viability and sustainability of the facility. Thus, at this stage, no repair works is envisaged.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as public safety in our sport facilities remain one of our primary concerns, access to the skating park will remain closed pending the outcome of the ongoing assessment.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, hon. Member!

**Mr Jugurnauth:** Can the Minister inform the House, briefly, on the construction of the changing room and BMX/skateboard tracks and also, on the procurement method applied thereof?

**Mr Nagalingum:** Bidders were invited on 11 October 2022 through an Open National Bidding exercise, advertised in local newspapers, to submit their best offer for the above-mentioned project with the deadline for submission on 07 November 2022. Three bids were received, namely from –

- RBL Construction Limited;
- SMS Contracting Limited, and
- Good Peace Company Limited.

The contract was awarded to Good Peace Company Limited for a contract amount of Rs9,023,415, including the contingency sum of Rs900,000, exclusive of VAT. The letter of award was issued to the bidder on 27 December 2022, and the signature of the contract with the bidder was done on 28 February 2023. The starting date was on 14 March 2023 and works were completed in April 2024. The total cost of the project for the construction of the changing room and BMX/skateboard tracks amounted to Rs9,272,698.56, including VAT.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/811, B/819, B/822, B/835, B/838 B/840, B/845, B/850, B/854, and B/855.

Now, I call upon the hon. Third Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien!

### **BOIS D'OISEAUX ROAD, PLAINE MAGNIEN – SAFETY RISKS ASSESSMENT & REMEDIAL WORKS**

**(No. B/809) Mr C. Lukeeram (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the state of the roads in Bois D'Oiseaux, Plaine Magnien, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether an assessment has been carried out of the safety risks posed to the users thereof, especially, the elderly and the school children, indicating whether consideration will be given for urgent remedial works to be carried out thereat and the scheduling of longer term measures in respect thereof.

**Mr Woochit:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the District Council of Grand Port that Bois d'Oiseaux Road, situated at Plaine Magnien, is a secondary road of

approximately 285 metres in length, serving around 40 households and falling under the administrative responsibility of the District Council of Grand Port.

I am further informed that the Central Water Authority, that is, the CWA, carried out pipe replacement works along that road between 30 March 2026 and 14 April 2026. Prior to the installation of the new pipeline, a trench of approximately 280 metres was excavated along the road, and thereafter, temporarily reinstated pending completion of the final remedial and associated infrastructural works. The said works remain under a defect liability period extending up to December 2026.

Following a site inspection conducted by officers of the District Council, on 21 May 2026, it was observed that water had accumulated over a stretch of approximately 35 metres, located about 45 metres from the junction of the main road. The preliminary assessment of the relevant technical officers indicates that this accumulation of water is likely due to the leakage from the CWA pipeline installed during the recent pipeline replacement works. The District Council immediately liaised with the Central Water Authority upon identification of the problem.

I am informed that remedial measures were initiated by the Central Water Authority on 22 May 2026 to address the leakage and alleviate the inconvenience being faced by residents, pedestrians, school children and other road users. The situation is being jointly monitored by the District Council and the Central Water Authority, and any further corrective intervention deemed necessary will be carried out without delay.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that upon completion of the repair works by the Central Water Authority, patching and temporary reinstatement of the affected section of the road will be undertaken by the relevant authorities so as to improve accessibility and provide safer, smoother and more convenient passage for residents and road users, pending the implementation of permanent rehabilitation works.

As regards longer term infrastructure solution, discussions have been held with the National Development Unit regarding the implementation of a comprehensive project, comprising both drainage works and full width reinstatement of Bois d'Oiseaux Road. I am informed that implementation of the project is subject to financial clearance and to the completion of related drainage connection works currently being undertaken along the A10

Road, by the Road Development Authority. Subject to these conditions being met, works are expected to commence in early 2027.

I am further informed that the proposed drainage work along the Bois d'Oiseaux Road is intended to complement the broader flood mitigation and drain upgrading project already being implemented in the wider Plaines Wilhems region, thereby contributing to a more sustainable and long-term solution to drainage issues in that area.

With regard to road safety, I am informed that there are presently no pedestrian crossings or road markings along Bois d'Oiseaux Road and that no road traffic accident has officially been reported thereat to-date. Nevertheless, the District Council is liaising with the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit for a joint technical assessment to determine whether additional road safety measures, including appropriate road markings, pedestrian crossings and other protective measures, may be required. Any measures considered necessary will be implemented accordingly.

I wish to also reassure the hon. Member and the House that the relevant authorities remain fully committed and are working in close collaboration to provide both immediate relief and long-term solution. The safety, welfare and well-being of the residents of all users of Bois d'Oiseaux Road remain a priority for this Government. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** No supplementary!

The hon. First Member for Vacoas and Floréal!

#### **MSAW – CHAIRPERSON & BOARD MEMBERS' RESIGNATION – GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

**(No. B/810) 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 Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare, he will state whether his Ministry –

(a) has received –

- (i) representations regarding the Chairperson and the two board members thereof who recently resigned prior thereto and, if so, whether same will be tabled, and
  - (ii) information regarding pressures exerted on the said chairperson to renew the Director's contract, indicating whether the said recruitment was in order, and
- (b) has initiated an inquiry into the affairs thereof and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Who is answering this question?

**The Minister of Local Government (Mr R. Woochit):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to Parliamentary Question B/810.

The Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare, commonly known as the MSAW, is a statutory body operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries, and is responsible for animal welfare, prevention of cruelty to animals and related operational programmes.

As regards to part (a) (i) of the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that on 30 April 2026, the Chairperson and two members of the MSAW Council resigned –

- one member, serving in an ex-officio capacity, cited excessive load work due to his representation on several boards,
- the former Chairperson, and another member referred to governance and administrative concerns at the MSAW.

Following an inspection carried out at the Enforcement Department, the former Chairperson submitted a report dated 28 April 2026, highlighting deficiencies in the record keeping, the absence of fully formalised standard operating procedures, weaknesses in the lodging and traceability of animal cruelty complaints, and shortcomings in operational records relating to dog registration, adoption, euthanasia and catch-neuter-release activities. Concerns were also raised regarding procurement procedures, overtime expenditure and supervisory control.

The Director of the MSAW was requested to provide explanations, which were submitted on 06 May 2026. In his explanation, he referred to, amongst others, staff shortage, the absence of dedicated administrative and IT Support, ongoing works to strengthen standard operating procedures and record keeping system, and the need for a comprehensive operational review of the MSAW.

As regards to the request for tabling, I am advised that the document forms part of an ongoing administrative examination and may also be relevant to a formal inquiry. It would be, therefore, not be appropriate to table internal reports, correspondences and preliminary requisition at this stage, as this could prejudice the process. Nevertheless, the substance of the matters raised is being fully communicated to the House today.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards to part (a) (ii) of the question, I am informed that the Ministry has not established that pressure was exerted on the former chairperson regarding the renewal of the director's contract. I am further informed that the MSAW Council under the chairmanship of the former chairperson, herself, had already approved the renewal of the contract on 23 April 2026, prior to the alleged telephone conversation referred to in an email dated 29 April 2026.

As regards whether the appointment and renewal were in order, Section 18 (1) of the Annual Welfare Act 2013 provides that the Council shall appoint a director with the approval of the Minister. In the present case, the appointment of Mr Tinagaren Govindasami as director was approved by the substantive Minister on 18 March 2025. Cabinet was informed accordingly on 04 April 2025 and the MSAW Council formally approved the appointment on 29 April 2025. The one-year renewable contract took effect as from 20 May 2025, following the Council decision of 23 April 2026. The MSAW formally requested ministerial approval for renewal of the contract for a further period of one year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that a preliminary internal examination has already been initiated by the Ministry. Meetings and consultations were held by the director, the acting procurement officer and the former representative of the Ministry of Finance on the Council. The preliminary findings indicate that there are administrative and governance weaknesses requiring corrective action, particularly in relation to record keeping, operational procedures, procurement controls, supervision system and overtime management.

However, certain allegations remain disputed and require further verification before any definitive conclusion can be reached. Accordingly, upon the designation of a new chairperson, the MSAW Council will be requested to conduct a formal inquiry into all matters raised and to submit recommendation for corrective measures and institutional reform. The Ministry will closely monitor the implementation of improved governance, accountability and operational system to ensure that the MSAW effectively fulfils its statutory responsibilities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to emphasise that the objective of the Ministry is neither to shade nor prejudge anyone, but to ensure that all matters are dealt with fairly, transparently and in accordance with due process and principle of good governance. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ B/844 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Tourism. PQ B/846 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms. PQ A/50 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Energy and Public Utilities. PQ B/814 has been withdrawn.

Now, I call upon the hon. Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil!

#### **REHABILITATION YOUTH CENTRE – TRANSFER TO MINISTRY OF GENDER EQUALITY & FW – LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENT**

**(No. B/811) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the issue of the transfer of the Rehabilitation Youth Centre from under the responsibility of the Prime Minister's Office to her Ministry, she will state whether the committee set up to look thereinto has recommended same and, if so, indicate the expected implementation date thereof and whether amendments to the Children's Act 2020 or to any other relevant legislation are being contemplated to facilitate same and, if not, why not.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES – EMPLOYMENT**

**(No. B/812) Mr R. Beehook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil)** asked the hon. Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to persons with disabilities, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board, information as to the –

- (a) number thereof currently in employment, indicating the percentage thereof in the
- 
- (i) public sector, and
- (ii) private sector, respectively, and
- (b) measures taken to ensure compliance with the statutory minimum 3 per cent workforce threshold requirement thereof, indicating the number and nature of sanctions imposed for non-compliance therewith, if any, over the past two years.

**Mr Subron:** First, I wish to thank the hon. Member for this pertinent question. As I previously informed the House in my reply to a parliamentary question B/842 at the Sitting of 07 October 2025, according to the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms, there are around 110 persons with disabilities who are employed in the public sector. 110 persons - I am ashamed of this figure. With regards to data for the private sector, I am informed that the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations keeps no such record at its level.

According to the registry of persons with disabilities kept at the level of the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board, which is a parastatal body falling under the aegis of my Ministry, there are only 527 persons with disabilities who are registered with the Board, searching for employment or training. Only around 900 employers are registered with the Board. With regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to add that the Training and Employment of Disabled Person Act 1996 provides that all employers with a workforce of 35, or more, must employ 3% of their staff from among persons with disabilities. The Act also requires the maintenance of registers of persons with disabilities as well as the register of employers. The establishment of a hearing committee to review non-compliance and the possibility of requiring non-compliant employers to be fined.

Although the above-mentioned framework was made with good intention, it was a structural failure in terms of implementation. This was the first assessment I made when this Government and me and the Junior Minister took office. No employer was ever fined or prosecuted for not being registered. No employer was taken to task when not complying to the 3% requirement. I am informed that the law and its measures could not be implemented due to various reasons, amongst them are lack of staff and associated resources. The number of trainings conducted over the years has systematically declined; while reporting and

compliance mechanisms have in turn remained weak. This is why I call it a structural failure, and this has been going on for 30 years.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when taking office at the end of 2024, I had three options, three ways forward to decide. First, try to apply the existing 1996 law, the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board Act, which turned to be a structural failure. Two - the second option was to proclaim the April 2024 law, the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Person with Disabilities Act 2024, voted by the previous regime. I opted not to pursue in this direction.

Firstly, given that various NGOs and disability rights activists wanted amendments to be brought before this law is proclaimed. It is not yet proclaimed. Second, precisely the unproclaimed law merely transposes the loose enforcement structure of the previous law in terms of employment related issues. The third option, which I choose, was to integrate the whole issue of employment and employability of persons with disabilities within the context of disability reform pursued by my Ministry. First, the employability of person with disability will be part of the new assessment panel on determining disability benefits. Two, the number of employments of person with disabilities will be changed to be both more flexible as well as ensure social responsibility and caring of employers. Third, the law will encourage employers who meet their legal and social responsibility of caring by granting them support, whereas those who do not comply with disability employment section will have to pay a social responsibility contribution. Non-compliance will result in more effective enforcement structure and more penalties.

The above will be included in the phase two of the reform, which will be implemented in 12 months after the start of the phase one of the disability reform. The disability reform, phases one and two, are presently, at this very moment, under consideration by the Ministry of Finance in the context of the coming budget. In parallel, the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2024 will be amended accordingly and proclaimed.

I understand that we are, at present, in a transition period, that is, we had a law which dates back to 30 years. We have another law which has been voted by this Assembly, not yet proclaimed, and new laws that will come out and reflect the reform that we intend to do. So, we are presently in a transition period. I do understand that we cannot have a vacuum. So, if the proclamation and amendments of the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons

with Disabilities Act 2024 will take too much time, then we will have to take remedial action to ensure a minimum compliance with the present law.

In this context, I intend to seek advice with the SLO to see what can be done under the existing law to prosecute and take action against employers, even though the staff and the mechanism do not exist. I must say that the caring responsibility towards our citizens with disability should be shared by all, in a collective manner. No one should leave anyone unattended behind. Thus, we will collectively be fulfilling both our national commitments and international obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, hon. Member.

**Mr Beehook:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is outrageous that only 110 disabled or rather I would say, differently abled citizens of Mauritius work in the Civil Service.

However, there is a statutory obligation of employing 3% of a workforce beyond 35 employees, but it is also a statutory obligation that in the absence of such employment provided, be in the Civil Service or private organisation, then in an absence of an exemption provided by the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board, these organisations, be it private companies or the public sector or parastatal body, should pay a financial contribution to the board for each employee they fail to employ. Therefore, I would like to know whether there has been such contribution made, be it by the public sector or the private sector for failing to employ differently abled citizens of Mauritius.

**Mr Subron:** My answer to the hon. Member is unfortunately 'no'.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, hon. Member.

**Mr Beehook:** Hon. Minister, I wish to bring to your attention that the law compels organisations, be it the Civil Service, parastatal or private bodies, to provide suitable employment that fits the abilities but also taps the capabilities of the differently abled citizens of this country. I would state this case where for one year, I have been fighting to find an employment and training for one of my constituents who is a deaf and mute person, but I face a situation where the management of state-owned company...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Can we have your question, please?

**Mr Beehook:** Yes, I should be able to express the problem to be able to ask the questions.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Briefly.

**Mr Beehook:** ... comes forward with the argument that the criteria to recruit a mere attendant in the organisation is Form 3 level, whereas the person I was talking about, is deaf and mute.

Therefore, there is a mismatch in the criteria to recruit; whether they are normal citizens or citizens with different abilities. So, how is the Minister going to tackle this situation?

**Mr Subron:** All the criteria will be redefined in the amended legislation but if you have a case concerning a state company, then just refer it to me. I will raise it with my colleague Minister, because I think besides legal obligation, all the ministries and the state-run companies have an ethical and moral duty of respecting the least minimum, I would say.

Thank you, hon. Member.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. First member for Vacoas and Floréal.

#### **INDIAN OCEAN TUNA COMMISSION – MAURITIAN DELEGATION – OUTCOMES & IMPLICATIONS**

**(No. B/813) 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 30th Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, held from 11 to 15 May 2026, he will state whether Mauritius was represented thereat and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) composition of the delegation;
- (b) main issues discussed, and
- (c) outcomes, decisions, commitments and/or opportunities arising therefrom, indicating the implications thereof for the fisheries sector, the blue economy, food security and the protection of Mauritian interests within regional fisheries management bodies.

**The Minister of Local Government (Mr R. Wochit):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to Parliamentary Question B /813 regarding the 30<sup>th</sup> session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, which was held from 11 to 15 May 2026 in the Maldives.

Mauritius was duly represented at the session through a hybrid delegation comprising representatives of Government and private sector. At the outset, I wish to clarify that the decision for virtual participation was a deliberate and principled one, following Government's decision of 27 February 2026 to suspend bilateral relation with the Maldives after that country publicly objected to the United Kingdom-Mauritius Agreement concerning the Chagos Archipelago.

However, I must emphasise that the hybrid mode of participation is fully recognised under the IOTC rules or procedures and Resolution 25/01. Mauritius was not the only Member State participating virtually as several delegations similarly opted for remote participation during the session.

I also wish to place on record that virtual participation of Mauritius did not, in any way, affect the effectiveness or substance of the Mauritian delegation's contribution. Mauritius participated fully in all negotiation, technical discussion and decision-making processes and firmly defended its national, economic and strategic interests throughout the proceedings.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, the Mauritian delegation was led by Mrs M.S. Koonjul, Director of Fisheries of the Ministry. The delegation further comprised representatives from the Prime Minister's Office, the Attorney General's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, and the private sector, namely; Alba Fishing Limited, Princes Tuna Group and IBL Seafood. The participation of both government institutions and major operators of the seafood industry reflected the importance attached by Mauritius to regional fisheries management, seafood export, employment creation, food security and the blue economy.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that 17 proposals, including amendments to existing conservation and management measures were tabled and discussed during the session. The principal issues debated, related mainly to interim catch limit for yellowfin tuna, allocation criteria for skipjack tuna, interim catch limits for swordfish and sustainability and conservation measures within the Indian Ocean region. Following extensive negotiation and consultation among member states, eight resolutions were formally adopted during the session. I am tabling same.

Mr Deputy Speaker, sir, as regards part (c) of the question, I now come to the principal outcomes and their implications for Mauritius. Firstly, concerning yellowfin tuna, Mauritius co-sponsored together with Kenya and Tanzania, a proposal aimed at establishing interim

catch limit consistent with the scientific advice of the IOTC Scientific Committee. Following deliberation and voting by member state, the proposal was adopted with 21 votes in favour, four abstention and one vote against. As a result, Mauritius secured an increase of its yellowfin tuna allocation from 10,490 tons to 10,990 tons for the year 2027, representing an additional allocation of 500 tons.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this increase is economically significant for Mauritius. I am informed that the existing quota of 10,490 tons for 2026 has already been substantially allocated among licensed industrial operators engaged in purse seine and long line fishing activities. These activities sustain important economic sectors in Mauritius including seafood processing, export-oriented activities, employment creation, logistics and port services and value-added operation within the seafood hub. The increase in quota will therefore support additional economic activities and strengthen the contribution of the fishery sector to the national economy and the blue economy.

Secondly, regarding skipjack tuna, Resolution 25/3 adopted in 2025, had allocated Mauritius a quota of 13,908 tons which will enter in force on 01 January 2028. During the present session, Mauritius submitted a proposal seeking a revision of allocation criteria applicable to Small Island Developing States with a view to increasing the Mauritian allocation from 13,908 tons to 19,009 tons, representing an additional of 5,101 tons. The proposal was motivated by the needs to better safeguard the economic interests of Small Island Developing States such as Mauritius, which remains heavily dependent on tuna fisheries, seafood processing and export activities.

Also, consensus was not reached during this session, discussions were substantive and constructive. The proposal has, accordingly, been deferred to the 2027 session for further scientific and technical consultation. Mauritius will continue to engage actively with like-minded Member States in support for of a fairer and more equitable allocation framework that better reflects the realities and vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States.

Thirdly, regarding short fish, the proposal relating interim catch limit was adopted in line with recommendation of the IOTC Scientific Committee. Mauritius, however, remained categorised as a small harvester based on its historical catch level of 194 tons recorded in 2024 and is, therefore, not subject to any specific short fish catch limit for the years 2027 and 2028.

I also wish to underline that Mauritius continues to comply with all conservation and management measures adopted by the IOTC and remains fully committed to sustainable fisheries management and responsible utilisation of marine resources.

In this regard, Mauritius achieved a compliance score of 87.3% for the year 2025 under the IOTC Compliance Framework, reflecting the country's sustained commitment to responsible fisheries governance, transparency and international cooperation.

I further wish to emphasise that the fisheries industry and seafood sector remain a major pillar of the Mauritian economy through employment generation, seafood processing, export, logistic, port activities and other ancillary services associated with the blue economy.

Government will, therefore, continue to engage actively within regional fisheries management bodies to safeguard the interest of Mauritius, secure fair and equitable treatment for Small Island Developing States, and further strengthen the long-term sustainability and economic contribution of the fisheries and the blue economic sectors to the national economy. Thank you.

#### **NATIONAL WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR COUNCIL – SECRETARY – QUALIFICATIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

**(No. B/814) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the post of Secretary to the National Women Entrepreneur Council, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the name and qualifications of the incumbent thereof, indicating the roles and responsibilities assigned thereto.

*(Withdrawn)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Second Member for Savanne and Black River! PQ B/815!

#### **LPG POWERED VEHICLES – FIRE RISKS & SAFETY MEASURES**

**(No. B/815) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to Liquefied Petroleum Gas powered vehicles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to –

- (a) the number of reported such vehicles which caught fire on being involved in road accidents over the past two years;

- (b) whether the inherent risks thereof are factored in during inspection for the issue of the Certificate of Fitness, and
- (c) the measures taken and/or being envisaged to mitigate the inherent risks associated therewith.

**The Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection (Mr Yeung Sik Yuen):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this Parliamentary Question.

At the outset, I have to highlight that there is a significant regulatory and operational inconsistency regarding the use of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) propelled vehicles in Mauritius. While the National Land Transport Authority (NLTA) does not prohibit the conversion of petrol or diesel vehicles to LPG, there is currently no LPG dispensing stations across the island. The systemic gap has inadvertently given rise to the highly unsafe and illegal practice of decanting subsidised domestic gas cylinders to refill vehicles.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the NLTA and the Commissioner of Police that to date, there have been no officially reported cases of an LPG powered vehicle catching fire as a result of a road accident. However, the Ministry of Financial Services has informed that as per information at its end, there has been one case of an LPG powered vehicle which caught fire on being involved in a road accident in the course of the past two years.

I am further informed by the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services that 11 LPG powered vehicles have been involved in fire incidents for the period 2024 to date, irrespective of cause as follows –

- In 2024, two incidents;
- In 2025, seven incidents, and
- In 2026, up to 25 May 2026, two incidents.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am advised there are currently 15,696 vehicles registered as operating with LPG propulsion systems. Any vehicle fitted with a gas propulsion system undergoes inspection at the authorised vehicles examination stations. They are strictly required to comply with the Sixth Schedule of the Road Traffic Construction and

Use of Vehicles Regulation 2010, which mandates comprehensive technical and safety standards for gas containers, pipelines, valves and pressure relief systems. Certificates of fitness are issued under compliance with the regulations.

However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must clarify a critical caveat. Private cars under seven years old fitted with LPG system are not legally bound to undergo annual fitness test.

Consequently, they may not be captured in the 15,696 figures as amendments to the registration book horsepower are only made when the owner formally notifies the NLTA.

Mr Deputy Speaker, sir, turning to part (c) of the question, the NLTA maintains that the primary responsibility rests on vehicle owners to ensure their LPG systems remain leak-free and meticulously maintained in accordance with the law.

To curb the abuse of subsidised fuel, the Government has in place a strict legal framework. In fact, by virtue of the Consumer Protection Fixed Penalty Notice Regulation 2020, offenders are liable to the payment of fixed penalty of Rs10,000 for misusing domestic LPG cylinders for commercial purposes, which includes illegal decanting. Furthermore, the Consumer Protection Use of Liquefied Petroleum Gas in Small Cylinders Regulation 2012 provides for penalties ranging from Rs10,000 to Rs75,000 for repeat offences such as unauthorised storage or selling more than four cylinders at a time.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, despite the high volume of LPG propelled vehicles on our roads, only 22 cases of illegal decanting have been formally reported to the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection from November 2024 to date. These cases have been referred to the Mauritius Police Force for prosecutions. The Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection is concurrently also intensifying its field inspections, enforcement operations and targeted awareness campaigns, particularly aimed at fuel retailers.

Nevertheless, a clear anomaly remains. There is an urgent need for the Ministry of Land Transport and my substantive Ministry to collaborate closely with all relevant stakeholders to resolve this operational gap swiftly and permanently. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, hon. Jugurnauth!

**Mr Jugurnauth:** In regards to the refilling of these cars, can the hon. Minister inform the House where are the sites to refill?

**Mr Yeung Sik Yuen:** In fact, there are no sites for refilling. All these are illegal.

**The Deputy Speaker:** You have a question? Okay!

**Mr Juman:** Merci, M. le président. Monsieur le ministre, vous avez dit qu'on a 15 610 véhicules équipés avec le kit. Il y a pas de station pour faire le refilling. Mais comment ont-ils pu importer ce kit-là pour le mettre dans leurs voitures?

**Mr Yeung Sik Yuen:** In fact, in the past, there were filling station who were supplying LPG gas to cars. However, let us say, five years back, the price of LPG gas has gone down in Mauritius to the tune of Rs190, people stopped going to filling station.

So, they went through illegal supplying of LPG gas. This is what happened. I have to say that my Ministry is coming up with a smart card so that each person will have only two LPG gas per month. After that, they will have to pay the regular price which will be the cost price of the LPG gas which will be will be around Rs600.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue!

#### **GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS – SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEMS – INSTALLATION**

**(No. B/816) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to Government buildings, he will state whether consideration will be given for the installation of Solar Photovoltaic systems thereon for electricity generation.

**Mr Assirvaden:** M. le président, le CEB m'informe que la situation actuelle est de soutenir le déploiement de 11 MW d'installation photovoltaïque solaire sur des bâtiments publics à Maurice et à Rodrigues. Ce projet mis en œuvre dans le cadre du projet de Fonds vert pour le climat du programme des Nations unies pour le développement est intitulé : accélérer la transition vers une économie à faible émission de carbone en République de Maurice. Dans le cadre de ce projet, le CEB sera chargé de l'acquisition, de la fourniture, de

l'installation et de la mise en service des panneaux photovoltaïques sur les bâtiments publics désignés, notamment les établissements d'enseignement. Je parle ici des écoles.

Le Fonds vert, M. le président, pour le climat, octroie une subvention à la hauteur de 27 % d'investissement initial pour l'installation des systèmes photovoltaïques. Les 73 % restants seront financés par le Ministère des Finances dans le cadre du budget national. Ainsi, sur un investissement initial total de R 660 millions, le Gouvernement injectera environ R480 millions dans l'initiative du projet du secteur public, les bâtiments publics, notamment l'installation des systèmes photovoltaïques sur les bâtiments. L'état actuel du déploiement des 11 MW de panneaux solaires photovoltaïques sur les bâtiments publics est le suivant –

1. D'abord, l'évaluation technique de 175 bâtiments publics à Maurice pour déterminer l'état des toitures, les travaux de préparation pour l'installation des panneaux solaires en cours. L'achèvement des installations de 5 MW est prévu en septembre 2027, l'année prochaine.
2. La lettre d'attribution, la lettre d'intention pour les installations photovoltaïques de 2 MW sur les bâtiments à Rodrigues devrait être émise d'ici juin de cette année-ci.
3. Concernant les 4 MW d'installation solaire photovoltaïque restante, l'appel d'offre a été lancé par le CPB et la date limite pour le dépôt des candidatures est fixée au 2 juin de cette année-ci. Ces installations de panneaux solaires de 4 MW sont destinées aux établissements d'enseignement public encore une fois, les écoles et leur mise en œuvre et devrait être achevée d'ici 2027.

Les installations photovoltaïques, comme demandé par l'honorable membre, combiné les 11 MW, M. le président, sur les bâtiments, produiront environ 16 500 000 unités d'électricité par an, ce qui équivaut aux besoins annuels en électricité pour 8000 familles. Donc, ce projet de 11 MW va satisfaire du moins autour de 8000 familles.

En ce qui concerne mon Ministère, j'ai demandé, M. le président, à la CWA et la WMA de soumettre des projets d'installation des panneaux photovoltaïques sur leur bâtiment, CWA et WMA. Dans leurs enceintes aussi, l'objectif principal est de réduire les coûts énergétiques liés au fonctionnement des stations de pompage et des stations d'épuration.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Your question! Yes!

**Mr Beejan:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Will the hon. Minister inform the House whether similar solar photovoltaic projects are being envisaged after this initial project with a view to reducing electricity costs and promoting renewable energy across government facilities?

**Mr Assirvaden:** Oui. Est-ce que ce projet va continuer, vous voulez dire ? Oui, bien sûr, parce que dans les 175 projets mentionnés, M. le président, il y a des projets peut-être quand on va faire les études techniques, il se peut que ces toits ne vont pas pouvoir être équipés de panneaux. Donc, tous nos projets depuis qu'on est arrivé au pouvoir, les *schemes* agrivoltaïque, *Greenfield*, *household*, *are ongoing* parce qu'il y a des projets qui vont rentrer ; par exemple, là, il y a le projet important de Stor'Sun. Qair, c'est un projet de 60 MW, de mémoire, 30-30 et 10, 70 MW, qui devrait être sur le réseau en septembre.

Malheureusement, il y a des projets qui sont encore à 9 % d'achèvement. Ils n'ont fait que 9 %. J'ai demandé d'écrire pour dire que si rien n'est fait en ce qui concerne ce projet de Stor'Sun ou de Qair, ils vont devoir sortir de sur la liste parce qu'on ne peut pas attendre. Donc, tous les projets vont être chaque année, se sera ouvert et continuellement parce que nous sommes qu'à 17 %. Nous voulons atteindre 60 % en 2035. Les projets vont rester ouverts comme le *household*, comme agrivoltaïque, que ce soit Greenfield, que ce soit le commercial, que ce soit pour les industriels. Les projets vont rester ouverts et le CEB va *entertain*. Donc, ceux ou celles qui sont les premiers à arriver et pouvoir être sur le réseau, vont être acceptés.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. The hon. Second Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle.

## **MAURITIUS – CULTURAL HERITAGE & HISTORY – PROMOTION & DEVELOPMENT**

**(No. B/817) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle)** asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the promotion of the cultural heritage and history of Mauritius as key pillars of the Mauritian economy, he will state the measures being taken or being envisaged therefor, including whether consideration is being given for the development of cultural sites, museums and locally-made crafts and souvenir shops.

**Mr Gondeea:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to the question, I wish to inform the House that through the Government Programme 2025-2029, culture and the creative

economy have been positioned as important drivers of national development, tourism and economic diversification. Measures announced include, *inter alia* –

- (a) the holding of the *Assises des Arts et de la Culture*;
- (b) the implementation of a heritage stewardship scheme to encourage public-private partnerships;
- (c) the modernisation and revitalisation of museums, heritage sites and cultural infrastructure;
- (d) the promotion of cultural tourism and locally made crafts, and
- (e) the setting up of the National Arts Open Commission.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government has already moved beyond policy announcement and concrete actions have been initiated for the implementation of the above measures in collaboration with relevant stakeholders with certain initiatives already completed and others currently at an advanced stage. I am pleased to inform the House that the *Assises des Arts et de la Culture* has already been completed. The recommendations will feed into the preparation of the first comprehensive strategic plan for the arts and culture sector for the period 2026-2029 through the National Arts Open Commission currently being set up.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concrete actions are also underway on other fronts. The heritage stewardship scheme announced in the Budget Speech 2025-2029 is being finalised by the Economic Development Board and my Ministry. The objective is to encourage greater private sector participation in the restoration, maintenance, management and promotion of heritage assets, including historical buildings, museums and cultural sites, while enhancing their tourism and economic potential. In parallel, under the cooperation agreement with the government of the French Republic, Business Mauritius and civil society partners, a team from Expertise France is working on the public-private partnership model for selected national heritage sites. Necessary consultations and technical exercises are currently underway.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are also working on the development of local economic development plans around major heritage sites so as to create greater economic opportunities for the local communities, artists and cultural entrepreneur. In parallel, my Ministry is equally working with the Human Resource Development Council and tertiary institutions to mount specialised training programmes for the creative sector. The objective is to bridge the gap

between existing academic training and the practical realities on the ground, while better equipping artists, cultural entrepreneur and creative professionals with industry relevant skills.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is important to underline that the present Government inherited a sector which, for many years, lacked a coherent long-term vision and strategic direction. For nearly a decade prior to 2025, culture, heritage and the creative economy were unfortunately not positioned as national economic priorities despite their immense potential for tourism, employment creation and national identity building. While certain initiatives were undertaken during that period, these were often fragmented and implemented without an integrated national strategy or measurable development objectives. Critical areas such as the modernisation of museums, the structured development of heritage sites and the valorisation of local artisan did not receive the sustained attention they deserve.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Do you have a supplementary question, hon. Seeburn?

**Mr Seeburn:** Yes. Given that the hon. Minister has stated that the *Assises* on the *Arts et de la Culture* have been earmarked in our Government Programme, can the hon. Minister state whether there is a timeline as to when this will be implemented?

**Mr Gondeea:** I have already replied that it is already completed and now it will be sent to the National Open Arts Commission.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Third member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or!

#### **AFRICAN UNION – MEMBER COUNTRIES – EXPORT MARKETS DIVERSIFICATION – TRADE MISSIONS OUTCOMES**

(No. B/818) **Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the policy of Government to enhance trade with member countries of the African Union for the diversification of our export markets, he will state the trade missions effected in connection therewith since the implementation thereof to 20 April 2026, indicating, in each case, the actual and foreseen outcomes thereof.

**Mr Ramful:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the leading Government agency mandated to provide strong institutional support to promote trade and investments in Mauritius, the Economic Development Board, working collaboratively with my Ministry and our diplomatic missions in Africa, has organised and participated in several trade missions in Africa since

November 2025 to date. I am therefore informed by the EDB that between November 2025 and April 2026, four major trade missions and road shows were undertaken as follows –

- (i) Africa Tech in November 2025, where the EDB participated in the Africa Tech Festival 2025, which was held from 11 to 13 November 2025 in Cape Town, South Africa. That event had enabled fruitful discussions with many stakeholders including tech operators from the United States. I am informed that some US firms are already in an advanced stage of incorporating their activities in the tech sector in Mauritius.
- (ii) Multi-cluster road show in South Africa, a high-level delegation of 26 companies from Mauritius undertook a business prospection mission in Cape Town and Joburg from 26 to 30 January 2026. This mission which was supported by our High Commission in Pretoria, has already yielded Rs45 million in immediate orders with a further Rs440 million worth of orders currently under negotiation. 20 investment leads were identified with potential investment and trade structures estimated at 10 million USD, focused, *inter alia*, in the mining sector, commodity trading and freeport services. In the margins of that road show, our High Commission in Pretoria has also established contacts with representatives of the First National Bank who manifested an interest in promoting Mauritius as preferred investment destination for their high-profile clients.
- (iii) Joint education fair in Zambia and Zimbabwe in February 2026. So, the EDB and the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research organised a joint education fair in February 2026 in Lusaka to create awareness about the educational opportunities available in Mauritius, particularly for students from Zambia and Zimbabwe. The education fair generated great interest on the part of students from those two countries and successfully registered some 409 on the spot applications for seats at Mauritian universities.
- (iv) The ICT Road show in Namibia, Botswana, Zambia in March 2026. So, an ICT services road show for Zambia, Botswana and Namibia was organised by the EDB in March 2026 in Zambia, targeting ICT operators in those three countries. The aim was to promote business growth and export of services opportunities in the ICT sector and strengthen collaboration between Mauritius and the Government, industry, startups, SMEs and African partners in those countries.

The road show successfully established high-level institutional links and paved the way for several Memoranda of Understanding with regional investment promotion agencies.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Government continues to monitor the outcomes of those trade missions to ensure that such commercial efforts translate into tangible economic growth for the sustainable diversifications of our exports. In addition to those specific trade missions pursued by the EDB in collaboration with my Ministry and other Ministries, Government is committed to broaden and diversify our investment space and encourage Mauritian businesses to integrate the regional supply chains in targeted sectors such as agro-processing, textiles and ICT.

My Ministry closely follows the evolution of trade within the existing trade blocks. We participate in ongoing trade negotiations; address implementation challenges including non-tariff barriers and make proposals, when necessary, with a view to improving regional trade. In this regard, Mauritius is actively participating in the various meetings of the AU with a view to implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area. At the sub-regional level, Mauritius trades within the SADC and COMESA free trade areas which have followed an upward trajectory reflecting the country's ability to effectively leverage the provisional trade access provided under those agreements.

Thank you.

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

#### **ADOPTION BILL – PROPOSED INTRODUCTION**

**(No. B/819) Ms D. Henriette-Manan (Third Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of the Adoption Bill in the Assembly, she will state where matters stand.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **NCE EXAMINATIONS – ABOLISHMENT – ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS & MEASURES**

**(No. B/820) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the National Certificate

of Education Examinations, he will state whether same will be abolished after the holding of the 2026 edition thereof and, if so, indicate the alternative pathways and measures being envisaged for students thereafter.

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the National Certificate of Education (NCE) was introduced in 2018 under the Nine-Year Continuous Basic Education Reform Framework by the previous Government. While the inaugural assessment for grade 9 students was originally scheduled for 2020, disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the first live administration of the examinations until 2021.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is currently finalising a comprehensive blueprint for the Mauritian education sector, which proposes among other structural reforms, the abolition of the NCE examinations at the end of grade 9. I wish to inform the House; the blueprint has almost reached the final stage of its preparation. Following legal vetting by the Attorney General's office and review by an Inter-Ministerial Committee, the blueprint will be submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to assure the House that this Government does not believe in throwing the baby out with the bath water. Where a system is pedagogically flawed, it is our responsibility to rectify it, not merely patch it. In its current form, the curriculum of the NCE is partially flawed because it does not adequately prepare our students to meet the exigencies of the School Certificate examinations. Consequently, we are reviewing both the lower secondary curriculum and its assessment framework. In collaboration with Cambridge International, we are developing a new curriculum and assessment framework that prioritises holistic student development over rigid, high-stakes testing. Let me inform the House that the NCE was initially designed to assess both mainstream and Extended Programme students. Numerous stakeholders openly showed their disapproval regarding the practice of asking the former extended stream students to take the NCE examinations.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, unfortunately, between 2022 and 2025, nearly 7,000 Extended Programme students who sat for the NCE examination failed miserably. And 7,000 Extended Programme students were left entirely without certification. This is unacceptable systemic failure which could not be condoned. That is why this Government came with the Foundation

Programme as an alternate pathway for children who need a special curriculum and assessment framework based on their competencies.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, during the extensive stakeholder consultations held for the preparation of the blueprint; educators, parents and psychologists highlighted several critical flaws inherent in the NCE system.

For example –

- (i) The current system induces severe stress. Learners are driven into an intense cycle of private tuitions, spanning from Grade 7 to Grade 9. In reality, extending continuously from Grade 5 to the Higher School Certificate, causing learner burnout and considerable harm to the well-being of our children.
- (ii) The NCE curriculum is inherently flawed. It is not designed to prepare our Grade 7 to Grade 9 students to actually prepare for the exigencies of the School Certificate examinations.
- (iii) The migration of thousands of students from regional colleges to academies after the NCE examinations, which severely disrupts schools' continuity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, education cannot be reduced to a conveyor belt of examinations that alienates and penalises the majority of our children. The alternative pathways being engineered in our upcoming blueprint will ensure that every child, regardless of their academic stream, is provided with a humane, equitable and certified pathway towards secondary and technical education. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, hon. Member!

**Mr Baboolall:** I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. Can the hon. Minister at least give some indications because there is a legitimate expectation in the public, for teachers and pupils – they are stressed as well – when the system will change?

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Thank you, hon. Member for this question. With your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, through this question, let me assure everyone that due attention will be given for the phasing out so that the new system, which will come will respect the legal framework and that enough time will be given to students. For example, students who are already in Grade 8 will take the NCE examination. The phase out will not come abruptly. We

assure students and everyone that nobody will be harmed. They will be given sufficient time in order to prepare for the change that will take place.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, you have one question?

**Mr Beejan:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Will the hon. Minister inform the House whether the NCE examination is used to eliminate students from being promoted to Grade 10 so that the percentage of pass rate in the SC exam could be maintained at a high level?

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Thank you, hon. Member for this question. In fact, I would wish to inform the House, in general, this is what was happening when we came with the criteria of five credits. That was happening with the criteria of five credits. The idea was to eliminate the students with three and four credits so that the HSC result could be good and the percentage could be lofty.

I presume similarly, with hindsight, perhaps that was the intention. What was happening with the NCE examination? I am saying it from memory: around 30% of students used to fail the NCE examination. Already one out of three students used to be eliminated at Form 3, that is, the NCE level itself so that we could buttress the SC result.

Our Government is of a different approach. We believe in giving our kids the maximum opportunity. Coming from the sector, when a student sits for the Form 3 exam/the Grade 9 examination, it is better left to the rector and the members of staff to decide whether the child can be promoted in Grade 10 or not. Very often, it is at this point that they opt for the stream, whether they will do science, technical, arts side, or economic side. It is at that level. But the NCE examination was not doing justice to the potential of our kids. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. First Member for La Caverne and Phoenix!

#### **ENSAFRICA (MAURITIUS) – EMPLOYEES’ SUSPENSION – LABOUR LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK – REINFORCEMENT**

**(No. B/821) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to the recent findings of the Equal Opportunities Commission in respect of the alleged discriminatory dismissal of two employees of ENSAfrica (Mauritius) for wearing hijab, he will state where matters stand as to

the consultations held with the Attorney-General's Office with a view to reinforcing the labour legislative framework to prevent any recurrence of similar discriminating practices.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Members will recall that two employees of ENSafrica (Mauritius) were suspended for failing to remove their headscarf. They were subsequently dismissed. The Employment Relations Tribunal found that the dismissal was unjustified, but did not order their reinstatement, because according to the Tribunal, the relationship between the employees and the employer had irremediably broken down.

The two employees filed complaints with the Equal Opportunities Commission alleging that they had been subjected to discrimination by ENSafrica (Mauritius), via its *preposé*, based on their creed.

In its report dated 08 May 2026, the Equal Opportunities Commission concluded amongst others that –

- (i) no condition, requirement or practice existed within ENSafrica (Mauritius) relating to secularity that was ever binding on the two employees;
- (ii) ENSafrica (Mauritius) did not address the accusation of the two employees that the employers allegedly used derogatory language to refer to the employees' hijab, and
- (iii) the facts suggest that the two employees were subject to discrimination by ENSafrica (Mauritius).

The Equal Opportunities Commission also emphasised that even where an expressed policy exists, regimenting employees' dress code, any such policy must pass a test of constitutionality under Sections 11 and 16 of the Constitution, and they should also meet the threshold set under the Equal Opportunities Act, which prohibits discrimination based on creed.

Pursuant to Section 33 (2) of the Equal Opportunities Act, the Equal Opportunities Commission provided the parties a statutory period of 45 days, from the day of submission of its report, to inform the Equal Opportunities Commission whether the complaints have been resolved. Where the complaints remain unresolved, the Equal Opportunities Commission

shall, with the consent of the complainants, refer the complainants to the Equal Opportunities Tribunal.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following the decision of the Equal Opportunities Commission on 10 May 2026, ENSafrica (Mauritius) issued a press communiqué informing, *inter alia*, that the termination of employment of the employees was not motivated by discriminatory practices, and that its employees could attend work in a dress code which conforms to their religious practice. It also stated that, in accordance with the EOC's guidelines in its report, the conciliation process will restart with a view to achieve a satisfactory solution for all parties.

This communiqué, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is contrary to the reply I made to Parliamentary Questions B/794 and B/810 at our Sitting of 29 July 2025. The House was informed that on 26 June 2025, the representative of ENSafrica (Mauritius) was convened to my Ministry, and he informed that there was a dress code which had been well-established in the past 30 years and that all employees of ENSafrica (Mauritius) had to officially adhere to same.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in July 2025 and November 2025, my Ministry submitted proposal to the Attorney General's Office for amendments to Section 5 of the Workers' Rights Act to prevent discrimination based on religious appearance or dress, which is required by or symbolic of a person's religion or religious belief. The proposed amendment will also require an employer to make such adjustment to the condition or practice as may be reasonable and necessary to accommodate a worker's religious appearance or dress unless the employer can demonstrate that making such adjustment would impose unjustifiable hardship.

On 25 May 2026, yesterday, the Solicitor General's Office sent a reply to my office opining that, and I quote –

“The existing legal framework appeared to be sufficient to cover dress code issues, provided they are interpreted and applied correctly by our court and tribunal.”

As we only received that opinion yesterday, the matter is still under consideration.

As far as ENSafrica (Mauritius) is concerned, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, should ENSafrica (Mauritius) fail to reach an amicable settlement with the two employees within the

45 days given to them by the Equal Opportunities Commission, I will ask the hon. Attorney General to consider revoking the license of ENSafrica (Mauritius) under the Law Practitioners Act on the ground of public interest because, in my opinion, a law firm which engages in discriminatory practices should not be allowed to practice in Mauritius.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, hon. Lobine.

**Mr Lobine:** Yes, thank you, hon. Minister for this reply. In the meantime, will the hon. Minister consider issuing a guideline or a notice to all employers that they should make it mandatory at their workplace to have written non-discrimination and dress code policies that are in line with our Constitution - written guidelines?

**Mr Uteem:** Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will give the instruction to my officers to liaise with the different employers of organisations to make sure that they have this non-discrimination policy in written form which is circulated to all employees.

**BASSIN D'APPRENTISSAGE – 2019 TO 2025 – TOTAL COSTS -  
CONTRACTOR**

**(No. B/822) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the “Bassin d'Apprentissage” initiative, operating under the broader “Natation Scolaire” (School Swimming) Program, he will state the total costs thereof over the period 2019 to 2025, indicating, in respect of each such project, the initial project cost and variation cost, if any, and, if so, indicate the reasons and the name of the corresponding contractor/s responsible therefor.

*(Withdrawn)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Your next question, hon. First Member for La Caverne and Phoenix!

**CASINOS OF MAURITIUS LTD – 13 EMPLOYEES’ SUSPENSION –  
INVESTIGATION**

(No. B/823) **Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to the Casinos of Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Investment Corporation Management Services Co Ltd., information as to the circumstances surrounding the suspension of thirteen employees thereof in October 2020 and the subsequent dismissal of eight of them, indicating whether the allegations of unfair treatment meted out thereto are being investigated and, if so, where matters stand.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that on 31 October 2020, 13 employees employed under different entities following the State Investment Corporation Management Services Co Ltd. were suspended with pay. These entities are Sun Casino Ltd., Beach Casino Ltd., Le Grand Casino du Domaine Ltd., and Casino de Maurice Ltd. The administrative and Human Resource Department is based at Casino de Maurice Ltd., located in Curepipe.

According to records available at my Ministry, the employees were suspended following a serious incident at Le Grand Casino du Domaine Ltd., which occurred on the night shift of Sunday 25 October 2020 to Monday 26 October 2020, whilst they were on duty. The incident involved, but was not limited to the following –

- heavy betting by punters with 5,000 value chips up to Rs80,000;
- bet on one even chance, bet of up to Rs240,000 by punters per spin, and
- heavy payment made to punters in excess of Rs1 million.

Management considered that the employees have committed acts of gross misconduct and informed them that an investigation was being carried out in that respect. The employees were thus suspended with pay with immediate effect.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that further to investigation carried out by the Administrative and Human Resource Department of the group, the employees were issued with their respective letters detailing the particulars of charges against them and requesting

them to appear individually before disciplinary committees. The hearing of the disciplinary committees was held on different dates in 2021.

I am further informed that upon completion of these disciplinary hearings; five employees were individually issued with a severe warning as their acts and doings and omissions, at all material times, were considered as serious and contrary to their work conditions. However, the remaining eight workers had their employment terminated on the ground of gross misconduct.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, six out of those eight employees whose employment were terminated, solicited the conciliation services of my Ministry to claim their reinstatement. Despite seven conciliation meetings held at the level of the Conciliation and Mediation Section of my Ministry, the Employer, State Investment Corporation Management Services Company Ltd., refused to reinstate them on the ground that the employees had been found guilty of gross misconduct.

As conciliation was unsuccessful, all eight employees registered their complaint for termination of employment at my Ministry against their respective casino employers. My Ministry then conducted an inquiry into the complaint and tried to resolve the matter amicably. However, no settlement was reached. The worker was subsequently admitted to the workfare programme, and between August and October 2023, my Ministry lodged cases before the Industrial Court to claim termination dues on behalf of the eight employees, whose employment had been terminated.

Subsequently, the employees decided to retain the services of their own attorney and counsel to pursue the matter further at the Industrial Court. Accordingly, because they had retained services of counsel and attorney, my Ministry had to withdraw from all eight cases in April and May 2024.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Quirin!

**PAMPLEMOUSSES SC TO GRSE WANDERERS - MR F. B.'S TRANSFER – FCC  
INQUIRY**

(No. B/825) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the reported transfer of Mr F. B. from the Pamplemousses SC to the GRSE Wanderers, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether an inquiry has been conducted by the Financial Crimes Commission thereon and, if so, indicate whether his Ministry has been notified of the findings and recommendations thereof and, if so –
  - (i) when, and
  - (ii) give details thereof, and
- (b) state the actions, if any, being envisaged by his Ministry and/or the Mauritius Football Association in connection therewith.

**Mr Nagalingum:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, question (a), whether an inquiry has been conducted by the Financial Crimes Commission, yes, an inquiry is being conducted by the Financial Crimes Commission on this matter.

However, I have been informed by the Financial Crimes Commission that as this question relates to the inquiry being conducted by the latter, no information relating to any investigation can be divulged by virtue of Section 161 of the Financial Crimes Commission Act 2023, and that the exception provided under the law would not apply to parliamentary questions.

Furthermore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also advised that under Section 131(3) of the Financial Crimes Commission Act 2023, even the Parliamentary Committee set up under Section 129(1) of the said Act is precluded from seeking information regarding any investigation. As such, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not in a position to reply to this question.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président, il est bon de savoir que la FCC a référé toute la question, tout le cas au Ministère des Sports quoi qu'en dise l'honorable ministre. De ce fait, peut-on

savoir justement ce que compte faire le ministère des Sports vu que les procédures de transfert n'ont pas été respectées, M. le président, premièrement concernant le paiement...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Put your question! Put your question!

**Mr Quirin:** Oui, mais c'est la question. Que compte faire le ministère des Sports vu que les procédures de transfert n'ont pas été respectées, premièrement, concernant le paiement fait par chèque et tiré au nom d'un dirigeant de Pamplemousses SC au lieu du club lui-même, et deuxièmement, en évitant de suivre les règlements de la FIFA, tout en ignorant les formalités de transfert à travers le *transfer matching system*...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hang on! If this is the subject of the FCC inquiry, I won't allow you to proceed any further because for FCC inquiry nobody is allowed to ask any question about the inquiry.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président....

**The Deputy Speaker:** If what you are saying is the subject of the inquiry at the FCC, so I won't allow any question on this incident or ...

**Mr Quirin:** Cela concerne la MFA, cela concerne un transfert.

**The Deputy Speaker:** There is an inquiry!

**Mr Quirin:** Je viens de vous dire que la FCC a référé toute la question au ministère des Sports. Ce que je viens de dire...

**The Deputy Speaker:** How do you know that? We do not have any evidence here. We don't have. Unless you have evidence. There is no evidence.

**Mr Quirin:** J'ai des documents, M. le président! N'essayons pas de camoufler toute l'affaire. N'essayons pas de camoufler. J'ai des documents ici.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are you saying that I am trying to camouflage? Are you saying that I am trying to camouflage?

**Mr Quirin:** Not you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! *J'ai des documents en ma possession que le dénonciateur Monsieur G.M. a adressé à la FIFA et à la MFA. Ce sont des documents véridiques que je vais déposer, M. le président, à votre attention et à l'attention de l'honorable ministre aussi, peut-être qu'il n'est pas au courant de toute l'affaire. Donc, ce que je suis en train de dire, est-ce que l'honorable ministre, à travers son ministère, ils ont l'intention d'ouvrir une enquête et de demander à la MFA de donner toutes les informations concernant ce transfert frauduleux qui a été effectué?*

**Mr Nagalingum:** I am clear on that issue, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The matter is clear. Everything has been referred to the FCC, and I got the letter from the FCC to say that this question cannot be replied in Parliament.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Okay, next question!

**Mr Quirin:** Mais je dépose les documents, M. le président.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Okay, next question.

**Mr Quirin:** Mais, je dépose les documents, M. le président.

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

#### **RESIDENCE LAVANDE HOUSING COMPLEX – REGULAR MAINTENANCE MEASURES**

**(No. B/826) Mr G. P. Venkatasami (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Residence Lavande Housing complex at Dagotiere, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., information as to –

- (a) whether the site has been vested in the Moka District Council and, if not, why not, and
- (b) the measures in place for the regular maintenance of the green spaces and amenities thereat.

**Mr Mohamed:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that following completion of housing project by the NHDC, it has been the practice for my Ministry to vest part of the housing estate, that is, plots of land over which stand the social facilities and green spaces in

the Ministry of Local Government for maintenance as the NHDC does not have sufficient financial and human resources.

However, in the year 2021, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of Local Government informed my Ministry that maintenance of green spaces and amenities within the NHDC housing estates does not fall under the purview of the local authorities as per the Local Government Act and requested my Ministry to make its own arrangements for such services. At one point in time, there was also the issue of the Local Government Act having to be amended that would have permitted the local authorities to take care and maintain those specific spaces but as at yet, ever since 2021, nothing has been done. In a spirit of collaboration, some local authorities have, despite their limited means, been maintaining the green areas and other amenities over a number of housing estates.

I am given to understand that my Ministry has had several meetings with the Ministry of Local Government and that of Finance to come up with a policy for the maintenance of green spaces and social amenities of NHDC housing estates. I wish to seize this opportunity, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to inform the House that maintenance of green spaces and amenities with respect to the NSLD residential units project will also have to be looked into. I am informed that during the last meeting held at the Ministry of Finance on 16 September 2025, the Ministry of Local Government was agreeable to take over the green spaces, and I thank the hon. Minister of Local Government for that, and other common amenities subject to amendments to the Local Government Act, as I said earlier. And obviously, I cannot be difficult on him and his Ministry subject to availability of funds.

Residence Lavande housing project in Dagotiere comprises 656 housing units on a ground plus one configuration, a football ground, a children's playground, a jogging track, a community centre, a commercial outlet and 32 green spaces. In regard to part (a), the plots of land over which stand the green spaces and amenities have not yet been vested with the Ministry of Local Government. Conversely, the District Council of Moka has, in April 2023, taken over the operation and maintenance of the community centre. As regards part (b), the NHDC is, despite the lack of resources, undertaking maintenance of the green spaces and amenities thereat on an ad hoc basis.

Let me give details with regard to that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because I think it is important not only for the hon. Member, but most importantly, the residents there and the constituents. The issue is as follows: the NHDC in-house team is presently carrying out the

cleaning of green and common spaces at Residence Lavande, Dagotiere. Cleaning works started on 06 May 2026 and are expected to be completed by 05 June 2026, subject to weather permitting. As at 21 May 2026, 50% of the cleaning works at the children's playground have been completed. The NHDC does not have the resources to ensure regular maintenance, and as I said, it is on an ad hoc basis.

To conclude, I would also like to add the following, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Not only is this problem only with regard to that particular residence, but it is quite generalised. So, what we have come up at the level of my Ministry is as follows – we have come up with a new scheme altogether whereby the NHDC, myself and the officers of the NHDC, we will be visiting every single NHDC and NSLD residence in Mauritius, old and new. We will be proposing our services in-house. Government, at one point in time, the Labour Government started by giving Rs200 per household of NHDC residence, per family. It is contributed but we are in the process of finalising a management plan whereby we will be able to take over the cleaning and management with the Rs200 per household, but we will obviously, if we have to give better services, we are going to give satisfaction to all those who live in those residences. We will be expecting the inhabitants there to also contribute.

So, with better services and better quality of service, comes also the responsibility on the part of the residents. So, we will both act responsibly; NHDC staff as well as the residents of all those NHDC estates. It will be up to them to decide whether they are agreeable to us stepping in to take over those services, because it is for the residents to decide. We will be giving them the opportunity, we will be presenting them what exactly we are offering as services, and we will be showing them how much it will be costing and there will be a total *transparence* in the management of the finances for that new project which I have been spearheading ever since last year.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes?

**Mr Venkatasami:** Do you have a timeline for this project to be realised?

**Mr Mohamed:** The timeline for the project to be realised is we will be starting with Constituency No. 19 first. We will be starting – it is not because of you – but what I am saying is we have to start with Constituency No. 19 first because there are serious problems there. There are such urgent problems there that deserve our immediate attention. It is not in any way minimising the problems elsewhere but what I am saying is that I want to take it upon myself to meet with the Members of each constituency, where I will expect and I hope

that you will all be helpful to organise meetings with all residents at one place, where we show them exactly what we want to do and now the timeline is very simple. We are going to start by next week at the most, the week after with Constituency No. 19. We will be moving then to Constituency No. 3. Forgive me, I just wanted to do so in my constituency – I am sure you will understand – and then we will be moving to other constituencies on a weekly basis. So, it is going to be constant progress, work in progress, but it is going to be changed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Everyone will ask when you will come to their constituency now.

So, okay. Hon. Quirin, the document you have produced has not been admitted yet. They are mere communication. They are print outs of computer communication. I will have to study it and see whether we can admit it or not. For the time being, it is not admitted.

The next question, hon. Caserne, Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue!

#### **COVID-19 VACCINES – DONATION, PURCHASE & EXPIRED DOSES**

**(No. B/827) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to COVID-19 Vaccines, he will state the number of doses thereof –

- (a) received as donation, and
- (b) purchased, indicating the –
  - (i) total cost incurred therefor, and
  - (ii) number of doses thereof which have expired as at to date.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in reply to part (a) of the question, I am informed that since January 2021 to date, my Ministry has received 1,258,913 doses of COVID-19 vaccines as donations from friendly countries, namely People's Republic of China, India, France, United Arab Emirates, Republic of South Africa, United Kingdom and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as follows –

- 100,000 doses of Covishield from India;
- 100,000 doses of Sinopharm from People's Republic of China;
- 5,000 doses of Hayat Sinopharm from UAE;

- 50,400 doses of Johnson & Johnson vaccine from Republic of South Africa;
- 1,170 doses of Johnson & Johnson vaccine from France;
- 151,200 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine from Mastercard Foundation and Saving Lives and Livelihoods Initiative in partnership with Africa CDC;
- 387,270 doses of Pfizer from United States;
- 200,760 doses of Moderna from France;
- 211,200 doses of paediatric Pfizer from UK;
- 51,840 doses of Bivalent Pfizer from United States through Covax facility;
- 20 doses of Pfizer vaccine in 2025 for Hajj pilgrims, and
- 53 doses of Pfizer vaccine from United Kingdom of Saudi Arabia this year for Hajj pilgrims.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding parts (b) and (b) (i) of the question, I am informed that some 2,708,940 doses of COVID-19 vaccines were purchased and delivered for COVID-19 vaccination campaign in 2021 as follows –

- 100,000 doses of Covishield from Serum Institute of India for a total amount of Rs21,149,472;
- 200,000 doses of Covaxin from Bharat Technologies, the cost thereof was around Rs139,650,763;
- 100,800 doses of AstraZeneca from COVAX Facility for the total cost of Rs17.17 million, including bank guarantee and other expenses;
- 1,500,000 doses of Sinopharm vaccine for total sum of Rs825 million;
- 120,000 doses of Sputnik procured at the cost of Rs49,646,379;
- 288,000 doses of Johnson and Johnson vaccine have been delivered in two instalments. Total cost incurred was Rs116,494,720, and
- 400,140 doses of Pfizer had been delivered for total cost of Rs264 million.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regards to part (b) of the question, out of 2,708,940 doses of COVID vaccines purchased and delivered, a total of 162,816 doses of vaccines have expired. The House may wish to note that a total of Rs987 million in respect of Johnson and Johnson's

Pfizer and Sputnik vaccines was outstanding when I assumed office as Minister of Health and Wellness in 2024.

Some 691,200 doses of Johnson and Johnson vaccines, which had never been delivered, but for which a contract agreement had been signed by the previous government, were expired and disposed of by Johnson and Johnson Vaccine Pharmaceuticals. Several negotiations have been carried out with the African Vaccine Acquisition Trust and Afrexim Bank to cancel the remaining doses.

However, the negotiations were not fruitful and my Ministry is bound to pay the outstanding claims. As such, part payment to the tune of Rs170 million of the undelivered doses have been made during this financial year.

An amount of Rs25 million is still outstanding in respect of Johnson and Johnson vaccine and same will be settled shortly. Similarly, we would have to pay an amount of Rs277 million for 599,040 undelivered doses of Pfizer in line with the contract agreement signed by the previous government. As a result, provisions are being made in the forthcoming budget to settle the outstanding claim. In case of an emergency, Pfizer will not provide any vaccine to us as no payment was effected by the previous government for the remaining doses.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, you have one question? One last question. Time is over!

**Mr Caserne:** Yes. With regard to the undelivered doses which the Ministry had to pay, is the hon. Minister going to launch an inquiry to investigate, so as to bring all those who are at fault for the amount the Ministry has had to pay?

**Mr Bachoo:** Well, this matter will be looked by the Attorney General's Office. But I have to inform the House that our Government has disbursed over Rs1 billion as far as these medications and vaccinations are concerned.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Time is over!

Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/828, B/829, B/830, B/831, B/833, B/834, B/837, B/839, B/841, B/842, B/843, B/844, B/847, B/848, B/851, B/853, B/857, and B/858.

Time is over!

**MOTION****SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)**

**Mr Mohamed:** 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 Bhagwan rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

**The Deputy Speaker:** I call the hon. Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change.

**UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION – CLIMATE  
CHANGE OBLIGATIONS**

(4.17 p.m.)

**The Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change (Mr R. Bhagwan):** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish, with your permission, to make a Statement following the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Resolution welcoming the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change.

On 25 July 2025, I made a statement in the House following the Advisory Opinion given by the International Court of Justice on the Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change to clarify the legal obligations of States in addressing global warming and climate change.

The House will recall that the request for an Advisory Opinion was led by Vanuatu Island State following lengthy representations made by Pacific Islands law students.

On 23 July 2025, the International Court of Justice delivered the landmark Advisory Opinion clarifying that protecting the climate is not an optional diplomacy and political option, but is a legal duty grounded in treaties, customary law and human rights.

Thus, States which fail to fulfil their obligation risk legal responsibility and claims for repair. The Advisory Opinion was also supported by science-based temperature rise target of 1.5 degree centigrade as the agreed primary temperature goal under the Paris Agreement.

To affirm the findings of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, Vanuatu, on behalf of other supporting States, including Mauritius, introduced a resolution to the UN General Assembly for adoption on Wednesday 20 May 2026. The Resolution had a resounding success with 141 votes in favour, only eight against and 28 abstentions.

The UN General Assembly adopted the Resolution whereby it first welcomed the opinion and stressing on the fact that climate change is an unprecedented challenge, calls on States to act consistently with their obligations under the international law and the Paris Agreement, including implementation of measures to transitioning away from fossil fuels energy systems, and highlights that the UN General Assembly is determined to translate the Advisory Opinion into enhanced multilateral cooperation and accelerated climate action at all levels consistent with international law.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, accordingly, the Resolution establishes a follow-up mechanism to a report of the UN Secretary General on progress in 2027 while ensuring continued consideration of the General Assembly with a formal follow-up item on the agenda of the UN General Assembly in 2028.

This Resolution is a powerful message for vulnerable nations such as Small Island Developing States which bear the brunt of climate change, although they are the least responsible for global warming.

It is an affirmation that climate justice should not be a vain word as States have now recognised legal obligation to protect their people and future generations without restriction and discrimination.

Moreover, it has given renewed trust in the multilateral system as Member States are preparing for the Climate COP 31 this year conceptualised as a COP of Implementation.

The Resolution will significantly guide negotiations on key agenda items, including climate finance, loss, damage, just transitions, among others. Mauritius as a member of the Alliance of Small States, the African Group of Negotiators as well as the G77 and China will be guided by this Resolution in the preparation of its national position for the forthcoming COP 31.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for your attention.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness!

(4.22 p.m.)

### **MAURITIUS – EBOLA OUTBREAK – PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

**The Minister of Health and Wellness (Mr A. Bachoo):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I wish to make a statement on my Ministry's preparedness plan for Ebola. In view of the fact that on 16 May 2026, the World Health Organisation declared the outbreak of Ebola in Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda as a public health emergency of international concern. I wish to reassure the House and the population of my Ministry's preparedness to deal with this serious health threat.

I wish to report that I have had a fruitful personal meeting with Dr. Tedros, Director General of WHO during my participation in the 79<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly held in Geneva from 18 to 23 May 2026. In addition, members of my delegation and myself participated in several daily briefings held by the Director General personally and the WHO Regional Director of African Region, Professor Janabi, on the situation of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. Both the Director General and the Regional Director stressed the need for preparedness, solidarity among nations and dissemination of accurate and updated information, particularly with respect to any suspected case of Ebola.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Ebola is a severe, very often fatal disease in humans. It is caused by viruses including Ebola virus, Sudan virus and the Bundibugyo virus. The average case fatality rate is around 50%, although in past outbreaks it varied from 25 to 90% depending on the virus species, the context and the quality and timeliness of supportive care.

Ebola is transmitted to humans through close contact with the blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids of infected animals such as chimpanzees, gorilla, fruit bats, monkeys, forest antelope and porcupines found ill or dead, especially in the rain forest.

Once introduced into human population, it spreads from person to person through direct contact through broken skin or mucous membranes with blood or body fluids of infected persons or indirectly through contaminated materials such as bedding, clothing or needles or as a result of unsafe burial practices. The incubation period is usually between 2 to 21 days. A person is generally not infectious before the onset of symptoms.

The clinical features include sudden fever, intense weakness, muscle pain, headache and sore throat. This may be followed by vomiting, diarrhoea, rash, impaired kidney and liver functions and in some cases internal and external bleeding. Diagnosis requires laboratory confirmation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the current situation, the outbreak concerns Bundibugyo virus disease, the most virulent form of Ebola disease. There is currently no vaccine against the disease. The information available indicates that as at 18 May 2026, the Democratic Republic of Congo had reported 516 suspected cases and 131 suspected deaths, as well as 33 confirmed cases and four confirmed deaths. Uganda has reported two confirmed imported cases including one death. Overall, this represents 35 confirmed cases and five confirmed deaths.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a public health emergency of international concern is defined under the international health regulation as an extraordinary event which constitutes a public health risk to other states through the international spread of disease and which may require coordinated international response.

My Ministry has updated and activated its national preparedness plan for Ebola virus disease in May 2026, of which I am tabling a copy.

The plan covers the Republic of Mauritius including Rodrigues and the outer islands, and is structured around preparedness, mitigation and recovery. It provides for response planning and coordination, control at ports of entry, surveillance of incoming passengers from affected countries, hospital preparedness, laboratory preparedness, passenger monitoring, contact tracing, risk communication and recovery activities.

With regard to response planning and coordination, my Ministry has moved to strengthen coordination, surveillance and operational readiness. With regard to control at ports of entry, surveillance of incoming passengers from affected countries, at our point of entry, namely the airport and the seaport, procedures for health profiling of incoming passengers have been reinforced.

At the airport, these include verification of flight declaration forms, thermal screening, scrutiny of passport and health declaration forms and assessment of possible exposure in affected countries.

At the port, ships are boarded by the public health and food safety inspectors, maritime declarations are verified, health declaration forms are collected before immigration procedures. Passengers from high-risk countries are being followed up by the relevant regional health officers with initial contact within 24 hours, daily telephone contact, routine visits and further monitoring over the follow-up period.

The plan also provides clear protocol for suspected cases detected on board an aircraft or ship. With regard to hospital preparedness, any suspected case would be separated, assessed by a medical team wearing appropriate personal protective equipment and transferred through a dedicated pathway to our isolation facility at Souillac Hospital with dedicated isolation bays and separate quarantine bays, contacts would be identified, assessed and followed up.

In the case of a ship with one or more suspected cases, the vessel will be directed to an isolated quay with transfer of suspected cases to the Souillac Hospital and assessment of close contact. Similarly, should there be any suspected cases from private sector, the case would be transferred according to an established protocol to Souillac Hospital.

Allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to remind the House that it was under the Labour Government that around 2013 to 2014, following an outbreak of Ebola in West Africa, that was for the first time an isolation facility was set up at Souillac Hospital.

This facility was validated by WHO for isolation of Ebola cases but can also be used for isolation of other infectious diseases. Staffing arrangement, buffer stock of personal protective equipment, stockpiling of essential medicines, intravenous fluids, blood products, medical equipment and consumables and training of staff in case of recognition, isolation procedures, infection prevention and control, personal protective equipment use, laboratory procedures, waste management and burial procedures have been looked into and addressed.

My Ministry has also initiated actions to ensure that the relevant protocols are available and operational. This includes isolation, infection prevention control, laboratory testing, clinical management, linen and laundry services, management of clinical waste, handling of dead bodies, environmental cleaning, disinfection of transport vehicles and guidance for aircraft cabin crew.

With regard to laboratory preparedness, laboratory testing protocols have been elaborated recognising high biohazard risk posed by specimen from suspected cases, hence requiring safe handling, strict infection prevention and control and appropriate sample transport procedures.

With regard to contact tracing, contacts are to be identified through interviews, hospital records and other reliable sources. Follow-up is to be conducted for 21 days following exposure with quarantine measures applied according to level of risk. From 17 May 2026 to 24 May 2026, a total of 30 passengers arriving from the Democratic Republic of Congo and

45 passengers arriving from Uganda are under active 21-day public health surveillance. To date, follow-up has been uneventful.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to risk communication, Ebola outbreaks are not managed only with ambulances and hospital beds but also with accurate information, public trust and rapid correction of rumours regarding the alleged exposure of Mauritian nationals abroad to a patient with Ebola.

Yesterday, my Ministry promptly informed the population that there has been up to date no known case of any Mauritian national locally or abroad who has been exposed to any patient. I make an appeal to the public and health professionals to immediately inform my Ministry of any suspected case of Ebola for us firstly to confirm the veracity of the information and to take actions accordingly.

A responsible citizen does not rush to the press to create sensation, spread alarm or provoke panic among people. The irresponsible and unethical spreading of rumour regarding alleged Ebola cases is not only reckless; it is unpatriotic. It risks pairing unnecessary fear, damaging public confidence, harming our tourism industry and affecting the economy of our country.

My Ministry will provide press releases, targeted radio and television programmes, counselling of travellers, distribution of fact sheets to public and private doctors, information materials for airport and port staff, hotlines, regular situation reports and community engagement.

The key message is this: Mauritius has a national updated preparedness plan, actions initiated and my ministry is strengthening operational readiness in line with WHO guidance and obligations under international health regulation.

Our objective is clear: early detection, rapid isolation, safe management, effective contact tracing, protection of health workers and prevention of any local transmission and putting a rapid halt to irresponsible spreading of rumours.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to say to the House and the public that the risk of Ebola spreading widely in Mauritius remains extremely low or non-existent. Unlike COVID-19, Ebola is not primarily airborne and unlike Chikungunya or Dengue, it is not spread by mosquitoes. It is transmitted mainly through direct contact with body fluids of an infected person. Let me reassure the House and the population at large. My Ministry supported by

experienced professionals who have already helped the country to successfully manage H1N1, Chikungunya, Dengue and the first outbreak of COVID-19 in the past.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in matters of public health, credibility matters, experience matters, integrity matters. We will continue to act calmly, firmly and responsibly to protect the population.

I thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you.

The hon. Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations!

(4.32 p.m.)

### **INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE – RIGHT TO STRIKE – ADVISORY OPINION**

**The Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations (Mr R. Uteem):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I wish to make a statement in connection with the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice delivered on 21 May 2026 on the issue of whether the right to strike of workers and their organisations is protected under the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention 1948, Convention No. 87.

18 member States of the International Labour Organisation, including Mauritius, five international labour organisations, namely ILO, the International Trade Union Confederation, the International Organisation of Employers, the International Cooperative Alliance, and Business Africa made oral statement during the advisory proceedings. In my oral statement before the International Court of Justice, I spoke about the evolution of the right to strike and freedom of association in Mauritius, and reaffirmed Mauritius' stand that the right to strike was protected under the Convention, but it was a qualified right.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following our participation in the advisory proceedings, Mauritius was commended by the African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation, which represents over 18 million workers from over 52 African countries. In a correspondence dated 20 October last year, the General Secretary, ITUC Africa, congratulated Mauritius for the country's, and I quote –

“Courageous and principled stand before the ICJ, where clear and compelling arguments were made in defence of the right to strike as an integral component of freedom of association under ILO Convention 87.”

The ITUC Africa described this Government's position as, and I quote –

“Unambiguous, principled and anchored in deep understanding of democracy and justice.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in its Advisory Opinion on the Right to Strike under the ILO Convention 87, the International Court of Justice by 10 votes to four was of the opinion that the right to strike of workers and their organisation was protected under the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention of 1948. This Advisory Opinion is of particular significance to Mauritius. Section 13 of our Constitution guarantees freedom of assembly and of association. To a large extent, Section 13 of our Constitution is similar to Convention 87, as both protect the rights of persons to form or belong to Trade Unions for the protection of their interests. Just like Convention 87, Section 13 of our Constitution does not expressly provide for a right to strike but in the light of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, it can be safely inferred that the right to strike in Mauritius is protected under Section 13 of our Constitution.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this ruling represents an important milestone for Trade Unions and workers across the world, including Mauritius, who have historically fought for the recognition and protection of workers' collective rights, including right to strike for the protection of their interests. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection!

(4.36 p.m.)

#### **PETROLEUM PRODUCTS – VAT COLLECTION – MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT**

**The Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection (Mr M. Yeung Sik Yuen):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to make a Statement on VAT collection on petroleum products. Since the onset of the conflict in the Middle East in March 2026, compounded with the disruption of shipping routes through the Strait of Hormuz, we have witnessed significant volatility and sustained increases in global crude oil and refined petroleum prices, particularly for Mogas and gas oil. Reports from the World Bank, Reuters and the US Energy Information Administration have confirmed that the ongoing conflict has

not only caused one of the largest oil supply shocks in recent decades, but also warned that oil markets are likely to remain under pressure for an extended period of time in the foreseeable future.

As a fully import-dependent economy for petroleum products, Mauritius has inevitably been affected by these international market developments. Nevertheless, this Government has consciously refrained from passing on the full extent of the increase in international oil prices to consumers. This policy decision has been taken in order to cushion households, protect purchasing power, contain inflationary pressures and safeguard economic activities across the country. Had the full increase in procurement costs been transferred directly to pump prices, consumers and businesses alike would have faced significantly higher transportation and living costs. For instance, the calculated prices of Mogas and gas oil have, as at 25 May 2026, increased by 22.87% and 11.09% respectively.

Accordingly, the retail prices of Mogas should have been Rs78.95 cents per litre, while that of gas oil, should have been Rs79.50 cents per litre. Government, however, did not pass on these increases with the consequence that within the three months period since the outbreak of this crisis, the deficit of the Price Stabilisation Account has increased by more than Rs2 billion, reaching a deficit of Rs3.53 billion today, compared to a deficit of Rs1.5 billion on 28 February 2026.

In this context, it is important to underline that revenues collected through VAT on the sales of Mogas and gas oil contribute directly to the financing of the extensive social and welfare measures provided by the State in Mauritius. Unlike many developing countries, Mauritius maintains a broad welfare system which ensures universal or highly subsidised access to essential public services and social protection mechanisms such as free healthcare, free education from primary up to tertiary level, universal pensions for senior citizens, social aid schemes for vulnerable households, subsidised public transport for students and elderly persons, and numerous support mechanisms aimed at protecting lower and middle-income families.

When compared to several African countries, Mauritius offers considerably broader and more universal welfare framework. In South Africa, while social grants and pensions are extensive, healthcare and education system remain uneven and highly dependent on income level. In Kenya and Ghana, access to healthcare and social protection is comparatively more limited with a larger reliance on contributory insurance schemes and private expenditure.

Namibia provides certain pension and social assistance programs, but its welfare coverage remains narrower in scope than that of Mauritius. Importantly, despite these countries capping their VAT collections on petroleum products, most of them have nonetheless increased their retail prices for these products as per the global prices, which Mauritius has not done. The prices of both Mogas and gas oil in Kenya, Namibia and South Africa are higher than the prices in Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Mauritian social model therefore requires substantial and sustained public financing. Taxes and VAT revenues collected across the economy, including on petroleum products, constitute an essential source of funding which enables Government to maintain free and subsidised services for the benefit of the population as a whole. Consequently, the VAT collected on Mogas and gas oil should not be viewed solely as a fiscal measure, but also as a contribution towards preserving the country's social safety net, supporting vulnerable groups and maintaining the quality of life and social stability enjoyed in Mauritius.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT

#### PQ B/825 - TABLED DOCUMENTS - RULING

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Hon. Members, I have perused the documents that the hon. Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière wished to table in relation to PQ B/825. These documents are exchanges of emails between two persons referring to certain third person and making mention of materials which, if made public, may prejudice the ongoing inquiry before the FCC. I am, therefore, not allowing the tabling of the said document and the document will be returned to the hon. Member.

I suspend the Sitting for half an hour.

*At 4.43 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 5.18 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.*

**Madam Speaker:** You may be seated!

Hon. Members, let me take my breath.

**ANNOUNCEMENT****PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS – S.O. 22(1)**

Hon. Members, this morning, before lunch, the hon. Member for Vacoas-Floréal raised a supplementary question for her Parliamentary Question B/805, on which I decided to give a ruling.

I have just read the uncorrected transcript of the Hansard so that I may be properly guided in delivering my ruling.

I refer Hon. Members to Standing Order 22(1), which refers to the rules concerning Parliamentary Questions, including supplementary questions.

Standing Order 22(1) (h), which I partly referred to recently, reads –

“(h) a question shall not include the names of persons or statements of facts unless they are necessary to make the question intelligible and, in the case of statements of facts, can be authenticated by the Member concerned, nor shall it contain charges which the Member asking the question is not prepared to substantiate;”

Standing Order 22(1) (i) –

“(i) a question shall not contain any arguments, expressions of opinion, inferences, imputations, quotations and extracts from newspapers and periodicals, epithets or controversial, ironical or offensive expressions or hypothetical cases;”

In the same vein, I also refer to Standing Order 22(1), still, but this time (l), which was not totally the case this morning, but again, refers to statements in the press, and reads as follows. It will stand as a guideline, as recently, there was such a question regarding L'Express during the PNQ. I quote –

“(l) a question shall not be asked whether statements in the press or of private individuals or unofficial bodies are accurate;”

Members, I also wish to draw your attention to Standing Order 22(5) –

“A question shall not be made a pretext for debate.”

I have noted that of late, this has often been the case. Members tend to make statements rather than put questions. Sometimes, I am lenient.

I am once more appealing to all hon. Members, on whichever side of the House you may be sitting, to, please, respect the Standing Orders and help me to uphold the dignity of our Parliament. You have the duty, of course, to fight for your ideas, but please, do so with respect for your opponents, but also for all those watching you on Parliament TV.

Thank you.

## **PUBLIC BILL**

### *Second Reading*

## **THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMISSION BILL**

**(NO. VI OF 2026)**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

(5.21 p.m.)

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I move that the Constitutional Review Commission Bill (No. VI of 2026) be read a second time.

Madam Speaker, the Bill we are presenting today is not an ordinary Bill. It concerns the supreme law of the land, the very constitutional architecture upon which our democracy, our institutions and the rights of our citizens rest.

For decades, Mauritians have been proud of the democratic traditions of this country. We have been often cited as an example of constitutional stability, institutional continuity, and the respect for the rule of law. But, Madam Speaker, recent years have also exposed vulnerabilities in our constitutional framework, which can no longer be ignored.

Madam Speaker, a Constitution cannot remain frozen in time while society is evolving around it. The Constitution is a living instrument, and like any living thing, it is as capable of being exploited as it is of offering protection. History has shown us, with painful clarity, that a Constitution alone does not save democracy.

What saves democracy is the strength of its institutions and civil society, the independence of its judiciary, the freedom and independence of the press, the vigilance of its citizens in defence of their democratic rights, and the safeguards that prevent any single individual or family, or political clique from subverting all of them.

A Constitution must not only reflect the realities of the present, but it must also protect the future of the nation. It must be sufficiently robust to withstand the abuses of power, sufficiently modern to protect emerging rights, and sufficiently democratic to ensure that no government, no institution, no individual may place themselves above constitutional accountability.

This Government was elected, Madam Speaker, in November 2024 on a clear mandate to restore confidence in our institutions, reinforce democracy, strengthen the rule of law, and modernise the constitutional framework of Mauritius. The Constitutional Review Commission gives concrete effect to that commitment contained in the Government Programme of 2025-2029.

By this Bill, we take an important step to fulfil an electoral promise.

Madam Speaker, we are not today amending the Constitution itself. We are establishing an independent – and it needs to be highlighted –, an independent Constitutional Review Commission, which will undertake wide consultations, examine constitutional reforms and make recommendations to the President and therefore to the Government.

The Commission will have the responsibility to hear all views, engage with experts, civil society, institutions, political parties, the legal profession, academics, and citizens from all walks of life. Constitutional reform, Madam Speaker, cannot and should not be the monopoly of politicians alone. It concerns the entire nation.

This Bill we present establishes this Commission, sets out its composition, its mandate, its independence, and its process. Let me now address the substance of what this Commission will examine and why each area demands urgent attention.

Madam Speaker, Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises freedom of information as a fundamental human right. The UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression has stated that access to information is one of the most essential elements of the freedom of speech. Let me quote. He says –

"Freedom will be bereft of all effectiveness if the people have no access to information. Access to information is basic to the democratic way of life. The tendency to withhold information from the people at large is therefore to be strongly checked."

Transparency is not merely a governance ideal – it is the oxygen of democracy, Madam Speaker. When government decisions on public procurement, on appointments, on contracts, and concessions are shrouded in official secrecy, corruption may flourish in the darkness. The people of this country have had enough darkness in the governance of our nation. Furthermore, when the media does not have access to information, very often they speculate, and very often wrongly, and false perceptions are created, especially on the social media. Lies propagate. People very often believe what they see on social media; they do not use their head, unfortunately, and false perceptions are created. This is not conducive to the proper functioning of a democracy.

A Freedom of Information Act will be introduced by this Government and the Commission will examine the constitutional principle underpinning it. Sunshine, Madam Speaker, is the best disinfectant. This country has been kept in the dark for far too long.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, the Commission will examine the creation of a Senior Official's Appointment Committee, which will make recommendations to Government on the appointment of heads of major public institutions, other than appointments already falling under the service commissions provided for in the Constitution.

We witnessed, Madam Speaker, under the previous regime, the devastating consequences when the heads of supposedly independent institutions owed their position not to merit, not to competence or integrity but to political servility and personal loyalty to the ruling clique. The result was institutional decay on an alarming scale.

The Police Force was too often reduced to a political instrument deployed against critics and opponents.

The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation ceased to function as a national broadcaster and became instead a taxpayer-funded propaganda machine for those in power.

The former Independent Commission Against Corruption, established supposedly to fight corruption, was rendered a toothless watchdog, energetic when pursuing political adversaries, but conspicuously paralysed when confronted with allegations touching the corridors of power.

The Financial Crimes Commission set up under the Financial Crimes Commission Act made matters worse. It concentrated the critical powers of investigation in the hands of the hand-picked Director General and removed the constitutional prerogative of the Director of Public Prosecutions. As soon as we came into government, we initiated an amendment to restore the prosecutorial authority of the DPP.

Madam Speaker, institutions do not just collapse overnight. They are hollowed out gradually, little by little, when appointments are made on the basis of political obedience rather than public service. And once public confidence is lost, the damage extends far beyond any one government. It strikes at the very legitimacy and effectiveness of the State itself.

Confidence in our institutions depends not only on personal integrity of those appointed but equally on credibility, transparency, and independence of the process by which they are appointed. A democracy cannot function where citizens believe that key constitutional and public bodies are merely extensions of the governing party. That is why reforming the system of appointments is not cosmetic reform; it is democratic repair.

The objective is, therefore, to reinforce merit, transparency, competence, and institutional credibility in appointments to key public offices. Of course, in organisations that are central to the implementation of a government's programme, it may sometimes be permissible for political considerations to play a part, but competence must always be the primary consideration.

I do not pretend, Madam Speaker, that we have always got it right, but we must correct what can be corrected. We must change the culture.

Unless our nation can rise above the tribal divisions that afflict us, we cannot build the sound foundations for a future in which the youthful generations of our country can have confidence.

Madam Speaker, the Commission will also consider constitutional provisions for the mandatory holding of local government elections at statutory intervals.

The successive postponement of municipal elections, not once, not twice, three times, if I am not mistaken, was one of the most brazen exercises of institutional manipulation witnessed in this country's modern democratic history. Local elections represent a fundamental democratic right. They are not a convenience to be scheduled when a government feels it might win or deferred when it fears it might lose. It is an essential component of our democratic governance. Citizens must have the constitutional guarantee that local authorities remain accountable to their electorate through regular elections.

The Commission will examine the mandatory constitutional entrenchment of local government elections at fixed statutory intervals, removing forever any government's ability to weaponise delaying elections as a political strategy.

Madam Speaker, since the beginning of this Government's mandate, with the participation of the Attorney General's Office, we have brought about a series of significant reforms to our laws in order to make justice more accessible, more efficient, and more responsive to the lived realities of our citizens.

The Commission will therefore be asked to examine further constitutional and judicial reforms that will align with this commitment.

Madam Speaker, if there is but a whiff of the perception of bias, there cannot be justice as the people must be confident that the system is not and cannot be biased. Today, our current system permits judges who sit at first instance to sit on appeal. So, today, for example, a judgement may be on appeal before two judges, and tomorrow, the judge whose judgement was on appeal, sits on appeal on a judgement at first instance handed down by his or her colleague. This is unacceptable. The perception that this may give rise to bias, undermines public confidence in the impartiality of our courts.

Justice, Madam Speaker, must not only be independent but must be scrupulously impartial.

The Commission will therefore examine the creation of a new Court of Appeal, within the Supreme Court, consisting of dedicated judges of appeal as recommended by Lord Mackay. Judges at first instance will adjudicate; judges of appeal will review. This would reinforce appropriate judicial specialisation, improve efficiency, and strengthen public confidence in the administration of justice. The right of the final recourse to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council will, of course, be maintained. This is therefore a critically important institutional reform.

The Commission, Madam Speaker, will also examine the establishment of a Constitutional Division of the Supreme Court for the timely adjudication of constitutional and human rights matters. Constitutional litigation often concerns the most fundamental rights and freedom of citizens. Delays in constitutional matters may effectively amount to a denial of justice.

A specialised Constitutional Division will ensure greater expertise, coherence and expedition in constitutional adjudication. It would strengthen constitutional protection and reaffirm the supremacy of the Constitution in our legal order. A good example, Madam Speaker, - and I think all of us know this - concerns electoral petitions. We have to prepare the affidavits and put in our petitions within 21 days. It is not easy when you have lost an election because people who were prepared to come are put under pressure or threatened in this country, but you have only 21 days to prepare your petition. But we all know what happened after the 2019 elections. I am an example myself. Four and a half years practically waiting for the petition to be heard, but finally we said there is no point because elections are held every five years. So, what is the point of having electoral petitions?

The Commission will also look into whether there is need to reinforce further the independence of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The independent prosecutorial function of the Director of Public Prosecutions is a cornerstone of the rule of law. That is why in the Constitution, he is given constitutional protection. If prosecutions are selectively initiated or dropped based on political considerations, and if the Director of Public Prosecutions is perceived as vulnerable to executive influence, the entire edifice of the criminal justice becomes an instrument of executive power rather than that of justice.

I may say, thankfully, we have been fortunate that the recent occupants of that office have had the moral courage and fortitude to resist the most flagitious and brazen attempts to coerce and intimidate them.

Madam Speaker, who can forget the astonishing spectacle, widely reported not only here but around the world, of a sitting DPP, his house being surrounded by compliant police officers on the orders of two political Ministers and with the approval of the then Prime Minister, forced to seek an order for *habeas corpus* to prevent his arrest on trumped-up charges? He had to go by the back door, run away.

Who can forget the campaign of steady, attritional executive harassment and coercion exercised against him and his successor right up to the elections, 18 short months ago, to capture the institution of the DPP and bend it to its will?

A campaign, which I must say, to the lasting credit of the former Deputy Prime Minister, Xavier-Luc Duval, who decided to resign, who preferred to resign from government rather than accepting such a repugnant and proposed action. He resigned.

That, Madam Speaker, was a testimony to their character, the former DPP's, but it does not mean the system is incapable of improvement, to better protect the prosecutorial independence and impartiality of the DPP's office.

The Commission, therefore, will examine whether further constitutional reinforcement of the DPP's independence is necessary, including protections against political interference in prosecution decisions and clearer constitutional delineation of the DPP's exclusive prosecutorial authority.

As alluded to earlier, the Government has already moved to amend the Financial Crimes Commission Act to remove the power of its Director General to prosecute or decline to prosecute without the DPP's consent. He cannot do it without the DPP's consent anymore. The Commission will consider whether there is need to further constitutional underpinning to buttress the independence of the DPP.

Madam Speaker, on another note, the Commission will examine amendments to Chapter II of the Constitution to further protect fundamental rights, including new generation rights relating to environment, technology, health, education, and other economic, social and cultural rights recognised under international treaties, and to provide for the rights of nature.

Chapter II of our Constitution, which is our Bill of Rights in a way, was drafted in 1968. It was after the constitutional conference of 1965. It was, for its time, a remarkable document and has served us well. At the time our founding document was written, the internet did not exist. The climate crisis was not yet understood as an existential emergency. Artificial intelligence was science fiction. And yet, today, we are asking a 1968 document to protect citizens whose rights are being violated –

- through digital surveillance,
- through environmental destruction, and
- through the denial of adequate health care and education.

The Commission will examine how to strengthen the protection of fundamental rights and enshrine what we call new generation rights: the right to a clean environment, the right to health, the right to education as constitutional guarantees, rights recognised under international treaties to which Mauritius is already a party.

The Bill also provides for the Commission to examine the rights of nature, a concept that has gained momentum in constitutional jurisprudence from Ecuador to New Zealand, and to which this Government committed in its Programme. If we are serious about climate justice and ecological sustainability, we must be prepared to enshrine it at the highest level of our legal order while paying due regard to practicalities.

Madam Speaker, the Commission will also be mandated to examine the introduction of public interest litigation and class actions to better safeguard public interest and better protect citizen rights.

Our Supreme Court has consistently held that Mauritius does not recognise representative standing, that only those with direct personal interest, who have *locus standi*, may bring constitutional proceedings. The consequences of this restrictive position are profound. Communities devastated by pollution, for example, cannot sue without proving individual harm. Environmental NGOs cannot challenge destructive government decisions. Marginalised groups, lacking the resources to litigate individually, find the courts effectively closed to them.

In India, South Africa, and the United States, these tools have enabled courts to move beyond narrow adversarial disputes and to address systemic wrongs affecting large sections of society.

There is a landmark judgement, Madam Speaker, the Taj Trapezium case. In that judgement, the Supreme Court of India used Public Interest Litigation to compel the State to take action to protect the Taj Mahal and the surrounding communities from the devastating effects of industrial pollution. It demonstrates how judicial intervention can safeguard both heritage and public health.

Similarly, in the case of the Government of the Republic of South Africa against Grootboom, the Constitutional Court affirmed that constitutional rights are not abstract promises, but enforceable entitlements, holding the State accountable for its obligations to provide adequate housing to those living in inhumane conditions.

These experiences demonstrate that where traditional mechanisms of litigation may be insufficient, for the various reasons I gave, to address diffuse or collective harm, Public Interest Litigation and Class Actions can serve as vital instruments of accountability, ensuring that the justice system remains accessible not only to the privileged few, but to society at large.

Madam Speaker, after careful deliberation, I will bring an amendment at Committee Stage of the Bill to extend the mandate of the Commission. The Commission will be empowered to examine the introduction of an Electoral College for the election of the President of the Republic, with a view to strengthening democratic governance by providing for a more deliberate and representative mechanism for the selection of the Head of State rather than a direct nationwide popular vote.

Such an electoral college might enable a specific caucus, whether of elected representatives or of delegates to reflect the diversity of regional, institutional and sectoral interests within the Republic, thereby ensuring a more balanced and inclusive process. It might further serve to mitigate the risks of excessive polarisation and personality-driven electoral competition by encouraging the emergence of persons who command broad national consensus rather than narrow majoritarian support. In a society characterised by diversity, this mechanism might enhance political stability, reinforce the legitimacy of the Office of the President, and strengthen public confidence in the neutrality and unifying role of the Presidency as an institution which should be standing above partisan politics. I shall await the Commission's views with keen interest.

Madam Speaker, the integrity of our electoral system is the foundation of everything. An election that is not free, that is not fair, that is not credible, is not an election at all. It is a performance of democracy dressed in democratic costume.

The Commission will, therefore, examine a comprehensive package of electoral reforms: stronger powers and independence for the Electoral Commissioner and the Electoral Supervisory Commission; faster access to justice in electoral disputes, as I mentioned; the introduction of a proportional element in our electoral system to reflect more closely the will of the people.

As the highly respected journalist, Mr Yvan Martial, said recently in an interview in *L'Express* of 20 May of this year, and I quote –

*"Quand un système électoral donne tous les votes à un seul parti et zéro siège à l'Opposition, c'est une forme de dictature."*

This is, I should say, the unintended consequences of our electoral system. Nobody at the time thought that an alliance could sweep all the seats! This was not even envisaged, and it has already occurred. Not once, not twice; three times again! The last one being the general election of 2024.

The *parti de l'Alliance Nationale*, led by the Labour Party with its friends of the CAM and all this, in spite of having got 25.7% of the vote in 1982, was not represented in Parliament, that is, 25.7% of the people's voice were ignored, stifled.

I remember vividly, Madam Speaker, – I am sure many of the young MPs do not even know this – The London Times, in 1982, after the election. There was a headline, and this is what the headline said –

“Unique in the world – Democracy opts for one party State.”

Never happened! People want democracy. Here, we opted for a one-party State.

This is never good for a democracy. You need an effective Opposition, *comme chien de garde* in any democracy. Otherwise, it does not work.

Furthermore, the regulation of political party electoral funding and the right of constituents to recall their members for serious misconduct should also be considered.

Madam Speaker, the Commission will be charged with examining the introduction of anti-defection provisions for Members of the National Assembly, a provision necessary to protect the integrity of Parliament and the mandate given by voters. It seeks to prevent elected Members of Parliament from opportunistically changing political allegiance after elections in exchange for personal benefit or ministerial office or political favour. Such practices arguably undermine political stability, weaken public trust in democratic institutions and distort the will of the electorate. An anti-defection framework could promote accountability and ensure that governments are formed and maintained on the basis of principles and electoral legitimacy rather than political bargaining and inducements. Very often, financial inducements as well!

The Commission will have, therefore, to examine how best, because they must balance the freedom of conscience of Members of the Parliament with respect to the democratic mandate entrusted by voters.

Madam Speaker, our national anthem calls upon us to honour the values of peace, justice and liberty – values we pledge at every gathering of the Nation. This is not just poetry. They are foundational principles upon which the Republic rests.

Peace, justice and liberty are constitutional values which must guide our institutions, public institutions, democratic governance and national life. Constitutional recognition of these principles would reaffirm the moral and democratic identity of the Mauritian Republic. The Commission will, therefore, examine how to enshrine these fundamental foundational values constitutionally, not as mere aspirations, but as justifiable standards by which the conduct of all public authority may be measured.

Madam Speaker, finally, the Commission will also consider any associated matters which it may think relevant in the line of the objects of the Bill.

This flexibility is important because constitutional review cannot always be confined within strict, rigid parameters. During consultations, additional concerns, proposals and constitutional issues may well emerge, which deserve consideration.

Madam Speaker, the Commission will operate with the full independence guaranteed by clause 4(2) of the Bill, free from the direction or control of any person or authority. It will conduct public sittings, invite written submissions from every citizen, whoever, political parties, associations, engage with experts both domestic and foreign, and deliberate in a structured, transparent process before presenting its findings to the President. Every Mauritian, including Rodriguans, people from Agalega, from Saint Brandon, and very soon from Diego Garcia, who wish to be heard will have the opportunity to be heard. This is participatory and consultative constitutional reform. It will be the people's Constitution.

Commissioners and all persons assisting the Commission will be protected by immunity from legal proceedings for acts done in good faith. This is a Commission built for candour, for rigour, and for courage.

Madam Speaker, the philosopher Aristotle wrote that the purpose of the Constitution is to organise the city in the manner most conducive to good governance. Our Constitution was written from a different era. More than 50 years – nearly 60, actually – have passed. We have grown as a Nation, as a People, as a Democracy. It is time that our supreme text grew with us.

Madam Speaker, De Gaulle who was a former President of the French Republic, was asked about this, and he said, I am quoting –

*« Des Grecs, jadis, demandaient au sage Solon : 'Quelle est la meilleure Constitution ?' Et il répondit : 'Dites-moi d'abord pour quel peuple et à quelle époque'. »*

This exercise is not academic; it is urgent.

Every mechanism we have described and on which we invite the Commission to reflect and report: stronger fundamental rights, protected privacy, an independent and impartial judiciary – not just independent, they have to be impartial – a reformed electoral system, public interest litigation, freedom of information, and every one of these themes is a direct and deliberate response to the documented failures of the decades between 2014 and 2024.

Madam Speaker, we are not drafting hypothetical safeguards against hypothetical abuses. We are giving the mandate to the Commission to come up with real and effectual shields against the very real violations that this country has suffered.

Mauritius was Africa's beacon for democracy, but we slid. You just have to look at V-Democracy reports, which said we were a democracy. We have slid into an autocracy. They have just had a report which said we are back as a democratic country. November 2024 was the moment Mauritian people arose to reclaim that distinction. The Bill forms part of the rebuilding of the democratic architecture that will make such a reclamation permanent.

Everything this Government does will focus relentlessly on building the solid foundations of the bridge to a new and better future for our country. Every decision I take, and the Government takes, must be deliberately and painstakingly calculated to restore the moral, democratic and economic health of our nation.

This Bill, Madam Speaker, is part of the building of the foundations of the Bridge to the Future.

This Bill represents an act and an expression of political and constitutional faith in that future.

The magnificent people of our Republic deserve so much better. And this time, we are going to make sure that they get it.

The Government Programme presented to this nation in January 2025 made a promise. Today, we are delivering on that promise. We are establishing the Commission this country needs, to undertake the constitutional review the country deserves.

Let Mauritius never again become what it was between 2014 and 2024. Let this Bill be the beginning of the guarantee that it will never be again the same.

I, therefore, invite, Madam Speaker, all the hon. Members of this House to support the Constitutional Review Commission Bill and to participate constructively in what may become one of the most important democratic exercises in the constitutional history of our Republic.

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

**The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.**

**Madam Speaker:** Yes. Motion is seconded. Now I call on the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

(5.58 p.m.)

**The Leader of the Opposition (Mr G. Lesjongard):** Merci, Madame la présidente. Merci de me donner la parole cet après-midi afin d'apporter mon humble contribution sur le *Constitutional Review Commission Bill (No. VI of 2026)*.

Avec ce projet de loi, cette auguste Assemblée pose, aujourd'hui, les jalons des futurs amendements qui seront apportés à notre Constitution. Malheureusement, Madame la présidente, la présentation, aujourd'hui, de ce projet de loi est à l'image de ce Gouvernement. À l'envers ou comme on dit *enba lao* – un projet de loi qui est contradictoire. Et je vais expliquer pourquoi, Madame la présidente.

Dans un état de droit, le cadre juridique doit précéder les nominations et non les suivre. Le 24 juin de l'année dernière, c'est-à-dire presque une année de cela, l'honorable l'Attorney General a affirmé à cette auguste Assemblée, et je cite –

"At the same time, a Constitutional Review Commission is expected to commence its work in the coming weeks."

*This is what he said, Madam Speaker, "in the coming weeks."* Et cela a pris une année. Et une année, Madame la présidente, vous avez l'admettre, ce n'est pas quelques semaines à venir. Et lorsqu'un gouvernement bafoue une promesse démocratique phare, les citoyens sont en droit de se demander : cette réforme est-elle dictée par des principes ou par un calendrier politique ? Et, nous savons tous que cet empressement à présenter ce projet de loi est principalement pour retenir les papillons et les empêcher de voler de leurs propres ailes vers d'autres cieus politiques, Madame la présidente. L'honorable l'Attorney General poursuivait ainsi –

“It will allow for a principle and inclusive review of our Constitution with a view to strengthening checks and balances and reinforcing public trust from electoral reform to a new generation of rights drafted by Mauritians, for Mauritians and passed by a Parliament with a clear mandate to do so.”

J'ai écouté avec beaucoup d'attention l'honorable Premier ministre faisant référence à la réforme électorale. C'est vrai qu'il a dit dans son intervention que la commission "*will look also into associated matters.*" Mais permettez-moi de me référer à la section 4 (r). Et la section 4 (r) fait mention de l'intégrité électorale, de l'équité et de la transparence du processus électoral. Ce qu'on comprend que ça englobe aussi la réforme électorale comme avait promis le gouvernement, Madame la présidente. Or ce que je vois, par exemple, la réforme fait clairement mention du financement des partis politiques. Et il faut se rappeler, Madame la présidente, qu'un projet de loi avait été présenté à cette Chambre en juillet 2019. Mais ceux qui aujourd'hui sont au gouvernement, autrefois dans l'opposition, avaient voté contre.

Madame la présidente, permettez-moi de faire référence au *Government Programme*. Je cite, et c'est la première mesure concernant la Commission constitutionnelle *where it was stated that the Commission will inter alia examine the setting up of an electoral college which will elect the President of the Republic with a view to ensuring that the President has a mandate for a broader base.*

Et ce n'est que ce matin, Madame la présidente, qu'on a circulé un amendement afin d'ajouter cet item dans les attributions de la commission. Est-ce un oubli ? Mais par contre, voilà ce que dit cet amendement, c'est-à-dire d'ajouter à la clause 4(g), *the creation of an electoral college to elect the President of the Republic in order to increase the legitimacy.* Fait référence avant, c'est-à-dire *the broader base*, mais aussi on a ajouté cette fois-ci *an independence of the office* qui n'était pas dans le discours programme.

Doit-on par cet ajout, Madame la présidente, comprendre que quelqu'un au sein du gouvernement a l'ambition de devenir président de la République avec les pleins pouvoirs ?

*(Interruptions)*

Comme je disais, Madame la présidente, un projet de loi présenté à l'envers. Le 19 décembre 2025, *the highlights* des décisions du Conseil des Ministres, et je me réfère au paragraphe numéro 4, et je cite –

*“Cabinet has taken note that former Chief Justice Y. K. J. Bernard Yeung Sik Yuen, GOSK has been designated as Chairperson of the Constitutional Review Commission.”*

Et lors des délibérations du Conseil des Ministres du 30 janvier 2026, la population est informée, Madame la présidente, que les membres de la commission sont nommés. Et depuis, c'est le silence complet jusqu'à la présentation de ce projet de loi. Donc, le Conseil des Ministres décide de la nomination du président et des membres de cette commission et cinq mois après, ce gouvernement vient présenter un projet de loi qui a pour objectif, Madame la présidente, comme énoncé à la première phrase de *l'Explanatory Memorandum*, et je cite –

*“...to empower His Excellency the President of the Republic of Mauritius to appoint a Constitutional Review Commission.”*

Madame la présidente, le gouvernement avait déjà décidé légalement et officiellement ces nominations puisque la décision a été prise par le Conseil des Ministres. Et maintenant, vous allez demander au président de la République de nommer les membres de la commission et cela à travers une loi.

Madame la présidente, dans la pratique, dans les pays du Commonwealth, comme par exemple, je vais citer le Kenya ou le Canada, les commissions statutaires sont d'abord créées par la loi et les nominations suivent. Inverser cet ordre, Madame la présidente, porte atteinte à la souveraineté parlementaire et crée un déficit de légitimité dès le premier jour. Et si le gouvernement, Madame la présidente, persiste avec ces nominations pré-annoncées, je demanderai à ce moment-là au gouvernement d'inclure une clause de ratification exigeant l'aval de cette auguste Assemblée.

Pour continuer dans la même veine, Madame la présidente, en vertu de l'article 47 de notre Constitution, les nominations clés requièrent la consultation du Leader de l'Opposition. Ce projet de loi malheureusement rompt avec cette tradition pour une instance qui va pourtant refondre notre loi fondamentale. Ce n'est pas un simple oubli. C'est un recul démocratique. Et je pense, Madame la présidente, tout sincèrement, du fait que cela concerne la révision de notre Constitution, non seulement il faut consulter le Leader de l'Opposition, il faut aussi consulter les leaders des partis politiques, du moins ceux qui siègent au Parlement.

Madame la présidente, à travers ce projet de loi, ce gouvernement démontre ses propres contradictions et je vais vous expliquer pourquoi. La section 4(1) qui définit les *functions and powers of Commission*, par cette section du projet de loi, le gouvernement définit les sujets que la commission doit prendre en considération. *It states that the Commission shall inter*

*alia examine the following.* Et le Premier ministre, lors de son intervention, a fait référence à l'indépendance de la commission, que la commission *will look into associated matters.*

Ainsi donc, Madame la Présidente, à la section 4(1), le gouvernement impose, je dis bien impose, les changements constitutionnels qu'il voudrait faire et ensuite, on vient dire que la commission va agir indépendamment sans contrainte d'une autorité. Madame la présidente, ce n'est pas seulement contradictoire, c'est constitutionnellement vicié. Une instance ne peut pas, à la fois, avoir pour mandat, d'examiner une liste prédéfinie et être véritablement indépendante. La véritable indépendance exige, Madame la présidente, la liberté d'identifier les enjeux issus des consultations publiques et non de simplement exécuter l'agenda de l'exécutif.

Madame la présidente, la rédaction de notre Constitution a été faite à travers des consultations avec tous les partis politiques. Mais 58 ans plus tard, le Parti Travailleiste et les autres imposent déjà ces changements à la Commission constitutionnelle. Et je précise, imposer puisque cette loi va être votée et la commission devra s'y soumettre.

Madame la présidente, il y a des dysfonctionnements graves au plus haut sommet de l'État. Et la chronologie de la présentation de ce projet de loi est un autre exemple. Dysfonctionnement entre l'administration publique et l'exécutif, des décisions qui sont prises à peu près et cela va aller en s'empirant, Madame la présidente. La nomination du président et des membres de la commission par le Conseil des Ministres démontre un certain amateurisme. Et c'était le cas aussi si je peux rappeler à la Chambre, le 16 mai 2025. Toujours, après les délibérations du Conseil des ministres, une des décisions prises, ce jour-là, était la nomination de Monsieur Axcel Chenney comme le *Chief Executive Officer* de la NEF. Quelques semaines plus tard, le ministre concerné, le « Père Papillon », l'honorable Subron, à une PNQ, affirme ceci –

“As for Mr Axcel Chenney, I proposed that he be nominated by the coming Board as CEO. When the Cabinet analysed this nomination, the Cabinet was of the opinion that ‘we cannot proceed with the nomination.’ So, we let the new Board sit and make proposals. Then, we will discuss.”

Ainsi, les délibérations du Conseil des ministres rendues publiques mentionnent la nomination de Monsieur Axcel Chenney, mais le ministre vient ensuite dire que le Conseil *cannot proceed with the nomination.*

J'ai cité cet exemple parce qu'il démontre parfaitement cette tendance. Lorsque des décisions du Conseil des ministres sont annoncées, puis retirées, puis réannoncées, la confiance du public s'effrite et la réforme constitutionnelle exige des normes bien plus élevées de cohérence et de transparence.

Je l'ai dit plus haut et je le redis, Madame la présidente. Je suis contre le fait que le gouvernement et les partis de l'alliance gouvernementale imposent les propositions dans ce projet de loi à la commission qui va être mise sur pied.

Alors, permettez-moi, Madame la présidente, de faire référence à la section 7 (1) (a) de ce projet de loi où il est écrit ceci, et je cite –

“(a) a preliminary consultation and exploration stage, whereby citizens and group of citizens, including political parties and associations, shall be invited to submit their ideas and suggestions (...).”

Madame la présidente, cette section fait mention de *preliminary consultation*. Doit-on conclure que la société civile et les partis politiques ne pourront faire uniquement des propositions qu'au début des travaux de la Commission et non pas après ? J'aimerais bien savoir, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker, let me come to some other clauses of the Bill. I made reference earlier to Clause 7. Let me come back again to Clause 7 with regard to the consultation process. Madam Speaker, Section 7 (1) outlines a four-stage process, which is good, but it lacks safeguards –

- no timeline;
- no requirement to publish submissions;
- no obligation to explain how public's input shape recommendations.

With regard to that section, Madam Speaker, I propose that all non-confidential submissions should be published on dedicated portal in *langaz Kreol Morisien*, in French and in English.

With regard to Sections 7 and 9 of the Bill, which deal with proceedings of Commission and deposit of records, I propose that another clause be added for the report and

the interim report – if ever there is one – to be submitted to the Clerk of the National Assembly.

At Clause 9, concerning the deposits of records, also, I propose that the Law Reform Commission be deleted and replaced by the Clerk of the National Assembly. *Parce qu'on est en droit de savoir. C'est vrai qu'on peut aller* to the Law Reform Commission, but not everybody knows where it is, Madam Speaker.

Let me refer to Clause 15 which deals with blanket immunity. This is a standard clause, Madam Speaker, but it must be limited to good faith. I propose that immunity under this section shall not apply to acts done in bad faith with gross negligence or in breach of the rules of natural justice.

Madame la présidente, une Constitution n'est pas un document pour des salles fermées, comme l'a si bien dit l'honorable Premier ministre dans son intervention. Elle appartient au pêcheur de la région de Grand Gaube, au planteur de Vacoas, à l'enseignant de Port Louis, au jeune entrepreneur de Rose Hill, à l'aîné de Rodrigues, à l'infirmier d'Agaléga.

Ce projet de loi est un début. Mais un début doit être bien fait. Je ne m'oppose pas à la révision constitutionnelle. Je m'oppose à un processus qui commence à l'envers, qui impose un agenda au lieu d'écouter le peuple et qui nomme des commissaires avant que la loi n'existe.

Madame la présidente, cette commission doit être un forum national et non pas un instrument exécutif; et que la révision constitutionnelle soit digne de notre démocratie, Madame la présidente.

Je vous remercie.

**Madam Speaker:** Je vous en prie.

Yes, hon. Minister of Labour!

(6.21 p.m.)

**The Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations (Mr R. Uteem):** Madam Speaker, let me, first of all, thank the hon. Prime Minister for bringing this historical Bill in Parliament. One of the main reasons behind the formation of *l'Alliance du Changement* was,

precisely, to implement the constitutional reforms that was set out in our electoral agreement between our four parties, and reflected in the Presidential Address of the Government Programme 2025-2029.

I still remember meeting hon. Subron and other members of *Rezistans ek Alternativ* back in November 2022, when we were discussing constitutional reforms. In those days, there was the question of having a transition government of national unity for the purpose of adopting a new Constitution. May I say, Madam Speaker, the MMM was fully aligned with the proposals of *Rezistans ek Alternativ*. I am glad that these informal meetings ended up into an electoral alliance.

Madam Speaker, when we look at the Constitution of Mauritius, when we open the Constitution, there is one thing that immediately strikes us. Our Constitution was never voted in Mauritius. It never originated in Mauritius. It was not an ordinary Act of Parliament presented, debated and voted in Mauritius. Rather, it was attached as a Schedule to the Mauritius Independence Order 1968. A British Order in Council issued under the Mauritius Independent Act 1968 adopted by the British Parliament. This historical context is important because, although undoubtedly, the Constitution emerged from negotiations involving Mauritius' political leaders at the time, the final constitutional instrument itself was ultimately promulgated under British legal authority and within the framework of British colonial constitutional arrangement.

This is why, Madam Speaker, this Bill is historical because once this independent Commission, the Constitutional Review Commission, will provide its draft legislation. For the first time in Mauritius, we will have the chance to adopt a Constitution by Mauritians for Mauritians. And although many governments amended the Constitution over the years, including the MSM, including government which had three-quarter majority, which could have made fundamental changes.

**Madam Speaker:** You mean four quarters majority?

**Mr Uteem:** Three quarters.

**Madam Speaker:** I am saying four quarters.

**Mr Uteem:** Yes, I mean that they had the minimum to amend the Constitution. They had that majority. They never previously undertook a comprehensive constitutional review to adapt the Constitution to the realities and challenges of modern society. So, this is why,

Madam Speaker, I am buzzled when I hear the hon. Leader of the Opposition criticising us for doing what he, his party never, never had the decency to do.

**Ms Anquetil:** Exactement!

**Mr Uteem:** And what are we doing? We are just doing what we have already said in our electoral agreement and which is already in paragraph 6 to 9 of our Government Programme. So, there are no surprises here. We do not need to have a never-ending mandate given to that Committee as suggested by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. We already know what are the areas that we want this independent Constitutional Review Committee to look at and come up with propositions.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition talks about contradiction. He takes strong exception to the fact that as far back as 19 December 2025, Cabinet had decided that former Chief Justice Bernard Yeung Sik Yuen would head this Constitutional Committee and the members of the Committee were nominated, were approved by Cabinet later on. So, according to him, it should have been done after the Act had been passed and it should have been done by the President. And according to him, by doing the way we are doing, we are '*en balao*'. But Madam Speaker, I think, the hon. Leader of the Opposition does not even know the Constitution. And when we are dealing with a Bill that is setting up a Committee to review the Constitution, the least we would have expected from the hon. Leader of the Opposition is to read his Constitution before coming and addressing this House. Had he done so, he would have seen, Madam Speaker, Section 64 of the Constitution, and I read -

"In the exercise of his functions under this Constitution or any other law, the President shall act in accordance with the advice of the Cabinet or of a Minister acting under the general authority of the Cabinet except in cases where he is required by this Constitution to act in accordance with the advice of, or after consultation with, any person or authority other than the Cabinet or in his own deliberate judgment."

So, the Constitution does not have any provision today requiring the President to act on his own deliberate judgment to set up this Review Committee. So, the Constitution requires the President to act on the advice of Cabinet. So what is '*en balao*' about it? What is '*en balao*' about respecting the Constitution and doing it the way the Constitution is telling us to do it? And now, why have we done it the way we have done it? Why has Cabinet chosen, as far back as December, to appoint the hon. former Chief Justice? Precisely to have the benefit of the wisdom of those who are going to constitute this Committee. We wanted that

Committee to have a look at the draft legislation. Tell us what they think about it. Tell us where they think we have to make amendments, where we have to make improvement. For example, should the hearing be held in public? Should it be in-camera? What would be the mechanism? Should there be a process where there is wide consultation or should they be just limited to whatever Cabinet has asked them to do? So, their involvement was extremely crucial. And I am very grateful for the hon. Yeung Sik Yuen, former Chief Justice and his Committee - I know there is the former Director of Public Prosecution who will be the vice-Chairperson, Mr Ajit Boolell, - and other members who contributed in reviewing and approving the draft legislation before it came to this House. So, there is nothing about '*en balao*', Madam Speaker.

We did it the right way and the right way to do it is to start by having consultations. This is why Section 7, which is rightly referred to by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, sets out the mechanisms which the Committee will use to come to its report. The first step is "preliminary consultation and exploration stage", whereby citizens and group of citizens, including political parties, shall be invited to submit their ideas and suggestions in writing. So, the hon. Leader of the Opposition again takes strong exception - why is it only preliminary? It is preliminary because the Committee needs to get all the suggestions first, before it moves to the next level, which is to do the research phase, to take all the recommendations they received, all the submissions they received from the *forces vives* from the NGOs, from the trade unionists, from the political parties, including the MSM, and then move to the next stage. When you move to the next stage, you cannot go back to the first stage because, otherwise, it will be a never-ending process. So, the next stage is the research stage where the Commission examines proposals received with identified experts. Identified experts - that is very important, Madam Speaker, because the law makes provision for the Commission to actually retain the services of experts.

So, if during the consultation phase, there is a proposal which is very interesting and which is taken from maybe South Africa or New Zealand or another constitution, I am sure this Committee would be interested to have the view of an expert from that jurisdiction to tell us how did it work? How was that put into practice? This right of nature that we are talking about here, how was that implemented in practice? What was the experience of South Africa? What is the experience of Vanuatu and other countries? This is why this second phase is very important.

Then comes the third stage, which is the deliberation stage. This deliberation stage involves the commissioners to discuss different orientation and issues. This is very crucial because this is an independent committee. There is no Member of Parliament. There is no political interference. It is those experts, those members of the Committee who will sit down and make their discussions and deliberations. Finally, the final stage is the drafting stage where a report will be prepared by the Commission on its findings and recommendations, including proposed constitutional amendments, each accompanied by an explanatory memorandum.

Once this exercise is completed, that is, when this document would be made public. Everybody will have a chance to see what have been the recommendations of the Committee. Then we will move to Cabinet. Cabinet will examine it and then we will come to this House with an Act of Parliament to implement the recommendations of that Committee.

So, today we are not amending the Constitution, we are just setting up this Committee. But there will come a time where this House will be called upon to amend the Constitution to give effect to the recommendations of that Committee. Madam Speaker, I hope that when we come to that point, I will not hear the Leader of the Opposition come up with other arguments not to ratify those constitutional amendments.

**Madam Speaker:** May I ask, for the people to understand properly, because, of course, a constitutional amendment is very complex. Do we understand that these recommendations can refer to part of what is proposed, not the whole of it? Do you understand my question?

**Mr Uteem:** Yes, Madam Speaker, this is a very valid point. You will see that Section 4 (1) of the Bill sets out an extensive number of proposed matters that can be covered. You will see, for example, Madam Speaker, some of the matters to be examined can be grouped under fundamental human rights. Some of them can be grouped under improving governance. Another group can be improving access to justice, and the fourth *volet* would be the political aspect of it.

Now, of course, it would be for Cabinet ultimately to decide what recommendation to accept and what not to accept. Ultimately, it would be for this House to decide what recommendation to accept or not to accept, but at least, there would be a process of consultation. There would be a process of debate, and after that, people would have adopted a Constitution by Mauritians for Mauritians.

We did not put any timeline, Madam Speaker. Deliberately, we did not put any timeline because you cannot bind this Constitutional Commission. You cannot start by telling them to meet this or that deadline but what we can give you, and I am sure that the hon. Prime Minister will agree with me, – the commitment we have to this country – is that we will bring the constitutional reform during our mandate. This we can take as given. That is why we have this committee, and we will come with the necessary constitutional reform.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned electoral reform. Yes, electoral reform is not one of the matters to be discussed by the committee. Political financing, powers of the Electoral Supervisory Commission, powers of the Electoral Commissioner, how election can be better organised are subjects of discussion that will be held in that committee, but not electoral reform. Why? Because for electoral reform, the consultation has already taken place. They have already invited the public to file all their representations. Everything has already been communicated. It is being worked by a committee at the level of the Prime Minister's Office. When the time will come, I am sure the Prime Minister will come to Cabinet with a proposal, and eventually, with a Bill in Parliament. So, that is why we did not need to refer electoral reform to that expert committee because for electoral reform, consultation has already been completed. Now, we are at the stage of digesting all the recommendations and coming up with a proposal for adoption.

Madam Speaker...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Carry on! Carry on!

**Mr Uteem:** I heard some noises. I did not know what it was because there are some people who are...

**Madam Speaker:** No, no, no. Do not take any notice. Only take notice of what I say!

**Mr Uteem:** The other point by the Leader of the Opposition was about the confidential submission. The hon. Leader of the Opposition knows already that at paragraph 6 of the Bill

–

“The Commission may hold public sittings as and when it deems necessary and may call any person it desires to hear in connection with its terms of reference.”

So, it is for the committee. We are not directing the committee on how to conduct the proceedings.

**Madam Speaker:** The Commission!

**Mr Uteem:** But the committee...

**Mr Bérenger:** It is not a committee. It is the Commission!

**Mr Uteem:** The Constitutional Review Commission, sorry. I keep saying 'committee'. It should be the Constitutional Review Commission.

So, the Constitutional Review Commission has the power already to hold hearings in public. We do not want to tie the hands of the Commission. If tomorrow there is someone who has a sensitive information and wants to communicate to the Commission, and we do not want people to know about it, we cannot tell the Commission: 'No, you are bound to have public hearing.' It is up for them to regulate their own proceedings. That is why the Commission is independent, and it should be given this flexibility.

The Leader of the Opposition, again, takes strong exception to the fact that once the Commission will complete its inquiry, it will remit all its documents, all its records to the Law Reform Commission. I mean this is already a novelty. I have never seen the record of any commission of inquiry anywhere. It is only when you go to court that you have to petition, and then, the court gives an order to ask the commission to bring the records so that we can have access to what was said.

At least, we are starting somewhere. We are telling that the records will be given to the Law Reform Commission. Why the Law Reform Commission? Because the Law Reform Commission is the body that is habilitated to come up with recommendations to review law. So, it would serve much better purpose for them to keep that record and see what has been debated in the Commission rather than put it in the National Assembly.

**Madam Speaker:** They will be the custodian.

**Mr Uteem:** They will be the custodian. It will be with them. Nothing prevents them, for example, from disseminating it, but they will be the ones keeping it because, otherwise, where do we keep it? There is going to be a Secretariat, but once the Commission has

completed its business, there will no longer be any Secretariat. There will no longer be any staff, any room to keep all these records. So, at least, we are providing that the record will be safely kept with the Law Reform Commission.

Then the hon. Leader of the Opposition – and that was one of the most laughable of all the comments – took strong objection that we are not consulting him and that we should have consulted him. May I remind him when his party was in power, when Sir Anerood Jugnauth was Prime Minister, what consultation meant? Because I know, in those days, the MMM had a Leader of the Opposition, and we know what was meant by consultation. There has never been any consultation when Sir Anerood Jugnauth was Prime Minister. There was only notification. They just notified, ‘We are appointing at the ICAC. We are appointing this person. Do whatever you want.’ And today, he is telling us to consult the Leader of the Opposition?

We did better than this. We publicised the names of the members of the Commission so that if there were any objection before the law was passed, they would have already come up and told us what are their objection to the present composition of the Commission. They have not done so, and I hope that pays tribute to the identity of the members who will be in that Commission.

Madam Speaker, I will not go and repeat whatever the hon. Prime Minister has spoken about, and I know there is a lot of other interveners who are going to talk individually on the different matters to be covered by that Commission. I would like to only say one thing. First, as a lawyer, as a practitioner, I think it was high time that we start getting someone to implement the recommendations of Lord Mackay, and create this new Court of Appeal, with dedicated judges sitting on appeal. It is high time to create this constitutional court that is going to speed up process and resolve matters dealing with the Constitution so that we do not have to wait for ages, for years, before we can have a constitutional redress. I am all for extending the powers of the Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal, which, Madam Speaker, you know very well, having chaired it yourself, increasing the powers, allowing it to consider appointment, enlarging it to even public service.

The reform, which is fundamental on Public Interest Litigation, is already there in India. So many of us have gone to court with very good cases, very sound legal cases, and even before the judges were able to go on the merit of the case, the application was thrown

out because the applicant did not, in the eyes of the judiciary, have sufficient direct interest in the matter. They did not have sufficient *locus standi*.

A final word before resuming my seat, Madam Speaker, which is on the political front. It relates to anti-defection, which will be dealt with. There are those who are in favour and there are those who are against anti-defection. We already have anti-defection laws in our local government legislation. We have seen that, today, several councillors, despite no longer forming part of the *Mouvement Militant Mauricien* (MMM), refused to give effect to that defection rule. But I personally think that it is well worth having an independent review commission to look at the issue of anti-defection once and for all.

We cannot go on with on and off, Madam Speaker! You cannot have a government which is at the ransom of one person. We cannot have a political party which keeps having the ransom of one leader. You know, if you have an ideological problem, I can understand. But you cannot, on whims and fancies or out of your own interest, of your volition, today, decide that you will be on this side and tomorrow you will be on that side. The people have elected a government. They have elected a coalition with a mandate.

Madam Speaker, I will end by saying, I read it out –

« Ce projet de loi est une gifle magistrale à ceux qui ont abdiqué leur responsabilité en prétextant que le gouvernement n'avait pas l'intention d'implémenter son programme électoral. Le MMM soutient entièrement ce projet de loi, et le moment voulu, nous voterons en faveur de tous amendements à la Constitution qui requiert une majorité de trois quarts des votes des élus de l'Assemblée nationale. »

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you. Yes, we want to hear you, hon. François.

(6.46 p.m.)

**Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Because Rodrigues is also in the news!

**Mr François:** Surely, surely! You will hear it. You will hear it. I rise in support of the spirit of the Constitutional Review Commission Bill No. VI of 2026 with specific proposals, challenges and constructive engagement to its substance.

Allow me first to congratulate the Government, the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Ramgoolam, the hon. Attorney General, hon. Glover, and all the team behind this monumental piece of legislation. I will share my remarks today and I will also lay before the House a document setting out my proposals pending the preliminary consultation and exploration stage of the commission.

Madam Speaker, 460 kilometres east of this Chamber, the people of Rodrigues are watching. They are watching to see whether this Parliament will tomorrow write a constitution that remembers them or one written without them. As a Rodriguan-born citizen, I carry their voices into this House.

They want to know what will this Bill thereafter mean for their future, for Rodrigues and for their children and grandchildren. This builds on our shared vision for Rodrigues a new horizon, and it builds on what we own as a nation to the men and women, who in 1968, raised our Quadri colour flag over Champs de Mars with the courage and foresight to declare one people, one nation, in peace, justice and liberty.

Today, when we revisit our supreme law, we are duty bound to honour that legacy and to expand it. Madam Speaker, before I debate the clauses, let me ask the fundamental question: what is a constitution?

Our constitution is not merely a legal statute. Allow me to invoke the words of former Chief Justice of South Africa, Justice Ismail Mahomed, who said –

“The Constitution of a nation is not simply a statute which mechanically defines the structures of government and the relations between the government and the governed. It is a ‘mirror reflecting the national soul’, the identification of the ideals and aspirations of a nation, the articulation of the values bonding its people and disciplining its government.”

Madam Speaker, that is what is at stake in this Bill. Not a legal amendment, but a mirror, a soul. We must ensure that mirror reflects every citizen of our Republic, from Grand Baie to Plaisance, to Plaine Corail and to Port Mathurin. We have made this journey before.

Over 58 years and 25 plus amendments, our constitution has evolved. From the Westminster model of an emerging post-colonial State to the proclamation of a Republic in 1992 and to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly of 2021, each amendment was a statement of who we were becoming. This review must be our most comprehensive, and it will depend absolutely on the will of the people and only the people.

Let me be direct. If widespread confusion and scepticism take hold, this process is not merely at risk of failing. It will have already failed before the commission hold its first sitting.

Madam Speaker, let me turn to some substance of the Bill, clause 3 (1). Invest the power to appoint every commissioner independently by the President.

But one word is key, the word ‘may,’ not ‘shall.’ I am not a legal person, but ‘may.’ What does that discretionary word mean for the commission?

I note that there is no requirement for parliamentary involvement of a commissioner's appointment.

Gender parity – despite women holding only 17.9% of seats in this very House. Civil society representations – and I say this with full conviction – no seat for Rodrigues. The international IDEA Global State of Democracy Report flags concerns about institutional capture in Mauritius alongside countries facing democratic regression.

We must not entrench that very risk into the body that will rewrite our supreme law. Clause 4 (1) (j) consecrates freedom of information, but immediately defers it to future legislation. And we are talking about constitutional review.

Madam Speaker, Kenya Constitution of 2010, Article 35, enshrines access to information as a fully justiciable right. South Africa's Constitution, Section 32, does the same. We should not enshrine a principle and then hollow it out. The Bill also does – I am not quite sure if I am right – does not clearly address the removal of communal classification and the Best Loser System.

Despite Cabinet's announcement of 24 April 2026 – I heard the hon. Prime Minister mention a dose of proportional representation – the Bill contains no clear mandate to examine women representation mechanisms from a structural point of view. Here, I propose two new clauses: Clause 3A.

I wish I could have read this Bill earlier, Madam Speaker, to share my proposals.

**Madam Speaker:** No, go ahead. Go ahead!

**Mr François:** The Commission shall include at least one commissioner nominated from Rodrigues. Maybe by the Regional Assembly.

It shall achieve gender parity and shall include civil society members appointed through a transparent public process. All appointments shall be tabled before the National Assembly and subject to parliamentary review within a reasonable period of time.

**Madam Speaker:** Where do you want to put that? Section 3?

**Mr François:** Section 3A.

**Madam Speaker:** Another one, 3A?

**Mr François:** Yes.

**Madam Speaker:** Not 3(2)?

**Mr François:** No, 3A. I have circulated a document as ease of reference for that, Madam Speaker.

My second proposal – clause 7A. The commission shall submit – because it is not defined in the Bill – its final report to the President. I would say; I propose: not later, let us say, 18 months from its first sitting. The report shall be tabled before the National Assembly and debated in a special committee of the whole House within a reasonable period of time. I leave it open. It can be 60 days or three months.

Madam Speaker, Rodrigues is not an afterthought. Rodrigues' distinct history and identity is a democracy within the national democracy, enshrined in Articles 75A to 75E of our Constitution and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001. Yet, this Bill does not mention Rodrigues at all.

Our Regional Assembly has been autonomous since 2001, and I note, Madam Speaker, that neither the RRA Act nor the Constitution itself uses the word autonomy explicitly - that ambiguity has consequences. I have personally experienced those consequences.

In 2006, I filed the first electoral petition to test Rodrigues Regional Assembly laws in the case *François versus Perin* 208 SCJ 299 and again in 2022, *Panyandee v. Roussety* 2022 SCJ 369. We know of the accounts after years and we were not, we OPR, in a position to have access to Privy Council, which implies that justice for Rodrigues can remain just out of reach.

I, therefore, welcome Clause 4(1)(k), the new Court of Appeal and the Constitutional Division of the Supreme Court. This will make constitutional justice faster and closer and more accessible and without any bias. But, Madam Speaker, the bigger question remains.

Will Rodrigues simply be taken on board through consequential amendments, as the hon. Prime Minister indicated in his reply to my Parliamentary question B/44 on 21 April 2026? Or will Rodrigues be a full and equal partner in this historical constitutional movement? And I now put to the House, to this House, three specific concerns.

1. the President can today dissolve the Rodrigues Regional Assembly by simple executive action. Rodrigues' autonomous status must be protected from simple dissolution. Just one example aside, Madam Speaker.
2. Rodrigues today depends almost entirely on budgetary transfers from Mauritius. The Constitution must guarantee that financial relationship. However, our people must go beyond waiting for Port Louis to allocate funds. We need an extra step for greater control over our own destiny, our development and especially protection of our lands from *braderie*.
3. I propose the establishment of a Rodrigues Constituency Constitutional and Electoral Review Forum - I mean a forum, not a committee - composed of political parties, NGOs, social and economic associations, unions and community leaders to ensure Rodrigues people are not just consulted but heard.

In addition, Madam Speaker, I propose a new Clause 4 (1)(t). The constitutional entrenchment and reinforcement of the autonomy of Rodrigues, including the protection of the Regional Assembly, the guarantee of adequate financial transfers to Rodrigues, and why not the extension of equivalent autonomous consideration to Agalega, the other Outer Islands, and in the future, Diego Garcia, Chagos.

Madam Speaker, Clause 4 (1) (a) mentions technology as a new generation right. That is welcome. But I submit that technology must be more than a subject of rights. It must be an instrument of democracy itself. Let us consider these realities. In Estonia, citizens vote online from anywhere in the world for national, local and European Parliament elections through i-voting. Government services are fully digital. In Taiwan, the vTaiwan platform enables open policy deliberation and consensus building online. In Ecuador, the right to internet access is in the Constitution.

**Madam Speaker:** In France, right now. Right now.

**Mr François:** I was going to mention that; you mentioned it for me. In India, just last year, the Supreme Court in the case of Amar Jain versus Union of India on 30 April 2025,

declared that inclusive digital ecosystems are a constitutional imperative, part of the right to life and liberty under Article 21.

So, connectivity is no longer a convenience, it is a right. For Rodrigues, this is not abstract. Our people need to participate and get access to. When Government services require physical presence on the mainland, our people are excluded. A Constitution fit for 2026, and beyond, must speak to the digital citizen, including the digital citizen of Rodrigues.

Madam Speaker, open Government data must be a constitutional default. All public expenditures, contracts, procurement, we know that, must be published in a machine-readable format. For example, our citizen must have the right to submit representations to Legislative Committees. This is not being done here. We have legislative committees, but citizens do not communicate with us. They cannot communicate. And here I propose, Madam Speaker, a new Clause 4 (1) (u), that the entrenchment of a right to digital access and connectivity as a fundamental right for all citizens regardless of geography and the establishment of constitutional principle for e-democracy - I am canvassing this for a few years, e-democracy, - open Government data, accountable government, and digital participation in the legislative and administrative process.

Madam Speaker, let me bring my proposal together. I propose to this House four things for this Bill before it is enacted –

- (i) Amend Clause 3 to guarantee an independent, gender-balanced, geographically representative Commission with a Commissioner from Rodrigues;
- (ii) Add a new Clause 7 (a) to set, let us say, an 18-month deadline requiring tabling of the final report and mandate a full Parliamentary debate;
- (iii) Add a new Clause 4 (1)(t) to constitutionally reinforce the entrenchment of Rodrigues' autonomy, not as a consequential amendment, but as a first order constitutional commitment;
- (iv) Add a new Clause 4 (1)(u) to establish a constitutional right to digital access and e-democracy framework, making this Constitution fit for the century it must govern.

This has been part of the mandate of the Commission beforehand.

Madam Speaker, I also propose that the Commission be mandated to examine the constitutional entrenchment of our anti-corruption institutions, despite the mentioned

independence of DPP, as rightly said by hon. Prime Minister, by removing the FCC from the statutory vulnerability to executive interference, as Rwanda and Kenya have done.

And I call, also, on the hon. Prime Minister to report progress on establishing a high-level committee to examine proposed amendments to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act before the next Regional Assembly elections due in a few months, despite bad governance challenges thereat. The Electoral Commissioner himself has confirmed that best practice requires reform to be legislated and consulted upon well before next regional electoral contest.

Madam Speaker, I acknowledge that previous constitutional reform efforts in this House have failed because Parliament elevated partisan interests above national ones. Government proposes, Opposition disposes. I have watched this that cycle for 16 years from both side of the House. This time must be different. Political consensus is not a luxury in constitutional reform. It is the minimum threshold for legitimacy.

A Constitution adopted by one fraction over the objection of another is not a mirror of a national soul. It is a partisan statute dressed in supreme law. Let us build something broader, something that will stand the test of time, something that every Mauritian in Port Louis, Vacoas, Grand Port, Mont Lubin, Rivière Cocos, La Ferme, and in Port Mathurin can call their own. *Avek en vre sans du Mauritianisme, comme le Rodrigaisme, naturellement présent à Rodrigues, un pays, un peuple, une nation.*

This Bill, with the proposals, I and others will lay before the House and I will conclude, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** It sounded like a conclusion.

**Mr François:** Sorry?

**Madam Speaker:** It sounded like a conclusion already.

**Mr François:** No, no. I am setting the tone because it is very important. Yes. I am getting there. I am concluding.

Madam Speaker, what we are doing has the potential to be the foundation of what I mentioned. A Constitution is a covenant between citizen and the State. For my people of Rodrigues, that covenant must be written and applied with their full voices. This is the moment, this very specific historic moment. Let us make our pledge real in pixels and broadband cables and as well as in ink.

For the people of Rodrigues, for the women of Mauritius, for the digital citizens of tomorrow and for the generation not yet born who will live under whatever Constitution we will adopt in this House. We owe our youths and our future generations a living Constitution that adapts with our evolving society. May this House deliver, with courage and determination, a new Constitution soon that reflects the will of all the people and the Republic of Mauritius.

Long live Mauritius, Rodrigues, Agalega and Chagos. Long live the Republic! Madam Speaker, I thank you for your kind attention.

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you. We enjoyed that. Yes, we enjoyed that.

Yes, hon. Jhummun, are you going to give us a flamboyant speech as well?

(7.04 p.m.)

**Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac):** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, let me, from the very outset, thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition for being here today. I do not know if he is still here to listen to us or in support of the other Members of the Opposition. I will not spare this opportunity to refute him. I do not get this opportunity often. After having listened to him carefully, I think his proposals are *anba lao*. He is proposing us to *met soulie, lerla met soset*.

**Madam Speaker:** You know that *balao* is a wood? You know that?

**Mr Jhummun:** Not *Balao*, *anba lao*.

Madam Speaker, we are here today to debate a monumental piece of legislation; the Constitutional Review Commission Bill. Why is this monumental? It is monumental because we are dealing with the supreme law of our country as mentioned by the hon. Prime Minister. Let me read Section 2 of our Constitution for those who are not well versed with it, including me –

“This Constitution is the supreme law of Mauritius and if any other law is inconsistent with this Constitution, that other law shall, to the extent of the inconsistency be void.”

Madam Speaker, this speaks volumes about the absolute importance of the Bill before us today. The monumental importance of this Bill is clearly demonstrated by the

overwhelming public interest it has generated. It is dominating our radios, trending our social media, and debated by the Bar and academia.

Madam Speaker, this immense importance is equally reflected within this very Chamber where no fewer than 25 hon. Members, the hon. Chief Whip can confirm, have registered to participate in this debate. Indeed, in the Government Programme 2025-2029, the first mission is constitutional reform. One of my friends, a constitutional lawyer, once told me, "*Sa constitution la, se enn mama dan constitution*" by the way it is drafted. The British do not have a written one, but they gave such a strong Constitution to us. They forged a masterpiece that has anchored our Republic.

However, Madam Speaker, after 58 long years since 1968, our constitutional fabric has inevitably worn out in certain areas. Even the best watches need careful tuning to keep perfect time. We are operating today under a completely new environment, a new social and economic order, shaped by explosive technological advancement where AI is cutting across all spheres of human life and the threat of climate change is overriding.

Madam Speaker, there is a time for everything and a time to every purpose. Today, the time has surely come for change. We cannot remain static. Only fools expect different results by doing more of the same. Madam Speaker, we are not foolish. Business as usual is definitely not the option. We need to adapt, we need to move forward, and above all, we need to walk the talk. The Constitutional Review Commission Bill is without any doubt one of the most important constitutional initiatives proposed in Mauritius in recent years. Our Constitution must evolve, it must reflect our present realities and future ambitions. This Bill paves a historic path towards a fairer, modern, transparent and above all, an inclusive and sustainable society.

Madam Speaker, let me seize this opportunity to thank and congratulate the hon. Prime Minister, the hon. Attorney General and his office for the remarkable work done since we took power, where more than 30 Bills have been passed to radically transform our legal landscape and deliver on our promises to the nation. These demonstrate an unparalleled work ethic and commitment to national progress.

Madam Speaker, some of these worth mentioning Bills are the Financial Crimes Commission (Miscellaneous Provisions), National Agency for Drug Control (NADC), Legal Aid and Legal Assistance, Road Traffic Amendment Bill, Law Reform Commission, the Certificate of Character and the Anti-Money Laundering amongst others. Where no fewer

than 30 Bills have been passed, yet, some people are saying nothing has been done, *nanye pa pe bouze, system bizin sanze*.

Madam Speaker, if this is not systemic change, then what is it? To these people, I will simply say, patience is a virtue. You cannot undo years of stagnation in only 17 months. I used to say that when the going gets tough, the tough get going, and this is exactly what the hon. Prime Minister and this Government are doing. We did not shrink away from the monumental challenges we inherited. We have said it time and over and over again. Instead, as the hon. Prime Minister says, "*Nou pou met l'ordre kot ena desordre*." And we will not falter, nor will we stop until fully executed and delivered.

Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, some have chosen the easy way. They have quit the Government to sit in the Opposition. *Les pompiers d'hier sont devenus les pyromanes d'aujourd'hui*. They were sent here by the population to extinguish national crisis and face international challenges. Instead, Madam Speaker, they have chosen to abandon. All of a sudden, they see darkness everywhere, *partou inn vinn nwar*. Even you, Madam Speaker, have not been spared by their criticisms, not even the Attorney General who has been criticised for mishandling the Chagos deal while they were part and parcel of all negotiations. This is called *la démagogie outrancière et l'amnésie sélective*.

This is the *raison d'être*, Madam Speaker, of the anti-defection provisions and the landmark right to recall Members of the National Assembly for serious misconduct. This will ensure political accountability where we remain strictly accountable to people who put us in office. Hence, Madam Speaker, in the future, I just hope no more floor crossing or horse trading. *To sote, to tase!*

Madam Speaker, this Bill explicitly provides the Commission with powers to examine the rights of nature and the prevention of environmental degradation. Ensuring a sustainable growth and development is of an utmost importance at a time where the world is severely hit by the consequences of global warming and climate change. Our friends from *Rezistans ek Alternativ* have been going around with their files to canvass about *droit de la nature et protection de l'environnement*. We all present here cannot but rejoice and welcome such proposals.

Madam Speaker, while some of the proposed constitutional reforms are deemed necessary due to evolution, technological change and climate change, yet others, like the

protection of fundamental rights and the consolidation of democracy and institutions are more necessary than ever before, after having witnessed *les dérives* and misuse of powers of the previous MSM-led government and their cronies. Do you want an example? I will give you three, Madam Speaker –

- First, the setting up of a mandatory requirement for the holding of local government elections at constitutionally set intervals is to avoid the repetitive postponement of such elections by the MSM-led government.
- Second, Madam Speaker, the reinforcement, if necessary, of the independence of the Director of Public Prosecutions is rightly to prevent attempts at hijacking the powers of the DPP, thereby prompting the former DPP to take legal actions to protect his constitutional independence and his Office, where he even had to run through the back door.
- Thirdly, Madam Speaker, the proposal to constitutionally reinforce privacy protections and strictly delimit covert surveillance powers is particularly important in any democratic society governed by the rule of law to avoid episodes like those demonstrated by the *Moustass Leaks*, where every one of us was at risk of being tapped anytime and anywhere.

I hope that such a proposal will reassure my good friend, who is not here, hon. A. Duval.

Madam Speaker, it is therefore legitimate to provide constitutional protections around technology, data privacy, and privacy protections, as our Constitution was drafted at a time where there was no artificial intelligence, no digital surveillance, no cyber intrusion and massive data collection.

Madam Speaker, another breakthrough of this Bill is in terms of new generation rights. While this framework guarantees essential protections across right to health, right to education, technology and the environment, it opens doors to constitutionally securing basic rights to adequate housing and food. Why not, Madam Speaker? I think that we can rightly believe that one day we may have a right to food and a right to housing, which are universal human rights recognised under international law to ensure social and economic dignity.

Madam Speaker, the proposal to have an Appointment Committee and the principle of freedom of information were among our promises to this nation during the last election. This Bill, therefore, addresses issues which many citizens have been demanding for years, namely greater transparency in political life and constitutional recognition of freedom of information principles.

Indeed, Madam Speaker, a mature democracy cannot function effectively without transparency and public trust. The introduction of Public Interest Litigation (PIL) and class actions are indeed very close to my heart, as I did propose this long back, in the years 2005-2006, to the then Attorney General. While he did welcome the proposal, yet, he expressed some reserves.

Madam Speaker, having studied in India myself, I have been fortunate enough to witness how PIL has fundamentally reshaped Indian legal and social frameworks with landmark cases in terms of speedy trial, gender equality, industrial pollution, right to livelihood, and more recently, officially recognising transgender individuals. The traditional rules of *locus standi* will no longer be a constraint under PIL.

Madam Speaker, Public Interest Litigation and class action can be considered a milestone in our constitutional and legal system, where ordinary citizens without any *locus standi* can fight for human rights, like any kind of discrimination such as xenophobia, gender issues, animal rights or the protection of our planet amongst others. I would also like to applaud the proposal for a new Court of Appeal which was long overdue.

To conclude, Madam Speaker, because this text is so strong and so vital, we cannot allow it to be amended haphazardly. If we are to modernise this magna *dan konstitision*, we must do it through the structured, expert-led and serious process outlined in this very Bill. As responsible guardians, and in line with our promises as spelt out in our programme, we must tread with absolute caution and seriousness. True modernisation requires us to be deliberate, serious and deeply careful, and more importantly, we must rise above partisan politics.

I will end by saying that while A. G. Gardiner's essay 'On the Rule of the Road' argues that to preserve the liberties of all, individual freedom must be curtailed and personal actions must be balanced with social responsibility and mutual respect, our Government upholds core values of peace, justice and liberty.

I, therefore, support this Bill. Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you.

Yes, hon. Beehook, it is your turn! No? Ms J. Bérenger. I am sorry. I am sorry.

Hon. Ms J. Bérenger, yes! I was trying to go fast.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Oui, deuxième fois, aujourd'hui!

**Madam Speaker:** Ce n'est pas fait exprès.

(7.22 p.m.)

**Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal):** Madame la présidente, il est des moments où une Assemblée ne légifère pas seulement pour le présent, elle légifère pour la mémoire. Aujourd'hui, en est un.

La Constitution, que nous nous apprêtons à confier à une commission de révision, n'est pas née d'un acte souverain de notre peuple. Elle nous a été remise. Pensée dans une autre langue que celle de nos rues ; rédigée dans des bureaux d'un empire qui s'en allait ; négociée pour un pays que nous n'étions pas encore, elle nous a servi. Elle a tenu. Elle a permis à une petite île de devenir une démocratie respectée. Pour cela, nous lui devons reconnaissance.

Mais une Constitution qui nous a été donnée n'est pas la même chose qu'une Constitution que nous nous serions donnés. 58 ans après l'indépendance, le temps est venu de la reprendre en main. Non pour la renier, mais pour l'améliorer. Pas pour effacer ce qui a été bâti, mais pour y inscrire enfin ce que nous sommes devenus : une nation qui ne demande plus la permission d'être libre. C'est cela le sens profond de cette commission. Ce n'est pas simplement un exercice juridique, mais un acte de maturité nationale. Et l'histoire nous jugera sur cette promesse d'une réforme constitutionnelle. Pas sur les discours que nous prononçons, pas sur cette loi que nous examinons ce soir, mais sur ce qu'elle devrait produire. Sur ce que cette commission accomplira ou n'accomplira pas. Sur le courage que le gouvernement aura eu de mettre en œuvre ou qu'il n'aura pas eu. Alors, disons clairement à celles et ceux qui siégeront dans cette commission, le chemin qui les attend.

Le premier défi sera celui de l'ambition. Une révision constitutionnelle ne se mesure pas au nombre de ses articles mais à la hauteur de sa vision. Inscrire les droits de la nature,

les droits sociaux et économiques, le droit à la vie privée du citoyen contre la surveillance de l'État, ainsi que les valeurs de la paix, la justice et la liberté dans notre loi fondamentale. Voilà une ambition digne de nous. Voilà la promesse que nous avons faite et pour laquelle un mandat a été donné. Mais ces droits ne doivent pas juste être une liste de principes pour faire moderne. Bien pensé, ils doivent être la réponse d'une nation aux défis de son temps.

Le 21<sup>e</sup> siècle nous confronte à des questions que les rédacteurs de la Constitution de 1968 ne pouvaient pas même formuler - une planète qui se réchauffe, des technologies qui savent tout de nous, une économie qui accroît les inégalités. Une Constitution qui resterait muette devant ces réalités ne protégerait rien. Inscrire le droit à un environnement sain, le droit à la santé, le droit à l'éducation, la protection du citoyen contre la surveillance, c'est dire à chaque Mauricien que sa dignité ne dépend ni de son revenu, ni de son origine, ni du bon vouloir de l'État. C'est faire de la Constitution non plus un texte qui encadre le pouvoir mais un texte qui élève le citoyen.

Et il y a le second volet dans ce premier défi, celui de la consolidation de notre démocratie et de nos institutions. Soyons clairs sur ce que cela veut dire. La dernière décennie nous a montré ce qu'il arrive quand les institutions censées être indépendantes cessent de l'être. Quand la capture de l'État par des intérêts privés est complète. La confiance s'effrite et avec elle, quelque chose de la République elle-même. Réparer cela ne suffit pas. Nous ne voulons pas seulement restaurer ce qui a été abîmé et encore moins remplacer la capture d'un groupe par celle d'un autre groupe. Nous voulons un changement profond de notre système. Un système où l'État sert le bien commun. La qualité de vie et la dignité pour tous avant les profits et les avantages de quelques-uns. Un système où les gouvernants rendent des comptes, où les contre-pouvoirs ne dépendent pas de la nomination de ceux qu'ils doivent réguler ou surveiller. Où l'unité dans la diversité n'est pas un prétexte pour rendre invisibles les discriminations et les dominations. Où la politique est un engagement et non un filon à exploiter. C'est l'ambition que porte notre mouvement.

Une Constitution n'est pas faite pour figer un pays dans ce qu'il est. Elle est faite pour lui permettre de devenir ce qu'il doit être. Celle que nous léguerons doit ouvrir ce chemin et non pas le fermer. Mais l'ambition ne suffit pas. Il faudra aussi de la rigueur intellectuelle et l'ouverture d'esprit. Il existe, par exemple, une question que la commission ne pourra pas contourner et qui décidera de la valeur réelle de tout ce travail. Ces nouveaux droits seront-ils des droits substantiels ou des droits procéduraux ? Un droit substantiel permet au citoyen de

le réclamer devant un juge. Si on prend, par exemple, le droit à l'eau potable, le juge va-t-il, comme cela a été le cas dans d'autres pays, devoir décider combien de litres accorder par personne ? Saura-t-il arbitrer entre la disponibilité, la capacité et la demande sans déborder sur le domaine du gouvernement ? Un droit procédural, quant à lui, peut éviter la politisation de nos cours car il ne fait que baliser la manière dont une décision est prise. Le juge, si je reprends l'exemple que je viens de citer, devra alors se demander non pas quel volume d'eau accorder, mais si les autorités ont agi raisonnablement. Mais ce droit aura-t-il alors la même portée qu'un droit qu'on peut faire valoir pour lui-même ?

Inscrire le droit à la santé, le droit à l'éducation, le droit à l'environnement sain dans notre Constitution, c'est une avancée. Mais si ces droits ne sont qu'un ornement sans portée devant les tribunaux, alors il aura été donné au peuple qu'une promesse en papier. La commission devra choisir droit par droit avec lucidité en pesant l'effet sur la justice, sur l'administration et sur la séparation des pouvoirs. C'est un travail difficile et c'est précisément cela que nous attendrons de cette commission.

Le deuxième défi sera celui de la méthode. D'abord l'indépendance, cette commission ne doit appartenir à aucun camp, ni au gouvernement, ni à l'opposition, mais au pays. Le jour où ses membres oublieront cela, ils cesseront de servir la Constitution pour servir un agenda. Ensuite, la transparence, le peuple est propriétaire de cette Constitution. Il a le droit de voir, de lire, de comprendre ce que l'on propose en son nom. Une réforme préparée loin des regards du citoyen ne sera pas une réforme démocratique mais un espoir confisqué. L'article 7 de ce projet de loi prévoit que le rapport sera transmis au président, mais pas qu'il soit rendu public. Madame la présidente, je demande que le rapport de cette commission soit publié dans son intégralité et déposé devant cette Assemblée. Le citoyen ne doit pas avoir à demander la permission de lire l'avenir de sa propre loi fondamentale.

Madame la présidente, les grandes réformes ont un ennemi, la lenteur. Ce qui est promis pour demain a une fâcheuse habitude d'arriver après-demain, voire jamais. Et c'est devenu malheureusement une marque de fabrique de ce gouvernement.

J'ai entendu que l'Attorney General prévoit un rapport de cette commission pour mars 2028. J'aimerais bien le croire tant le symbole des 60 ans d'indépendance est beau. Mais le programme gouvernemental promettait cette commission dans un délai de 6 mois. Elle nous parvient 16 mois plus tard. Ce simple écart est un avertissement. Car ce rapport ne sera qu'une première étape. Il faudra ensuite la préparation des projets de loi par le bureau de

l'Attorney General. Et là aussi, uniquement si le gouvernement approuve les propositions du rapport. Voilà le grand défi, Madame la présidente. Évidemment le gouvernement et le Parlement ne pourront pas se déposséder de leur rôle constitutionnel et ne faire qu'approuver les recommandations de la commission. Mais celle-ci ne serait qu'une mascarade si on ne prend pas les recommandations au sérieux. Ou si on relance après elle de nouvelles consultations ou des recherches interminables. Nous arriverions à la fin de cette législature sans que cette promesse ne soit remplie.

Et avant de terminer, il faut parler de la réforme du système électoral qui ne figure pas dans ce texte. La dose de proportionnelle, la représentation des femmes au Parlement, l'équilibre de nos circonscriptions. Rien de tout cela n'est confié à la commission. La fin de la déclaration communautaire obligatoire, elle non plus n'y figure pas. On nous explique que ces réformes ont été retirées du texte pour être traitées séparément plus vite ce qui pourrait être une bonne chose car la loi électorale ne doit pas être modifiée juste avant le scrutin. Et aussi, parce que le sujet a fait l'objet de tant de travaux dans le passé qu'on peut aller dans le sens du consensus qui a fini par se dégager sans devoir réinventer la roue.

On aimerait bien croire à cette explication, Madame la présidente. Mais la décision prise par ce gouvernement, y compris les commentaires méprisants de certains, permet d'en douter. Des ministres qui affirment que la réforme électorale n'est pas une priorité, pensent peut-être qu'ils gagneront les faveurs des électeurs en se concentrant sur les questions de pouvoir d'achat ou de drain mais ils oublient que nos difficultés économiques sont intimement liées à la gouvernance et au système qui les produisent. Ils ne veulent pas changer de système tout simplement, Madame la présidente. Nous, dans cette opposition militante, nous croyons au vrai changement. Nous ne ferons donc pas obstacle à une réforme, à cette réforme promise aujourd'hui. Nous avons cru à cette promesse avant qu'elle ne soit un projet de loi. Nous en serons désormais les gardiens.

Madame la présidente, nos enfants ne nous demanderont pas combien de temps nous avons été au pouvoir. Ils nous demanderont si nous avons été à la hauteur. Si lorsque l'occasion s'est présentée de donner enfin à Maurice une constitution née de Maurice, si nous avons tremblé ou si nous avons progressé. Que notre réponse soit la bonne.

Je vous remercie pour votre attention.

**Madam Speaker:** Merci. Merci beaucoup. Hon. Beehook, now it is your turn. I am sorry.

(7.35 p.m.)

**Mr R. Beehook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil)** Oui, merci, Madame la présidente. Avant d'aborder mon discours, généralement, il est de mon devoir de réfuter ce qui vient de l'opposition. Néanmoins, je dois avouer en toute sincérité, que l'honorable Joanna Bérenger, a fait acte de bonne foi. Néanmoins, il y a quelque chose qui lui a échappé, qu'il faut que je rectifie, c'est que l'honorable Premier ministre a notamment, lors de son allocution, précisée que la réforme électorale, il a mis l'accent sur la nécessité que ce pays ait une opposition. Donc, de facto, nous comprenons qu'une réforme électorale est nécessaire et une réforme électorale aura lieu. Néanmoins, Madame la présidente, en débattant de ce sujet, il m'est venu cette citation de Montesquieu qui mettait déjà sous les yeux du monde au 18<sup>e</sup> siècle –

« Une chose n'est pas juste parce qu'elle est loi, mais elle doit être loi parce qu'elle est juste. »

Mais ce qui était juste lorsque notre constitution a été rédigée en 1968, ne l'est pas forcément aujourd'hui. Donc, il convient à ce gouvernement, à ce Premier ministre, à cet Attorney General de vraiment prendre les taureaux par les cornes et adresser les problèmes fondamentaux qui émanent de cette constitution qui a fait son temps, qui nous a servi, mais qui nécessite une modernisation.

Madame la présidente, la constitution ne peut pas être un agrégat de lignes et paragraphes, c'est le battement de cœur de notre République. Et de cela, je dirais que dans toutes les réformes fondamentales, la monstration est meilleure que la démonstration car il ne suffit pas de démontrer par des raisonnements abstraits que cette réforme est nécessaire.

Il faut montrer ce qu'elle apporte à nos concitoyens, montrer comment elle renforce la justice, montrer comment elle éclaire l'avenir de notre République. Pour cela, Madame la Présidente, je ne vais pas être long, mais je vais m'appuyer sur un malheureux événement que notre nation a connu, c'est le décès des 12 patients dialysés à l'hôpital Souillac durant la pandémie de la Covid-19, c'était en 2021.

12 personnes sous traitement à l'hôpital Souillac meurent et personne ne sait pourquoi. Les familles des victimes ne savent pas pourquoi. Zéro recours possible. Un rapport, un *Fact-Finding Committee* sur ce malheureux, sur ce funeste carnage est resté dans le tiroir des dirigeants de l'époque. Et face à cela, quel a été le recours ? Quel a été le recours des proches des victimes ? Face à cette opacité, c'était quasi impossible de leur rendre justice.

Il aura fallu un changement de gouvernement pour que l'honorable Anil Bachoo, après avoir discuté de cela au Conseil des Ministres, rende public ce rapport pour que par la suite, l'honorable Premier Ministre annonce notre système judiciaire annonce qu'il y aurait un *judicial inquiry* sur cette issue.

Mais Madame, regardons aux provisions qui sont proposées par cette loi et essayons de l'appliquer à cette situation, nous allons voir comment les amendements que nous comptons apporter auraient pu aider le justiciable Mauricien. Je prends par exemple, le principe de la *Freedom of Information* qui sera inscrit dans la constitution et sera accompagné d'un *Freedom of Information Bill*. S'il y avait eu cette loi, s'il y avait eu cette loi, tout citoyen mauricien, non seulement les familles des victimes, auraient pu écrire et exiger que ce rapport qu'ils avaient honteusement mis au placard, soit rendu public pour statuer les responsabilités.

Les familles des victimes auraient pu faire leur deuil. Voilà comment cette *Freedom of Information Bill* permettra au citoyen lambda d'avoir accès à l'information publique. Cet amendement justement à la Constitution qui inscrira la *Freedom of Information* va renforcer l'action, l'accès à l'information publique, mais par la même, va encourager la transparence des dirigeants, la responsabilité et va instaurer une culture *d'accountability*.

L'introduction du *Public Interest Litigation*, PIL. S'il y avait cette provision à l'époque, et bien à ce moment-là, peu importe quel citoyen qui aurait un *reasonable interest*, aurait pu entrer une affaire en cour pour réclamer jusque justice soit faite dans le cas des 12 patients dialysés. Une class action, c'est-à-dire une action de groupe, c'est-à-dire toutes les victimes, tous les proches des victimes des 12 patients dialysés auraient pu mutualiser tous les moyens et entrer un recours envers nos tribunaux pour réclamer justice. Voilà ce que nous souhaitons rendre possible.

Et finalement, je vais m'appesantir sur *the right to recall for Members of the National Assembly*. S'il y avait eu *the right to recall for Member of the National Assembly*, je vous assure, Madame la présidente, le ministre Jagutpal n'aurait pas été ministre.

**An hon. Member:** Pas que lui !

**Mr Beehook:** Certainement ! Madame la présidente, j'ai essayé d'expliquer à cette Chambre à travers un événement comment le citoyen a accès à la justice, comment notre système devient plus transparent, comment les dirigeants, les politiques deviennent plus *accountable*. Les réformes proposées, Madame la présidente, rendent un pouvoir que le citoyen, l'électeur, perd au moment de l'élection. Ça a été très, très bien résumé par l'éminent

sociologue Pierre Bourdieu, qui disait dans sa critique du champ politique sous l'appellation 'La délégation et le fétichisme politique.'

Je vais le résumer en quelques secondes. Qu'est-ce qui se passe lorsqu'un électeur, un citoyen, vote ? Il croit détenir le pouvoir de voter. C'est lui qui a voté et a mis sur les sièges des dirigeants, des élus. Mais par là même – c'est ce que Bourdieu appelle la boîte noire –, il se passe quelque chose de funeste. C'est que l'électeur, parallèlement, perd le pouvoir qu'il va déléguer à ses dirigeants, à ses élus.

De plus, désormais, le peuple, l'électeur, n'existe que par l'existence de ces élus qui parlent en son nom. Le pouvoir des citoyens ; et il y a une confiscation de ce pouvoir par les élus. Mais lorsque je regarde tous les amendements que nous souhaitons apporter pour la population, nous voyons que nous faisons un retour le chemin inverse. On réattribue un certain nombre de pouvoirs aux citoyens mauriciens, aux électeurs mauriciens.

C'est quelque chose de fondamentale. Je ne vais pas être long. Je vais dire que c'est pour cela que je soutiens cette commission et je vais y apporter ma contribution. J'encourage tous les Mauriciens à y apporter leur contribution parce qu'on oublie facilement qu'il s'agit d'une commission qui va travailler avec le peuple et pour le peuple. C'est un texte rempli de bonnes intentions.

Madame la présidente, je vais terminer ici. *This is why I recommend this Bill to this House.* Merci, Madame la présidente.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Ms Anquetil !

(7.46 p.m.)

**Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) :** Madame la présidente, une Constitution, ce n'est pas un vieux livre que l'on garde précieusement sur une étagère en espérant qu'il ne prenne pas trop la poussière. Une constitution, c'est la colonne vertébrale d'un pays et c'est ce qui tient une nation debout. C'est ce qui protège son peuple. C'est ce qui donne à chaque citoyenne et à chaque citoyen sa place dans notre République. Quand un pays grandit, quand son peuple évolue, quand ses défis deviennent plus complexes, il faut avoir le courage de se demander si cette colonne vertébrale tient encore droite.

Ce soir, nous ne sommes pas là pour faire de la chirurgie esthétique institutionnelle. Nous ne sommes pas là pour mettre un peu de peinture neuve sur de vieilles fissures. Nous sommes là pour regarder les fondations même de notre République. Nous sommes là pour

nous demander avec honnêteté : est-ce que nos institutions parlent encore au peuple ? Est-ce que nos droits protègent vraiment les plus vulnérables ? Est-ce que notre démocratie ressemble encore à la société mauricienne d'aujourd'hui ? Est-ce qu'elle est prête pour la République de Maurice de demain ?

Mais, Madame la présidente, il y a une question fondamentale que nous devons poser avec courage. Est-ce que notre République traite réellement les femmes et les hommes avec la même dignité, les mêmes droits et les mêmes opportunités ? Une démocratie ne peut se dire pleinement moderne, juste et égalitaire, tant que les femmes restent sous-représentées dans les lieux de décision, doivent travailler deux fois plus pour être reconnues à la même hauteur que les hommes et continuent de subir le poids des inégalités salariales, des responsabilités familiales, des violences, des stéréotypes et des barrières invisibles.

C'est cela, Madame la présidente, la force de ce moment. *Le Constitutional Review Commission Bill* n'est pas simplement un texte de plus dans l'agenda parlementaire. C'est une invitation à ouvrir les fenêtres de notre maison commune, à faire entrer l'air du temps et à dire avec courage : notre République mérite d'être regardée, réparée, modernisée et renforcée.

Mais cette modernisation ne sera complète que si elle permet aussi de corriger les inégalités persistantes entre les femmes et les hommes dans notre République. Madame la présidente, depuis le 12 mars 1968, notre Constitution accompagne l'histoire de notre pays. Née avec l'indépendance sous l'impulsion de Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, alors Premier ministre, elle a traversé avec nous nos progrès, nos crises, nos contradictions, nos espoirs, tout en posant les bases d'une nation libre, souveraine et résolument tournée vers l'avenir.

58 ans plus tard, c'est le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, Premier ministre, qui vient poursuivre cet héritage en ouvrant une nouvelle page de notre histoire constitutionnelle. L'histoire retiendra que dans les grands moments fondateurs de notre nation, les empreintes du Parti travailliste ont toujours marqué le destin de notre pays.

En 1968, pour donner naissance à une nation libre. En 2026, pour donner un nouveau souffle à notre démocratie. Et ce nouveau souffle doit être celui de l'égalité réelle, car une République qui avance sans ses femmes n'avance qu'à moitié. Une démocratie qui ne donne pas aux femmes pleinement leur place demeure inachevée et déconnectée des réalités de notre temps.

Madame la présidente, une République qui veut inscrire dans sa constitution les valeurs de paix, de justice et de liberté comme boussole nationale, mais surtout, une République qui comprend enfin que la démocratie ne peut pas être complète sans égalité réelle.

L'égalité réelle ne se limite pas au texte de loi. C'est une égalité vécue au quotidien où chaque femme peut accéder aux mêmes responsabilités, à la même reconnaissance et aux mêmes opportunités, sans obstacles liés à son genre et où chaque jeune fille grandit en sachant qu'aucune ambition ne lui est interdite.

Madame la présidente, je prends la parole ce soir dans cette auguste Assemblée en tant que femme. Une femme passionnée de politique. Une femme héritière d'une famille de combats syndicaux et de luttes sociales. Une femme qui n'est pas spectatrice de l'histoire, mais une femme qui choisit de se lever dans l'histoire. Et quand une femme parle de constitution, Madame la présidente, elle ne parle pas seulement d'articles, de procédures ou de mécanismes institutionnels. Elle parle de place. Elle parle de dignité. Elle parle de reconnaissance. Elle parle de justice. Elle parle !

Elle parle de ses portes qu'il a fallu pousser, parfois avec le sourire, parfois avec la patience, parfois avec la colère, mais toujours avec détermination parce que nous, les femmes, nous savons très bien ce que cela veut dire être présente mais invisible.

Nous, les femmes, nous savons ce que veut dire contribuer pleinement, mais être reconnues partiellement. Alors oui, Madame la présidente...

**Madam Speaker:** Dans l'ombre. Dans l'ombre.

**Ms Anquetil:** Dans l'ombre, oui !

Alors, oui, Madame la présidente, ce débat constitutionnel est aussi un débat sur la place des femmes dans notre République. La *Constitutional Review Commission* devra avoir le courage de reconnaître et de corriger concrètement les inégalités entre les femmes et les hommes à Maurice, car moderniser une constitution ne consiste pas seulement à réformer les institutions, mais aussi à garantir une égalité réelle dans les droits, dans les chances, dans la représentation, dans la sécurité, dans le respect et dans l'accès aux responsabilités.

Madame la présidente, au fond, la question est simple. Dans la République de Maurice de demain, qui aura vraiment sa place à la table ? Pas seulement les puissants, pas seulement ceux qui parlent fort, pas seulement ceux qui ont toujours eu l'habitude d'être écoutés, mais aussi celles et ceux qui tiennent le pays debout en silence. Les mères, les travailleuses et

travailleurs, les jeunes, les familles modestes, les personnes vulnérables, les citoyens que l'on applaudit parfois dans les discours, mais que l'on oublie trop souvent dans les décisions. Une constitution digne de ce nom doit parler aussi pour eux.

Madame la présidente, cette réforme parle des droits fondamentaux et c'est essentiel. Le droit à la santé, le droit à l'éducation, le droit à la dignité sociale, le droit à un environnement sain, le droit à l'information, le droit à une justice accessible. Il faut rajouter avec force, le droit à l'égalité réelle entre les femmes et les hommes. Mais soyons clairs, un droit écrit dans une constitution ne doit pas rester une belle phrase pour un discours officiel. Un droit doit changer la vie des gens. Le droit à la santé, ce n'est pas seulement une ligne dans un texte, c'est une mère. C'est une mère qui ne doit pas choisir entre soigner son enfant et payer ses factures.

Le droit à l'éducation, ce n'est pas seulement une promesse. C'est une petite fille dans chaque quartier qui doit grandir avec les mêmes chances, la même confiance et les mêmes rêves qu'un petit garçon. Le droit à l'égalité entre les hommes et femmes, ce n'est pas un slogan, c'est une femme qui n'a pas à s'excuser d'avoir de l'ambition. Le droit à l'environnement sain, ce n'est pas un slogan vert pour décorer un programme. C'est l'eau que nous buvons, c'est l'air que nous respirons, c'est la terre que nous laisserons aux générations futures. Et si la Constitution ne parle pas de la vie réelle des gens, alors elle devient un beau texte enfermé dans une vitrine. Or, une République ne se construit pas dans une vitrine. Elle se construit dans les écoles, dans les hôpitaux, dans les maisons, dans les lieux de travail, dans les quartiers, dans les villages, dans les villes, dans chaque espace où une citoyenne ou un citoyen attend de l'État non pas des promesses, mais du respect.

Madame la présidente, il y a aussi une question profonde : qui sommes-nous comme nation ? Pendant trop longtemps, notre démocratie a porté les marques d'un passé où l'on classait les citoyens dans des cases. Des cases communautaires, des cases héritées de l'histoire, des cases parfois devenues trop petites pour contenir la richesse de notre peuple. Aujourd'hui, la République de Maurice peut avoir le courage de dire avant d'être enfermée dans une catégorie, nous sommes des citoyens. Avant d'être divisée, nous sommes mauriciens. Avant d'être comptée séparément, nous devons apprendre à avancer ensemble. Ce n'est pas effacer notre diversité, c'est lui donner une dignité nouvelle. Ce n'est pas nier nos racines, c'est refuser qu'elles deviennent des murs. Dans ma famille on m'a appris une vérité, une vérité simple. Aucun droit ne tombe du ciel. Les droits, ça se gagne, ça se défend, ça se transmet.

Madame la présidente, je pense ce soir à celles et ceux qui se sont battus avant nous. Je pense aux syndicalistes. Je pense aux travailleurs. Je pense aux femmes qui ont mené des combats sans micro, sans caméra, sans reconnaissance. Je pense à nos grands-mères. Je pense à nos mères. Je pense à ces femmes qui n'avaient pas toujours leur nom dans les livres d'histoire, mais qui ont écrit l'histoire dans la chair de notre pays. Et je crois, je crois qu'elles nous diraient aujourd'hui : 'n'ayez pas peur du changement quand il sert la justice. Ne reculez pas lorsque l'histoire vous demande d'avancer'.

Madame la présidente, une République qui n'écoute plus son peuple devient une institution froide. Une République qui ne protège pas les plus faibles devient une machine administrative. Une République qui ne fait pas de place aux femmes, aux jeunes, aux oubliés, devient une promesse inachevée. Mais surtout, surtout, une République qui ne corrige pas les inégalités entre les femmes et les hommes, reste une République incomplète.

Et moi, Madame la présidente, je ne veux pas d'une République incomplète. Je ne veux pas d'une République qui remercie les femmes dans les discours, mais les oublie dans les décisions. Je ne veux pas d'une République qui célèbre les femmes un jour, une journée dans l'année, mais ne leur garantit pas une égalité réelle tous les jours. Je ne veux pas d'une République où l'égalité reste un idéal lointain. Je veux une République qui ose. Je veux une République qui protège. Je veux une République qui rassemble. Une République qui regarde ses citoyens sans les trier, sans les réduire, sans les enfermer. Oui, cette réforme est ambitieuse. Oui, elle demande du courage. Oui, elle suscitera des débats et heureusement. Car l'histoire ne respecte pas ceux qui hésitent éternellement devant les portes ouvertes.

Madame la présidente, sous le leadership du l'honorable Premier ministre, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, la République de Maurice engage aujourd'hui une réflexion profonde sur ses institutions, ses droits et son avenir démocratique. Je veux saluer l'honorable Premier ministre, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam pour avoir respecté son engagement envers le peuple mauricien. Le *Constitutional Review Commission* aura une mission historique, examiner notre Constitution et formuler des recommandations pour renforcer notre démocratie, moderniser nos institutions et préparer Maurice aux défis du 21<sup>e</sup> siècle.

Je souhaite bien évidemment, bien naturellement, plein de succès à cette commission. Mais au-delà de la commission, au-delà des experts, au-delà des juristes, ce débat doit appartenir au peuple mauricien. Car une Constitution ne doit pas uniquement être le texte des juristes, elle doit aussi devenir la voix du peuple. Une voix qui dit que les femmes ne doivent

plus être invitées à la table après, après que les décisions ont été prises, mais présentes là où l'avenir se construit.

Madame la présidente, pour conclure, ce soir, je crois que nous sommes à un point charnière. Un moment où nous pouvons choisir une République plus inclusive, une République où l'identité ne divise plus, mais rassemble. Une République qui ose se transformer pour être enfin à la hauteur de son peuple.

Vive la démocratie, vive l'égalité réelle, vive la justice sociale, vive la République de Maurice !

Je vous remercie.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, hon. Etwareea!

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

**Mr Lobine rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Debate adjourned accordingly.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Friday 29 May 2026 at 3.30 p.m.

**The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Madam Speaker:** Now, I have one for adjournment. I do not know, yes. Well, I had someone else before. Just one moment. Yes, he reserved. *Ça va*, you will speak afterwards.

Yes, go ahead.

#### MATTERS RAISED

(8.02 p.m.)

#### GRAND SABLE, B28 ROAD – BRIDGE UPGRADE WORKS

**Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle):** Merci, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker, may I raise a matter of concern and draw the attention of the hon. Minister of National Infrastructure to an ongoing project, the upgrading of a bridge along B28 Road, Grand Sable, also known as Ruisseau Paresse Bridge. In fact, this contract, as I am given to understand, Madam Speaker, was awarded to Transinvest Construction Ltd., and the works had already started.

However, for reasons not known to the public, the works have now been brought to a halt for months now, and this without any official communication to that effect. In the interim, only a temporary structure – a fragile temporary structure – has been erected for public use, which does not, unfortunately, provide adequate safety.

Now, numerous concerns have been raised to my two hon. colleague MPs and myself by the inhabitants of the locality, and since we are talking of a bridge along the coastal area, there is a strong fear that in the event of heavy rainfall, the temporary bridge may collapse. The water level may rise rapidly causing potential overflow. Soil, mud and debris may be carried out, carried into, into nearby residential areas, and houses and properties may be flooded and damaged.

Given this state of affairs which poses a, a threat, a potential threat to the safety and health of the inhabitants. I would humbly invite the hon. Minister to kindly look into as a matter of celerity, please. Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, hon. Minister. Urgent matter.

**The Minister of National Infrastructure (Mr G. Guinness):** Madam Speaker, in line with the recommendation of the Land Drainage Authority, the existing bridge opening of approximately 13.54 m<sup>2</sup> is being replaced by a new reinforced concrete structure having an opening area of approximately 15.75 m<sup>2</sup>. The project had undergone some delays and the reasons for the delays are normally new traffic diversion scheme adjacent to existing bridge, obtaining additional land for traffic diversion, major works for traffic diversion in marshy lands, relocation and protection of utility services, MT, CEB and CWA, provision for pedestrian crossing using steel structure.

In view of the substantial unforeseen works associated with the implementation of the temporary diversion, the contractor has submitted claims for additional costs incurred in relation thereto. Following disagreements on the matter, the contractor has suspended construction works on site as from February 26. The RDA maintains that as per the

contractual obligation and conditions of contract, the contractor is not entitled to suspend the works.

The Authority has, therefore, engaged in discussions with the contractor with a view to resume work at the earliest possible. And in the same vein, Madam Speaker, I am calling a meeting between the RDA, the contractor and myself on Thursday, the day after tomorrow, in my office, to sort out the matter and to decide on the way forward.

**Madam Speaker:** Okay. Thank you. Yes, hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

(8.05 p.m.)

### **TAKAMAKA BRIDGE, AVENUE JOHN KENNEDY – WIDENING**

**Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal):** Je vous remercie. Ma requête s'adresse à l'honorable Premier ministre et concerne les travaux d'agrandissement du pont Takamaka à l'avenue John Kennedy. Au-delà du fait que les habitants soient dans le flou concernant la date de fin des travaux et que les petits commerces souffrent de la fermeture de la route, les habitants subissent aussi les énormes embouteillages dus aux travaux. Il avait été convenu qu'une présence policière assurerait le trafic, surtout au niveau de Sadally et de l'avenue John Kennedy elle-même, mais ce n'est malheureusement pas le cas. Donc, je demande à l'honorable Premier ministre de bien vouloir s'assurer d'une présence policière quotidienne, en particulier le matin et l'après-midi, pour soulager les habitants de la circonscription numéro 16. Je vous remercie.

**Madam Speaker:** It is with regard to police.

**The Prime Minister:** Yes. Je remercie l'honorable membre. Je me demandais pourquoi m'adresser quand j'étais ici.

**Madam Speaker:** Oui, moi aussi.

**The Prime Minister:** Mais je comprends maintenant. C'est le trafic et la police.

**Madam Speaker:** La sécurité ; question de sécurité!

**The Prime Minister:** Je vais certainement en parler au Commissaire de police.

**Madam Speaker:** You will do the needful? I am sorry, I could not hear. You will do the needful. Thank you everybody!

*At 8.07 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Friday 29 May 2026 at 3.30 p.m.*

**WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**DRUG TRAFFICKING – ARRESTED/SUSPENDED POLICE OFFICERS**

**(No. B/791) 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 drug trafficking offences, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of Police Officers arrested and/or suspended in connection therewith since 2014 to date, indicating the number thereof convicted and where matters stand regarding the remaining cases.

*(Withdrawn)*

**AIR MAURITIUS LTD – AIRCRAFTS SOLD, PURCHASED & HIRED**

**(No. B/793) 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 aircrafts, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Air Mauritius Ltd., information as to, since 2014 to 2024, the number thereof –

- (a) sold, indicating in each case, the proceeds thereof and time of service at time of sale, and
- (b) purchased and hired, indicating in each case the –
  - (i) cost thereof;
  - (ii) time in service at the time of purchase/hire, and
  - (iii) number of times same was grounded, indicating the reasons and duration thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

**MAURITIUS REVENUE AUTHORITY – VAT – TOTAL REVENUE COLLECTED**

**(No. B/794) Mr E. Juman (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** 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 Value Added Tax, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius

Revenue Authority, information as to the total revenue collected in terms thereof over the period July 2025 to April 2026.

*(Withdrawn)*

**GRA – HORSE RACING INTEGRITY DIVISION – OFFICERS**

**(No. B/795) 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 Horse Racing Integrity Division, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to the number of officers employed thereat, indicating in respect of each post –

- (a) whether it is on a full-time or part-time basis;
- (b) the salaries, allowances, bonuses and any other emoluments and benefits attached thereto.

*(Withdrawn)*

**COVID-19 – PROJECTS DEVELOPMENT FUND – SILVER BANK – SUM  
INVESTED/WITHDRAWN**

**(No. B/796) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the then COVID-19 Projects Development Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the date on which the sum of Rs 2.5 billion, invested at the Silver Bank in 2022, was withdrawn therefrom, indicating the reasons therefor, further indicating why the remaining sum of Rs 500 million was not withdrawn.

*(Withdrawn)*

**CONSTITUENCY NO. 18 – SAFE CITY CAMERAS INSTALLATION –  
ASSESSMENT**

**(No. B/799) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Safe

City Surveillance System Cameras, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof installed in Constituency No. 18, Belle Rose-Quatre Bornes, indicating the –

- (a) locations thereof, and
- (b) whether an assessment has been carried out to identify additional areas requiring surveillance coverage and, if so, indicate whether due consideration will be given thereto.

*(Withdrawn)*

**MAURITIUS BROADCASTING CORPORATION – TELEVISION LICENCE FEE –  
PROPOSED ABOLITION**

**(No. B/801) Mrs 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 proposed abolition of the monthly television licence fee of Rs 150 imposed by the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand, indicating the timeframe set therefor, if any.

*(Withdrawn)*

**POLICE INQUIRIES – OUTSTANDING CASES**

**(No. B/803) Mr E. Juman (First Member for Port-Louis Maritime & Port-Louis East)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to police inquiries, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the current number thereof, indicating the number thereof which have been ongoing for a period exceeding three years.

*(Withdrawn)*

**LOCALLY-MADE CRAFTS & SOUVENIRS – AIRPORT OUTLET**

**(No. B/828) Mr C. Lukeeram (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperative whether, in regard to locally-made crafts and souvenirs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from SME Mauritius Ltd., information as to whether –

- (a) consideration will be given for the facilitation of the re-opening of an outlet in the terminal of the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport for the sale thereof, and
- (b) imported crafts and souvenirs are being sold as locally manufactured goods and, if so, indicate the enforcement measures being envisaged to address same and protect local artisans.

*(Withdrawn)*

**NATIONAL EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION – RODRIGUES’ POVERTY  
ALLEVIATION & SOCIAL PROGRAMMES**

**(No. B/829) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the National Empowerment Foundation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, the list of poverty alleviation and social integration programmes implemented in Rodrigues Island, indicating, in respect of the Income Assistance Scheme, the –

- (a) eligibility criteria therefor;
- (b) frequency of payments thereunder, and
- (c) duration and renewed terms of contracts in connection therewith, if any.

*(Withdrawn)*

**TRIANON JUNCTION-RIPAILLES ROUNDABOUT – SPEED CAMERA  
INSTALLATION**

**(No. B/830) Mr G. P. Venkatasami (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the installation of speed cameras along the M3 Motorway, from the Trianon junction to the Ripailles Roundabout, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, information as to whether a survey has been carried out thereat and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof and, if not, why not.

*(Withdrawn)*

**COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE, CASE NOYALE – RESOURCES &  
OPERATIONS**

(No. B/831) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the Community Health Centre at Case Noyale, he will state the –

- (a) construction year thereof, indicating the number of times same has been renovated;
- (b) medical services provided thereat, indicating the number of staff posted and average weekly attendance of patients thereat, and
- (c) medical supplies stock held thereat at any given time.

*(Withdrawn)*

**CENTRAL WATER AUTHORITY – FINANCIAL SITUATION & LOANS  
REPAYMENT**

(No. B/833) Mr C. Ramkalawon (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Central Water Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the financial situation thereof, giving details of loans entered into and currently being repaid and indicating the amounts owed to contractors as at to date.

*(Withdrawn)*

**ST ANTOINE PLANTERS CO-OPERATIVE TRUST – BOARD COMPOSITION &  
FUNDS AVAILABLE**

(No. B/834) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperative whether, in regard to the St Antoine Planters Co-operative Trust Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) composition thereof;
- (b) amount of funds available thereunder
- (c) projects, programmes and action plan envisaged up to December 2026 for the benefit of the planters, indicating the projects and schemes implemented in Goodlands over the period 2015 to 2024, indicating in each case, the nature, cost and beneficiaries thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

**WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR LOAN SCHEME – APPLICATIONS – TERMS & CONDITIONS**

**(No. B/835) Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the Women Entrepreneur Loan Scheme, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) terms and conditions thereof, and
- (b) number of applications received in the current financial year from women in mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues Island respectively, indicating the number thereof approved and total value of loans disbursed as at to date.

*(Withdrawn)*

**SOUTHERN REGION – SCAVENGING LORRIES – REPAIR & MAINTENANCE**

**(No. B/837) Mr C. Lukeeram (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the scavenging lorries servicing the southern region, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) number thereof currently out of service, indicating the estimated timeframe for the repair and/or replacement thereof and
- (b) immediate and long-term measures being envisaged to ensure the timely maintenance and renewal thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

**FOND DU SAC GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – PRE-PRIMARY UNIT – NEW TOILET BLOCK – CONTRACT**

**(No. B/838) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River)** to ask the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the construction of a new toilet block and upgrading works at the Pre-Primary Unit of the Fond du Sac Government School, he will state the –

- (a) name of the contractor therefor;
- (b) contract value thereof and disbursements made as at to date, and
- (c) delay in the execution thereof, if any, and, if so, indicate the reasons therefor.

*(Withdrawn)*

**SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY – IMPLEMENTATION &  
MEASURES**

**(No. B/839) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle)** asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the elaboration of a Solid Waste Management Strategy, he will state where matters stand, indicating –

- (a) expected implementation date thereof, and
- (b) measures being envisaged to encourage.
  - (i) waste segregation at source, and
  - (ii) composting of market waste by local authorities.

*(Withdrawn)*

**MAURITIUS & RODRIGUES – SHELTERS – APPLICATION PROCEDURES  
FACILITATION**

**(No. B/840) Ms R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the shelters in mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues Island respectively, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) number of children residing thereat by age and gender;
- (b) measures being taken and/or envisaged to promote and facilitate applications for long-term care orders, indicating the provisions made for awareness campaigns, legal aid support, and coordination with the judiciary, and
- (c) funds earmarked and proposed timeframe set for the equitable strengthening of institutional capacity thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

**MAURITIUS & RODRIGUES – MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKERS – SCHEME OF  
DUTIES**

**(No. B/841) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to Medical Social Workers, he will state the –

- (a) number thereof posted in public hospitals in mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues Island, respectively, and
- (b) scheme of duties thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

**STATE LAND – LEASES GRANTED (2015-2024) – CABINET APPROVAL**

**(No. B/842) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the leases of State land granted over the period 2015 to 2024, he will state, in each case, the –

- (a) name/denomination of the leaseholder;
- (b) location and extent thereof;
- (c) purpose therefor;
- (d) duration and annual rental payable therefor, and
- (e) whether prior approval of Cabinet was sought and obtained therefor and, if so, when.

*(Withdrawn)*

**SAMU – OPERATIONAL AMBULANCES – AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME**

**(No. B/843) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the SAMU, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) number of ambulances at the disposal thereof, indicating the –
  - (i) respective acquisition date, and
  - (ii) number thereof currently operational and under repair, if any, respectively, further indicating the total maintenance and repairs costs therefor since January 2025 to date.
- (b) average response time to emergency calls, region-wise, and
- (c) number of ambulances region-wise.

*(Withdrawn)*

**CLUB MED HOTEL, POINTE AUX CANONNIERS – TAXI OPERATORS – TOUR OPERATOR LICENCE REVIEW**

**(No. B/844) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the taxi operators accredited to operate at the Club Med Hotel, in Pointe aux Canonnières, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to whether

consideration will be given for a review of the Tour Operator Licence granted thereto and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **SAINT-CROIX SOCIAL WELFARE CENTRE – NEW BUILDING CONSTRUCTION**

**(No. B/845) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, 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)*

#### **METRO EXPRESS SERVICE – SOUTHERN REGION – EXTENSION**

**(No. B/847) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle)** asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the Metro Express service, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Metro Express Ltd., information as to whether consideration is being given for the extension thereof to the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport and to the southern region of the island.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **CEB SECURITY SERVICES – CONTRACTS AWARDED (2015-MAY 2026)**

**(No. B/848) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the security services, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to the company/companies to which the provision thereof have been awarded since 2015 to date.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **MUNICIPAL CITY COUNCIL OF PORT LOUIS – LORD MAYOR – OVERSEAS MISSION (MAY 2025-MAY 2026)**

**(No. B/850) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the official overseas

mission undertaken by the Lord Mayor of the Municipal City Council of Port Louis since May 2025 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain the list thereof, indicating in each case –

- (a) whether prior approval was sought and obtained therefor;
- (b) the total cost incurred, giving details of the per diem allowances drawn;
- (c) the source of funds therefor, and
- (d) the outcome thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **NCE – EXTENDED PROGRAMME – ENROLLMENT**

**(No. B/851) Mr C. Ramkalawon (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the National Certificate of Education, he will state the number of students of the Extended Programme enrolled thereunder over the period 2021 to date, on a yearly basis, indicating the number thereof who failed same and the number thereof having subsequently opted for technical or vocational training.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **BY-PASS GOODLANDS-ESPACE MAISON/ROUILLARD ROUNDABOUTS – TRAFFIC DECONGESTION MEASURES**

**(No. B/853) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to heavy traffic congestion occurring along the By-Pass from the Goodlands Roundabout to the Espace Maison/Rouillard Roundabout between 7 00 a.m. to 9 00 a.m. and between 3 30 p.m. to 7 00 p.m., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to whether consideration will be given for the construction of –

- (a) an additional lane along same, and
- (b) a separate road stretch after Clos de la Fôret, Daruty, for commuters converging towards the Vale and Petit Raffray.

*(Withdrawn)*

**STATE LAND & PAS GÉOMÉTRIQUES – LEASES GRANTED & RENTAL  
ARREARS**

(No. B/854) Mr E. Juman (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to State Land and *Pas Géométriques*, he will, in each case, state the number of leases granted, indicating the total amount of arrears on rental as at to date and the amount thereof outstanding for a period exceeding three years.

*(Withdrawn)*

**MINOR J.D.M.E. – BASIC INVALIDITY PENSION DISCONTINUATION –  
REASONS & PREVENTIVE MEASURES**

(No. B/855) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the discontinuation of the basic invalidity pension in respect of minor J.D.M.E., he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –
  - (i) reasons therefor, and
  - (ii) date from which the said pension was being paid thereto, and
- (b) state the measures being envisaged to prevent recurrence of similar situations in respect of minors in receipt of social benefits.

*(Withdrawn)*

**CONSTITUENCY NO. 13 – HERITAGE SITES – LOCATION & PRESERVATION**

(No. B/856) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the heritage sites located in Constituency No. 13, Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof, indicating in each case the –

- (a) location, and
- (b) current preservation state, further indicating the –
  - (i) measures taken and/or being envisaged for the proper safeguard and preservation, and
  - (ii) future plans for usage thereof.

**Reply:** I am informed by the National Heritage Fund (NHF) that Constituency No. 13, Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac, possesses a rich historical, cultural and spiritual heritage

with several sites of national significance. As at date, seven sites within the constituency have been designated as National Heritage sites under the NHF Act 2003.

These are –

- (i) Le Batelage, Souillac;
- (ii) Souillac Police Station;
- (iii) Telfair Monument in Souillac;
- (iv) Bain des Negrèsses Bridge, Rivière des Anguilles;
- (v) Maison St-Aubin, Rivière des Anguilles;
- (vi) Château Benarès, and
- (vii) Ganga Talao Spiritual Sanctuary.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that most of these sites are presently being maintained in a satisfactory condition by their respective owners or responsible authorities, except Château Benarès which is vested in the District Council of Savanne and is currently in a dilapidated state due to financial constraints affecting restoration works. For the Souillac Police Station, I am further informed that re-roofing works will shortly be carried out. In addition, regular cleaning and maintenance works are being carried out at sites such as the Telfair Monument, Bain des Negrèsses Bridge and Ganga Talao Spiritual Sanctuary.

With regard to part (b) (i) of the question, the Government is firmly committed to the preservation, safeguarding and promotion of our cultural and national heritage. The broad objective is not only to protect heritage assets for future generations, but also to valorise them as centres of cultural education, national identity, tourism development and local economic empowerment.

In this respect, my Ministry is adopting a more structured and sustainable approach towards heritage preservation. Here, I would like to underline, that for many years, there was no coherent strategy aimed at mobilising public-private partnerships for the restoration, management and promotion of heritage sites across the country.

To address this gap, this Government is now actively working on the implementation of public private partnership (PPP) framework together with a team from “Expertise France” under the project “*Déclaration D’Intention relative à une Coopération en matière de Préservation du Patrimoine Architectural Mauricien*”. In parallel, the Heritage Stewardship Scheme which aims at encouraging greater private sector participation in the restoration, maintenance, management and promotion of our heritage assets, including historical

buildings, museums and cultural sites is currently being finalised by my Ministry and the Economic Development Board (EDB). Once this is approved, heritage sites such as Château Benarès can be included under the scheme.

With regard to part (b) (ii) of the question, I wish to highlight that most of the heritage sites are already being utilised either by public institutions, for spiritual purposes, tourism activities or commercial operations in the private domain. Government, therefore, envisages to work closely with the private sector for the restoration of those sites under the purview of Government. As regards the Ganga Talao Spiritual Sanctuary, it will continue to be a spiritual sanctuary. My Ministry, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, will work on guidelines to regulate development and activities thereat.

#### **NATIONAL PENSION FUND – RODRIGUES’ FISHERMEN – BENEFICIARIES**

**(No. B/857) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to fishermen in Rodrigues Island who contributed in the National Pension Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) number thereof;
- (b) benefits accruing from the said contributions, and
- (c) number thereof who are not in receipt of any pension, indicating the reasons therefor.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS – CANDIDATES’ PERFORMANCE – REMEDIAL MEASURES & RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES**

**(No. B/858) Mr C. Ramkalawon (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil)** 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)*

**OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH (AMENDMENT) ACT 2022 –  
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PHYSICIAN – SHORTAGE**

**(No. A/49) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to the provision of the Occupational Safety and Health (Amendment) Act 2022 for medical surveillance to be undertaken only by occupational health and safety physicians, he will state whether, in view of the limited number of such physicians and the delays occasioned thereby, consideration will be given for the amendment of the said provision to provide that any medical officer duly registered with the Medical Council of Mauritius may also undertake same.

**Reply:** The Occupational Safety and Health Act 2005 has been amended in 2022 to replace ‘Medical Practitioner’ by ‘Occupational Health Physician’ so as to ensure that only medical practitioners who are competent in the field of occupational health or occupational medicine, conduct health surveillance and medical examination of workers.

This amendment proposed by workers’ representatives was approved during a meeting of Advisory Council on Occupational Safety and Health on 13 June 2016. The objective was to ensure that only medical practitioners competent in the field of occupational health or occupational medicine conduct health surveillance and medical examination of workers. This amendment was brought with a view to strengthening protection of workers’ safety and health and is in line with international norms.

I wish to point out that Section 77 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act 2005 (as amended) makes provisions that –

- (a) Every employer shall ensure that an employee who is exposed, or liable to be exposed, to a substance hazardous to health be placed under suitable health surveillance, including medical surveillance, where the exposure to that substance is such that an identifiable occupational disease, as specified in the Fourteenth Schedule.
- (b) Where an employee is exposed to a substance specified in the Ninth Schedule, the employer shall arrange for medical surveillance, free of charge, at intervals of not less than once every six months or at shorter intervals as the Occupational Health Physician may advise or as the Permanent Secretary may determine.

It is worth mentioning that the Republic of Mauritius is envisaging to ratify the Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (C161), with a view to better protect the health of workers against occupational hazards. The amendment made to the Occupational Safety and Health Act 2005, as mentioned above, is aligned with the provisions of the convention and will facilitate the ratification thereof. Paragraph 36 of the Occupational Health Services Recommendation (R171) requires that occupational health service should have sufficient technical personnel with special training and experience in such fields as occupational medicine, occupational hygiene, ergonomics, occupational health nursing and other relevant fields.

According to records available at my Ministry, regular medical examination of employees exposed to a substance specified in the Ninth Schedule, are being carried out by employers. In case employers are failing to comply with this provision of the law, recommendations for compliance are issued to the employers by officers of my Ministry in accordance with the provisions of OSHA 2005.

Under Occupational Safety and Health Act 2005 (as amended), an Occupational Health Physician (OHP) is defined as a registered medical practitioner who is registered with the Medical Council of Mauritius under the Medical Council Act and holds such postgraduate qualification in Occupational Health or Occupational Medicine, as the Medical Council of Mauritius may recognise.

It is to be noted that in 2016 there were 6 Occupational Health Physicians in the Public Service and 4 in the private sector. Presently, as informed by the Medical Council of Mauritius, there are 21 medical practitioners who possess relevant qualifications to practice as Occupational Health Physician in the Republic of Mauritius. Moreover, the Medical Council of Mauritius has also stated that persons holding only a basic qualification in medicine i.e., MBBS, will not have sufficient knowledge to enable them to practice independently as an Occupational Health Physician.

In view of the above, it is not envisaged to amend the existing legislation to allow medical surveillance to be undertaken by any medical officer other than an Occupational Health Physician.

**WORKPLACE BULLYING, HARASSMENT & EXPLOITATION – ONLINE  
WHISTLEBLOWING PLATFORM**

**(No. A/51) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to workplace bullying, harassment and exploitation across various sectors, he will state whether consideration will be given for the implementation of an open-sourced and secured online whistleblowing platform for the anonymous reporting of cases thereof in compliance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

**Reply:** Section 114 of the Workers' Rights Act provides protection against workplace violence, including bullying and harassment.

Any worker, whether local or migrant, who considers himself or herself to be a victim of bullying, harassment or other forms of violence at work, or exploitation can report a complaint to any of the 17 Regional Labour Offices which is closest to their place of work, or to the Special Migrant Workers' Unit of my Ministry in case of migrant workers, to seek redress.

Upon receipt of such complaints, the officers of my Ministry investigate into the matter and seek advice from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to determine whether there is sufficient substance to institute criminal proceedings against the perpetrator(s).

At the level of my Ministry, as at date, there is no open-sourced and secure online whistleblowing platform for anonymous reporting of cases. Consultations will be held with relevant authorities to look into the advisability of such facilities in view of the seriousness of the offence of violence at work.

However, since 30 April 2026, my Ministry has launched the Labour Connect digital platform. The objective of the platform is to improve access to labour services in general, including complaint registration and case management. The platform has a public-facing portal through which workers can submit applications to register their complaints online. Complaints can also be made to report violence at work or labour exploitation by aggrieved workers.

As regards compliance of the Labour Connect digital platform, I am informed that my Ministry has already initiated procedures with the Data Protection Office for registration of designated officers as Data Controllers.