No. 25 of 2026

REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 28 JULY 2026

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(Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)

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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
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Dr. the Hon. Mrs Jyoti Jeetun	Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning
Hon. Patrick Gervais Assirvaden	Minister of Energy and Public Utilities

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MAURITIUS

Eighth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 25 of 2026

Sitting of Tuesday 28 July 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) Certificate of Urgency in respect of the following Bills (In Original):

(i) The Finance Bill (No. XII of 2026); and

(ii) The Economic and Financial Measures (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. XIII of 2026).

(b) The Annual Report and Audited financial statements of the Mauritius Ports Authority for the Financial Year 2024/2025.

(c) Umbrella Line of Credit Agreement between The Government of the Republic of Mauritius and Export- Import Bank of India dated 22 July 2026. (In Original)

(d) Virement Warrant – Quarter 4 (April – June 2026): Nos. 36, 56, 59, 76, 87 to 134, 136 to 176, 178 to 272. (In Original)

(e) Virement (Contingencies) Warrant – Quarter 4 (April – June 2026): No. 14 to 28. (In Original)

(f) Virement Certificate – Quarter 4 (April – June 2026):Programme/ Sub-Programme (Certificates Nos.): 0101(1-2, 4, 4A, 5), 0103(1-3, 6-17), 0104(1), 0105(5-18), 0107(4-9), 0108(6-14), 0109(1-2), 0110(1-4), 0111(1-6), 0112(3-7), 0113(2), 0114(5-8), 0116(1-3), 020103(30), 020104(10, 15, 29), 020103-020104(24), 020105(1-2), 020106(1, 3, 4), 020107(1-2), 0202(1), 0203(1), 0204(2, 4, 5, 6A, 7), 0205(2-3), 0206(1, 2, 4), 0207(1, 4, 5), 0208(13, 23, 25, 28), 0209(3-8), 0220(2-3), 0221(2-6), 023001(2-3, 15), 023001-023008(4-14), 024001(5), 024002(1, 4, 9), 024001-024002(2-3, 6-8), 0250(10-11), 025302(7-8), 0254(4-6, 8-9, 11, 13-18), 0255(2), 0256(34), 0257(1A, 2A, 3A, 4A, 5A), 0401(12), 0402(2, 5, 6, 13), 0403(7-9), 0404(4-6), 0501(2, 7), 0502(3, 5, 8, 10-11), 0504(4, 6, 8-10), 0505(6-7, 9, 11-12, 14), 0601(5, 10), 060201(12), 060301(4, 11), 060302(6, 9), 060401(7), 060402(8), 0605(6, 8-11, 14-16), 0606(7, 12-13), 0701(3, 5-6, 10, 13, 15, 18), 0702(4, 7, 11-12, 14, 16-17), 0703(8-9, 9A), 0801(17A, 31, 53), 0802(15, 17, 28, 33), 0803(19-21, 26, 30, 39, 41, 42, 44, 46, 46A, 47, 48, 50), 0901(1), 1001(8, 9, 11, 15, 18, 20, 26), 1002(2), 100301(13, 16, 23), 100303(7, 10, 12, 25), 100301-100303(17, 19, 24), 1004(14, 21-22, 27), 1101(1, 8-11, 13-14, 16-17), 1201(5), 1202(3), 1203(4), 1301(2-4), 1302(3-4, 4A), 1303(2-4), 1305(2-4), 140201-140202(2), 140201-140203(3), 1401-1404(4), 1401-1402(5), 1405(2-3), 1501(13, 16), 1502(11-12, 14, 17, 18), 1503(15), 1601(7-8, 10-11), 1602(5, 6, 9), 1604(3-7), 1701(6, 8, 11-12), 1702(4-5, 7, 9, 10, 13-14), 1703(7-19), 1801(1, 3, 6), 1802(4), 1803(2), 1804(7), 1805(5), 1901(13), 1902(6, 8, 12, 14), 1903(7), 2001(9), 2101(1-3, 3A), 2102(6-12), 2103(10-14, 14A, 15-18), 2201(21, 25, 27, 32, 37, 41, 45, 47), 2202(56), 2203(19, 20(a), 23, 28-29, 31, 34, 38, 44, 46, 48-49, 53, 59), 2204(20, 24, 30, 33, 35, 39, 42, 51, 54), 2204-2207(26), 2205(55, 58), 2206(36, 50), 2207 (22, 40, 43, 52, 57), 2301(14-16, 19, 21), 2302(5, 11, 17, 20), 2303(12-13, 18, 22), 2401(3-5), 2403(4), 2501(10, 12), 2501-2502(11), 2502(8-9), 2503(2-8), 2504(4, 9-10, 12, 14, 16), 2601(8), 2602(9-11, 16), 2603(14), 2701(4-8). (In Original)

(g) Carry-Over Warrant Nos.1 and 2 of 2026. (In Original)

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

The Annual Reports and Reports of the Director of Audit on the Accounts of the National Parks and Conservation Fund for the years ended 30 June 2022 and 30 June 2023. (In Original)

C. Ministry of Land Transport

The Road Traffic (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 130 of 2026)

D. Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Accounts of the Mauritius Digital Promotion Agency for the year ended 30 June 2024.

E. Ministry of Arts and Culture

(a) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Accounts of the Mauritius Film Development Corporation for the year ended 30 June 2019.

(b) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Accounts of the Conservatoire National de Musique Francois Mitterand Trust Fund for the year ended 30 June 2024.

(c) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Accounts of the Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund for the year ended 30 June 2024.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MR J. K. Y. T. DEATH – FIREARMS & ILLEGAL WEAPONS

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 death of Mr J. K. Y. T. allegedly through the use of a firearm, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand in respect of the Police inquiry initiated thereinto, indicating the number of –

(a) cases involving illegal weapons reported since January 2025 to date, further indicating, in each case, the types thereof and quantity seized, and

(b) firearms legally held in the country as at to date, further indicating the –

  (i) amount of ammunition sold since January 2025 to date, and

  (ii) number of licenses therefor currently active, suspended or revoked.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Yes, Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 11 June of this year, following information received at the Police Main Command and Control Centre, the Curepipe Police proceeded to Chassée D'au Villars, Midlands, where they found the body of Mr J.K.Y.T., aged 40, with an apparent gunshot injury to the left side of the chest.

The area was secured and exhibits were collected by SOCO. A Forensic Science Officer also attended the scene of crime.

An autopsy was conducted on 12 June 2026 and certified that the death was due to a gunshot wound at the chest.

The investigation is being conducted jointly by Central CID Curepipe, CID Eastern Division and the MCIT. In the course of the investigation, 21 persons were interrogated and subsequently allowed to go after their statements had been recorded. CCTV footages from various sources were also retrieved and are being examined.

On 08 July 2026, a communiqué was issued by the Police, inviting the public to come forward with any information in connection with the case. A reward of Rs500,000 has been proposed to any reliable informer. Subsequently, four persons have approached the Police and statements have been recorded from three of them.

The MCIT is continuing investigation into the matter by questioning suspects which is being done on a regular basis, that is, daily, in order to elucidate the matter. The enquiry is ongoing.

I wish to inform the House that a team of foreign investigators is also assisting the Police in this enquiry.

With regard to part (a) of the question, there are four cases involving illegal weapons since January 2025 to 27 July 2026. The details of the cases are as follows –

(a) On 24 July 2026, a case of illegal spreading of noxious substance was reported at Cité Tolle, Mahebourg;

(b) On 23 July 2026, an alleged case of gunshot was reported at Old Grand Port;

(c) On 21 July 2026, an alleged case of sequestration was reported where gunshots were fired at Palma, Quatre Bornes, and

(d) On 22 July 2026, an alleged case of gunshot at Barkly.

Madam Speaker, with regard to parts (b) (i) and (b) (ii) of the question, I am informed that there are 4,287 firearms licenses that were issued up to 27 July 2026.

The issue of firearms licenses is subject to strict eligibility criteria. The licensees should –

(a) successfully complete the prescribed training and pass the required tests;

(b) be at least 18 years of age and citizens of Mauritius;

(c) be a fit and proper person to possess or deal in firearms;

(d) be physically fit and of stable mental condition;

(e) not to be dependent on intoxicating or narcotic substances;

(f) have no conviction under the Firearms Act, and

(g) have no relevant convictions involving firearms, domestic violence, or dangerous drugs, whether in Mauritius or abroad.

With regard to the amount of ammunition sold, I am informed that the Police have given approval to three firearm dealers to import ammunition. On a monthly basis, the firearm dealers are required to provide to the Police their stock on firearms and ammunition. I have requested the Commissioner of Police to review and strengthen the procedures for monitoring the sale of arms and ammunition and ensure a more stringent control.

Madam Speaker, the number of firearm licences currently active is 4,287. There are eight licences which were revoked.

I have also requested the Commissioner of Police to review the criteria for granting of firearm licences. At the same time, the Commissioner of Police will review the list of firearm licences and revoke licences whenever the reasons for such licences were delivered and which are no longer valid.

Madam Speaker, on assuming office in November 2024, we inherited a law and order situation that threatened not only the reputation of the Police, an institution officially recognised as a 'disciplined force' guided by the values of integrity, accountability, and public service, but also the very foundation of public trust in our institutions.

We have embarked on an ambitious plan to reform the Police, with the assistance of foreign expertise and to transform it into a more dynamic service, responsive to the needs of a modern society.

In this context, the forthcoming setting up of the National Crime Agency represents an important institutional reform. The reform represents a pivotal step towards building an integrated, intelligence-led, and multi-agency response to serious and organised crime.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Your first supplementary!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. To start with, allow me to express my condolences to the bereaved family.

Madam Speaker: Yes, put your mic!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, regarding the tragic death of Mr J. K. Y. T. at the hunting grounds in Midlands, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House of the findings of the ballistic report, specifying – if he has the information – the exact type of firearm used?

The Prime Minister: This, Madam Speaker, is part of the inquiry that is ongoing.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether the ballistic evidence points to the use of an unregistered and, therefore, an illegal firearm?

Madam Speaker: Can you reveal that?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am not in a position to give details on this at the moment.

Madam Speaker: At this stage?

The Prime Minister: Of course, the inquiry is ongoing.

Madam Speaker: Of course!

Mr Lesjongard: I do not want to get into the details of the inquiry because the question is with regard to illegal firearms, Madam Speaker. Now, the hon. Prime Minister stated in his answer that the Police offered a financial reward for information leading to the resolution of this case. Can the House be informed, therefore, whether there has been any tangible development or breakthrough directly resulting from this reward initiative, hon. Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: I just said, Madam Speaker, that there are four people who responded to that; three of them gave statements, one of them was not valid.

Mr Lesjongard: Now, because you stated that also, let me ask you this question. You have stated in your reply that you have requested the Commissioner of Police to review and strengthen the procedures for allocation of licences, and also to review the criteria for granting firearm licences. May we know what is the timeframe, hon. Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: I am not quite sure what is the question. I have asked him to review the... because you know what happened in the past when you were in Government. I can give you details.

Mr Lesjongard: I am no more in Government. You are in Government.

The Prime Minister: So, we have to put order. Yes, you destroyed the system; we are correcting the mess you did, and this is why he is relooking at all this.

Madam Speaker: Yes?

Mr Lesjongard: The hon. Prime Minister always refers to the past. We are living in the present, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Si pena kestion, pa poze!*

Mr Lesjongard: Now, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House if the Police Force has conducted physical inspections of all designated hunting grounds, that is, '*chassés*', across the island, including a thorough check of their registries against the National Firearm Database?

The Prime Minister: The Police are doing all this, Madam Speaker. This falls under the Ministry of Agro-Industry, but the Police are coordinating with them.

Mr Lesjongard: I have been informed that no such physical inspections are carried out, Madam Speaker. Now...

The Prime Minister: Do you need evidence?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No, no, Minister!

Mr Lesjongard: If this is the case, when those inspections are carried out, will the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether they keep track of the movement of firearms used for hunting and also detect anomalies regarding the presence or absence of registered members on these hunting grounds?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, how will they be able to follow everybody who is using firearms? They are doing what they are supposed to do. That is, if there is a case, they follow up, they do the investigation as I have just said. But you are suggesting that they should follow everybody who has a firearm; it is impossible.

Mr Lesjongard: I am referring to when the hunting season is on, Madam Speaker. Now, given that we are in the hunting season, can the hon. Prime Minister confirm to the House how he intends then to guarantee the safety of civilians and law-abiding hunters while these sensitive inquiries are ongoing?

The Prime Minister: I do not see how one prevents the other. Inquiry is ongoing and people are going for hunting. These are two different things.

Mr Lesjongard: We still do not know what happened, Madam Speaker. Now, with regard to the incident which occurred at Camp Thorel involving an alleged gunshot, can the hon. Prime Minister confirm to the House if the firearm has been secured and what is the status of that specific investigation?

Madam Speaker: You mean the one used?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, the alleged.

Madam Speaker: The one that was allegedly used?

The Prime Minister: Are you referring to a different case?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, I am referring to a different case.

Madam Speaker: Do not speak from a...

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Of course, you asked a question about one case, now you are asking me about another.

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

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, we are witnessing a disturbing rise in the use of alternative weapons, notably the use of samurai swords and telescopic batons, that is, *matraque télescopique*. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that in recent months, civilians have been arming themselves with these dangerous weapons for self-defence out of fear of being attacked?

The Prime Minister: It is unbelievable, as if we are living in America!

Madam Speaker: Would you know?

The Prime Minister: He should have looked at what happened yesterday. When his leader was questioned, he threatened to kill people with firearms openly.

Mr Jhummun: *Kitfwa to pa pou kwar sa kou la.*

Mr Assirvaden: *Touy dimounn!*

The Prime Minister: *Touy dimounn!* And now he is telling me all this.

Ms Anquetil: *Quel culot!*

Mr Mohamed: The henchman of the leader.

Madam Speaker: No comments!

Mr Mohamed: Your people!

Madam Speaker: Come with your next question, please. Otherwise...

Mr Mohamed: Your bodyguard!

Mr Assirvaden: *Zot inn pran lalwa dan zot lame!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: This is not relevant at all, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: Threatening a journalist and it is not relevant?

Law and Order!

Mr Lesjongard: Now, the Police Force is overwhelmed with the rise in crime in this country. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister what concrete measures have been put in place by the Commissioner of Police to prevent a situation where victims are forced to defend themselves and they end up on the accusation's bench, Madam Speaker?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition should know, section 71(3) of the Constitution is clear. I give a general guidance, general directions...

Madam Speaker: To the Police?

The Prime Minister: … policy to the Commissioner of Police. I do not tell him: "Go and do this", "Go and do that". I cannot do that.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhummun: *Dan lepok Kistnen ki ti fer sa…*

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, the fear is real in this country. The population no longer trusts the State to protect them, unfortunately.

Madam Speaker: You are making...

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, we often hear concerns...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon...

(Interruptions)

Oh! Everybody!

Mr Lesjongard: ...regarding the use of tasers.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: *Chup Chap!*

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm, firstly, whether it is still under consideration for Police Officers to be equipped with tasers, Madam Speaker?

The Prime Minister: Just to answer that first part, I have got three, I can table it. What happened during your mandate, where firearms were openly being sold. People who were going to tell the Police, they were being arrested.

- '*Plusieurs vols d'armes à feu en 24 heures*' in May 2022;
- '*des pièces d'armes à feu saisies, enquête initiée pour importation illégale*' – September 2022;
- June 2016 – '*Armes à feu: les autorités désarmées*?'

This is what was happening under the previous regime. This is what we are correcting. This is why we are coming with this new institution that is called the National Crime Agency to put order in all those things.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Some people are asking for supplementaries. Do you have any?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, I have quite a few questions. If you want to give them, then it is okay, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Dr. Aumeer!

An hon. Member: *To pena kestion*! *To pe fer sanblan to ena kestion*!

Madam Speaker: Dr. Aumeer, yes.

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister if he will recommend to the Commissioner of Police or Government for the establishment of a centralised electronic registry, enabling real-time monitoring of firearm licences, renewals, transfers, losses, and revocations, since, as he just mentioned, in the last Government, these were done openly – selling arms to the public? Thank you.

The Prime Minister: This is what I said earlier, arms were being sold openly. People were threatened yesterday. Yesterday, in the public, his leader threatened people with firearms, to kill people. This is what they were doing.

Madam Speaker: One moment. The hon. Member asked you whether you are agreeable. Can you say that again? To setting up…

The Prime Minister: Yes, of course, I am agreeable. I believe that the Police must be doing this, but I will check.

Madam Speaker: Yes, I have hon. A. Duval first.

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Referring to the inquiry in this case, more particularly the reward money that has been offered, which I think, Madam Speaker, is the right thing where witnesses do not come forward. Drawing on that, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will now consider, in another cold case, the case of Nadine Dantier – in that case too, there were no witnesses brought forward, and the family has been looking to offer a reward – to extend the same mechanism for the cold case of Nadine Dantier?

Madam Speaker: He is talking of a cold case.

The Prime Minister: I believe this was done, but I will have to check. I cannot say for sure. But I can say, for this case, I reopened the case, if you remember, with the help of the external Police Officers. This is ongoing. The problem is that a lot of the evidence have disappeared. So, that is why it is taking so long.

(Interruptions)

Mr A. Duval: For a reward…

Madam Speaker: Yes, okay. Wait for a while! Wait for a while! Yes!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, I take note that you have allowed the hon. Prime Minister to quote from newspapers today in this House.

Madam Speaker: Oh, okay!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware of a disturbing practice, where many persons holding licences for hunting do not actively engage in the sport and yet, continue to legally acquire ammunition year after year?

The Prime Minister: I can only inquire because if they have applied for a firearm licence for hunting and they do not go hunting, it is a choice that they make. Maybe they will go and hunt in one year's time.

Mr Lesjongard: Then we may have an issue, Madam Speaker.

Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm whether there are individuals in this country, currently exploiting this practice to hold artillery and ammunition, and whether any of these individuals are suspects in ongoing inquiries related to drug cartels in the country?

Madam Speaker: Now, we are talking of hoarding.

The Prime Minister: I explained just now, Madam Speaker, in my answer that there are strict criteria for firearm licences. I gave seven criteria. These are the criteria that they have to stick to.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Mr Beechook! Oh, it is already done. Okay.

Mr Lesjongard: Can I?

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: You are on the same wavelength, it seems.

Mr Lesjongard: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware of the illegal online sale of restricted or prohibited firearms on social media platforms? And can he inform the House what actions are being taken by the Police Cybercrime Unit to address same?

The Prime Minister: The Police are aware of this, Madam Speaker, and they are looking into that matter. This is a complex situation because they are doing it through internet. This is also being looked into.

Mr Lesjongard: One last question!

Madam Speaker: Yes, last!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether consideration will be given to establishing a controlled firing range facility to allow legal firearm permit holders to undergo mandatory firearm safety and shooting training?

The Prime Minister: That they have to do. These are part of the conditions for them to obtain a firearm licence.

Mr Lesjongard: But we do not have such facility.

The Prime Minister: They do have.

Madam Speaker: Okay, we are done with the question. Thank you, everybody.

Now, we go to PMQT!

I am calling on hon. Baboolall. Yes!

STATE AGE PENSION – MAURITIAN ABROAD – RESIDENCY CRITERION

(No. B/1144) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) 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 State Age Pension, he will state the estimated number of Mauritian citizens currently residing or working abroad who would be rendered ineligible therefor with the application of the criteria effective as from 01 January 2027, whereby eligibility will be conditional upon a person having resided in Mauritius for an aggregate period of at least 15 years since attaining the age of 40, including the three years immediately preceding the claim.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, as the House knows, the State Age Pension will replace the Basic Retirement Pension as from 01 January 2027. The residency criterion to be eligible for the State Age Pension is also being reviewed as from that date.

Under the Basic Retirement Pension scheme, the current residency criterion is as follows –

(a) a Mauritian citizen under the age of 70 who is residing or working abroad qualifies for the Basic Retirement Pension if he or she has resided in Mauritius for an aggregate period of at least 12 years since attaining the age of 18. This residency criterion will no longer apply for a Mauritian citizen who reaches the age of 70, that is, he decides to stay there and come to retire here;

(b) as regards a non-citizen, the payment of the Basic Retirement Pension is conditional upon the latter having resided in Mauritius for at least 15 years in aggregate since his fortieth birthday, three of those 15 years being immediately before his claim; that is, with the Basic Retirement Pension.

Madam Speaker, the residency criterion is being improved through an amendment in the Finance Bill 2026. A person will now become eligible to the State Age Pension if he or she has resided in Mauritius –

(1) for an aggregate period of at least 15 years since attaining the age of 40, and

(2) for an aggregate of 12 months in the last 3 years preceding his claim for the pension.

As the State Age Pension, like the Basic Retirement Pension, is a non-contributory pension financed entirely from public funds, the change in the residency criterion will ensure that public funds are redistributed in a fair manner.

This change will ensure that the State Age Pension goes to people who have contributed to the development of our country and society and its tax system over their working lives rather than to those who have chosen to work abroad all their lives and now opt to come back to retire in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, let me reassure the pensioners who are already drawing the Basic Retirement Pension under the current residency criterion that the change will not apply to them. The new residency criterion will apply only to persons making their application for the State Age Pension as from 01 January 2027.

As regards the estimated number of persons who would become ineligible to the State Age Pension, this can only be determined when a claim is made, based on the person's residency record. It is, therefore, not possible at this stage, to determine the number of Mauritian citizens currently residing or working abroad who may not satisfy the revised residency condition.

Madam Speaker: Yes, please.

Mr Baboolall: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the hon. Prime Minister for his answer. After the Means Test and the number plate measure that were suspended, this is the third measure that is being revisited by the Government.

Madam Speaker: You are not putting a question!

Mr Baboolall: Given that the Finance Bill actual residency requirement, an aggregate of 12 months within the last three years, differs materially from what was announced in the Budget Annex, can the Prime Minister inform the House why this discrepancy was allowed to stand unclarified for so long?

The Prime Minister: It is not that it was allowed to stand for so long. It is the fact that we do not want people who have stayed abroad, worked abroad up to the age of retirement, then suddenly come to Mauritius to retire and benefit from the same pension scheme. That is the reason.

Madam Speaker: Yes, your second!

Mr Baboolall: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether any actuarial or fiscal impact assessment was carried out before setting the 15-year threshold? And if so, will the hon. Prime Minister table it for the benefit of the House?

The Prime Minister: The people who are working on the pension; this was a policy decision. It is not by the experts. We decided that somebody who has stayed abroad, worked abroad and then comes to retire in Mauritius should not be entitled to that pension, when he retires. He has never paid taxes here, never did anything for Mauritius. He has not improved anything here. That is the reason. It is a policy decision.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Next question!

Hon. Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac!

DRUG TRAFFICKING OFFENCES – POLICE OFFICERS ARRESTED AND/OR SUSPENDED (2014-2026)

(No. B/1145) 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.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that from 01 January 2014 to 27 July 2026, 23 Police Officers were arrested and interdicted from duty in connection with 18 cases of drug trafficking. The outcome of these cases is as follows –

(i) In 2014, a case was established against two Police Officers. One of the Police Officers passed away during the enquiry and the second one was sentenced on 31 May 2019 to a penal servitude of 15 years and a fine of Rs10,000.

(ii) In 2016, in one case, three Police Officers were arrested. Again, one of them passed away during the enquiry, the second one is awaiting judgement from the Supreme Court since 2019, and the third one was sentenced to 35 years of penal servitude and a fine of Rs150,000. However, the latter has lodged an application for leave to appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

(iii) In 2017, one case was registered involving one Police Officer who was sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment and a fine of Rs200,000 in November 2023.

(iv) In 2019, one Police Officer was arrested and advice from the Office of Director of Public Prosecutions is awaited since May 2023.

(v) In 2021, two cases were registered, each involving one Police Officer. The first Police Officer was sentenced to 8 years' penal servitude and a fine of Rs50,000 in March 2025 while the other officer is awaiting trial.

(vi) In 2022, two cases were registered, each involving one Police Officer. For the first Police Officer, a case has been lodged before the Assizes and the ruling has been reserved following arguments by counsels on 06 February 2026. The case of the second Police officer is still under enquiry.

(vii) In 2023, one case was registered, involving one Police Officer and the case is under enquiry.

(viii) In 2024, four cases were registered, each involving one Police Officer. The case of one of the Police Officers has been lodged before the Supreme Court in

January of this year and came for mention on 23 June of this year. The cases of the remaining three officers are still under enquiry.

(ix) In 2026, five cases were registered involving seven Police Officers and these cases are also under enquiry.

I should add, Madam Speaker, that Government will be reviewing the policy regarding payment of full salary to Public Officers under interdiction.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, one question!

Mr Jhummun: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House what was done and what will be done to deter police Officers from being engaged in such illegal, illicit or immoral activities?

The Prime Minister: I have mentioned how they were sentenced to long periods, 35 years in one case, I think I said, and plus the fines. But after we have the National Crime Agency, if we feel there is a need to strengthen this, it will be strengthened. But the bad apples will be sorted out.

Madam Speaker: Yes. Alright?

Next question, Mr Etwareea!

(Interruptions)

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker!

Madam Speaker: I am sorry. I am sorry. It is not…

Mr A. Duval: May I?

Madam Speaker: I did not see you. Alright.

Mr A. Duval: Thank you.

Madam Speaker: I have just received a note. That is why.

Mr A. Duval: No, no. No problem.

Madam Speaker, I spoke about that the last time. I will ask the hon. Prime Minister with regard to what he has just stated: reviewing the payment to interdicted Police Officer. I will ask the hon. Prime Minister to consider setting up a specialised tribunal for cases of offences on the job, like in any other profession where you are employed and you contradict your terms of employment, you are taken to task regardless of the penal prosecution that may come. Whether he will consider like other countries have done – setting up a specialised tribunal and taking them to task?

Madam Speaker: We have got the question.

Mr A. Duval: Because I would like to remind the hon. Prime Minister that according to the Director of Audit, Rs400 million is spent on payment of interdicted officers – many of whom, for drug offences on the job.

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

The Prime Minister: This is why I said we are reviewing this policy that they should not be allowed to take their full pay while they are waiting for years for the case to come to Court. This, I will have to talk to the members of the Judiciary to see whether they are prepared to have the tribunal. Already, they complain that there is a long list and it is difficult. This is why when I answered the question, you saw, for example, when a case is investigated and sent to court, it takes a long time.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Third Member for Grand Baie and Poudre d'Or!

MARITIME DEFENCE & SECURITY AGREEMENTS – SUBSTANCE & OBJECTIVES – RESOURCES EXPLORATION/EXPLOITATION

(No. B/1146) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the bilateral and plurilateral Maritime Defence and Security Agreements other than the recently signed Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement with the United States of America, which are currently in force or under negotiation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

(a) the substance and objectives thereof, and

(b) whether same provide for, or otherwise relate to, the exploration or exploitation of oil, gas or any other natural resources within the Exclusive Economic Zone of Mauritius.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that Mauritius has concluded 12 bilateral and plurilateral maritime defence and security agreements and Memoranda of Understanding with friendly countries and regional organisations. Collectively, these agreements provide the legal framework for co-operation in areas such as maritime security and maritime domain awareness with a view to enhancing the protection of our Exclusive Economic Zone.

The following agreements are currently in force –

(i) Memorandum of Understanding among Governments of Member States of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) on the Coordination and Cooperation of Search and Rescue in the Indian Ocean Region;

(ii) Regional Agreement on the Coordination of Operations at Sea in the Western Indian Ocean;

(iii) Agreement for the Setting up of a Regional Maritime Information Exchange and Sharing Mechanism in the Western Indian Ocean Region;

(iv) An Agreement between the Government of the Republic of France and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius in the Matter of Search and Rescue at Sea;

(v) Technical Agreement between the Mauritius Police Force and the French Armed Forces in the Southern Indian Ocean (FAZSOI);

(vi) Djibouti Code of Conduct;

(vii) Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and the Government of the French Republic on Defence Cooperation;

(viii) Agreement between the Government of the Republic of South Africa and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius for the Coordination of Search and Rescue Services;

(ix) Technical Agreement on Sharing White Shipping Information between the Indian Navy and the Mauritius Police Force;

(x) Lettre d'intention relative à l'établissement d'un jumelage entre deux unités des forces de Police mauriciennes et des Forces armées françaises ;

(xi) Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Mauritius and the Government of India on the improvements of sea and air transportation facilities at Agalega, which is part of the Republic of Mauritius, and

(xii) State Partnership Program between Mauritius Police Force and the New Mexico National Guard of the United States of America.

Madam Speaker, the broad objectives of the agreements are to –

(a) facilitate the timely exchange of maritime information and intelligence;

(b) enhance cooperation in combating piracy, armed robbery at sea, illicit trafficking, terrorism and other forms of transnational organisational crime;

(c) promote coordinated maritime operations, search and rescue activities and humanitarian assistance, where appropriate;

(d) strengthen interoperability through joint training, exercises, technical assistance and capacity building, and

(e) strengthen preparedness and response capabilities for natural disasters and major emergencies.

Furthermore, there is one agreement currently under consideration with the United States of America for the strengthening of maritime operations to combat transnational organised crimes.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that none of the defence and security agreements currently in force or under consideration, provides for, or otherwise relates to, the exploration or exploitation of oil, gas or any other natural resources within the Exclusive Economic Zone of Mauritius.

Madam Speaker: Yes, go ahead!

Mr Etwareea: I thank the hon. Prime Minister for his answer. Can the hon. Prime Minister give some elements of information regarding the choice of a French company, Viridien, which was announced last Friday that can eventually lead to the discovery of raw materials in the Indian Ocean?

The Prime Minister: None of these agreements pertain to looking for these petroleum products or whatever minerals might be in our region. These agreements do not concern this. But although, I should add, the joint agreement between us and the Seychelles for the Mascarene Plateau; we have included this.

Madam Speaker: Okay, next question! Hon. Third Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle, yes?

BEAU BASSIN CENTRAL PRISON – ALLEGED UNLAWFUL ACTS – DETAINEES' VIDEO

(No. B/1147) 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 recent circulation on social media of a video allegedly showing some detainees committing unlawful acts within the precincts of the Central Prison, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to whether an inquiry has been initiated thereinto and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof and actions, if any, taken in relation thereto.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that, on Friday 17 July 2026, the Mauritius Prison Service took cognizance of a video and two photographs circulating on the social media allegedly depicting illicit activities within the Beau Bassin Central Prison.

On the same day, the Prison Intelligence Unit carried out an internal assessment and reported the following –

(i) a mobile phone, without a SIM card, was secured from a bin within the Central Prison;

(ii) a video and two photographs circulating on the social media were found on that device, and

(iii) 10 persons appearing in the video and photographs were identified as prisoners of the Beau Bassin Central Prison.

On 20 July 2026, the matter was reported to the Police and an investigation was initiated by the Central Crime Investigation Department. The mobile phone seized by the Mauritius Prison Service was secured by the Police for investigation purposes. The Police IT Unit is carrying out forensic examination of the mobile phone. On 23 July 2026, the Police has contacted the Prisons Services for the retrieval of CCTV footage. The Police inquiry is ongoing.

I am informed that the Commissioner of Prisons has transferred detainees B.J.H.R. and P.C. to Phoenix Prison and P.L.F. to Eastern High Security Prison. The remaining seven detainees were relocated to different association yards and segregation units at the Central Prison of Beau Bassin.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr Ramdass: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware of an alleged common practice in prison compounds called 'pelting', which constitutes the throwing by professionals of prohibited and illicit items such as mobile phones, drugs, cigarettes, etc. into the prison compounds?

The Prime Minister: Yes, in fact, this question was asked before. Unfortunately, we have to go through a process of tender, and this is what delays a lot of things. I personally did not think there was a need for tender in that case because it is a simple thing that we put for the pelting but that is the procedure.

Madam Speaker: Yes, second question!

Mr Ramdass: Thank you. Insofar as the existence of prohibited items in prisons are concerned, surely the carrying out of regular thorough searches will bring this to a stop or at least reduce it. Would the hon. Prime Minister consider the possibility of taking up the matter with the Commissioner of Prisons so that regular thorough searches are carried out within the prison compounds?

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: He is well aware of this. He is a new Commissioner of Prisons, relatively new. He says they do this but in spite of this, we see the results, which is why we need to have a big reform.

Madam Speaker: Okay, next question has been withdrawn: B/1148. So, now we go to hon. Second Member for Rodrigues!

MAURITIUS POLICE FORCE – POLICE OFFICERS – POST & VACANCIES STATISTICS

(No. B/1148) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Mauritius Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the –

(a) number of –

(i) Police Officers currently in post, gender-wise, indicating the number thereof posted in each department/unit, and

(ii) existing vacancies, grade-wise

(b) ratio of Police Officers to the total population, indicating –

(i) how same compares with international norms, and

(ii) whether a data-driven deployment system is in place, particularly, for the specialised units thereof.

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUES – POLICE OFFICERS – CAPACITY BUILDING & TRAINING

(No. B/1149) 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 capacity building and training to be dispensed by INTERPOL and UNIPOL to members of the Mauritius Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether Police Officers posted in Rodrigues Island will benefit therefrom.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, Police Officers posted in Rodrigues form an integral part of the Mauritius Police Force. Accordingly, these officers are fully integrated into the training and professional development framework of the Mauritius Police Force. They benefit from the same operational support, training and professional development opportunities as other members of the Force.

I am informed, Madam Speaker, by the Commissioner of Police that Police Officers posted in Rodrigues are already benefitting from INTERPOL supported training programmes which are conducted in Mauritius. Besides, for the first time INTERPOL conducted specific training in Rodrigues from 06 to 10 July of this year. Two INTERPOL Criminal Intelligence Officers assisted by officers of INTERPOL National Central Bureau, conducted a Maritime Investigations Course in Rodrigues, under the European Union-Funded Safe Seas for Africa and Port Security Project. 20 participants benefited from the training, including 14 Police Officers from Rodrigues.

I am further informed that another training course on criminal analysis is scheduled to take place from 31 August to 04 September 2026. It will take place in Rodrigues by INTERPOL and 20 Police Officers have been designated to participate.

I also wish to inform the House that previously, Rodrigues Island was not connected to INTERPOL Global Secure Police Communication System and had to rely on the National Central Bureau in Port Louis. Since August 2025, Rodrigues Island has a direct access to the INTERPOL Database on a 24-hour basis, and can promptly exchange crucial information. With regard to UNIPOL, I am informed that the Mauritius Police Force has never dealt with this organisation.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr François: Just one supplementary, Madam Speaker.

Thank you, hon. Prime Minister for this answer. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister, whether this will be a continuous and standard practice for INTERPOL training to be always conducted in Rodrigues as from now on?

The Prime Minister: Yes, this is a new approach that we are dealing and it will continue.

Madam Speaker: Okay, next question. Hon. First Member for Montagne Blanche and Grand River South East!

NATIONAL ECONOMY – STAGFLATION RISKS – COUNTERMEASURES

(No. B/1150) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the national economy, he will state whether Government has taken cognisance of the risks of stagflation and, if so, indicate the –

(a) measures envisaged to address the contraction in growth in sectors such as accommodation, food services and construction, and

(b) specific counter-cyclical measures envisaged, other than through the Price Stabilisation Fund, to concurrently address the increase in cost-of-living and the slowdown in productive investment.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, stagflation is generally defined as an economic situation where three conditions occur at the same time, namely –

1. stagnant or declining economic growth;
2. high and persistent inflation, and
3. rising unemployment.

We are not experiencing stagflation. Our economy continues to grow at a reasonable rate of 3%, despite the highly uncertain and challenging global economic environment. Inflation has increased recently following the outbreak of the war in the Middle East, but it remains well below the 10.8% and 7% levels recorded in 2022 and 2023. As for unemployment, it continues its downward trend, falling from a peak of 9.2% in 2020 to 5.7% in 2025. Unemployment for both men and women is declining.

However, because of the geopolitical conflicts around the world, there are real risks that our economic growth could slow down, inflation could rise and that job creation could be adversely affected.

That is why, Madam Speaker, the reforms we are doing are necessary and policy decisions must be taken proactively in the light of evolving international economic developments.

With regard to part (a) of the question, we have taken various measures to mitigate the negative impact of such external developments. Furthermore, a number of measures have been announced in the 2026-2027 Budget Speech to give a boost to economic activities. These include –

1. building an AI-driven economy through the development of an AI and Digital Finance Special Economic Zone at Côte d'Or, the adoption of artificial intelligence across schools, businesses and public services;
2. supporting startups and SMEs through improved access to finance, business support services, digital transformation, and innovation incentives;
3. modernising the manufacturing sector by encouraging industrial upgrading, improving productivity, promoting digital technologies adoption, and supporting higher value-added manufacturing activities;

4. developing the blue economy by expanding fisheries, aquaculture, marine biotechnology, and other ocean-based economic activities;

5. accelerating the renewable energy transition;

6. promoting innovation and research to support higher productivity and economic diversification;

7. expanding financial services and FinTech by promoting digital finance, FinTech innovation, and new financial technologies, and

8. addressing labour shortages and skills mismatches by attracting foreign talent, expediting work permit processing, and strengthening training and skills development.

Madam Speaker, as regards the accommodation and food services sector, it is expected to record positive growth this year, with the number of tourist arrivals forecasted to reach around 1.47 million, despite the challenges arising from the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. To support the sector, Government is taking additional measures to expand air connectivity and increase seat capacity, including three additional weekly flights by Turkish Airlines and the introduction of three weekly Ethiopian Airlines flights, complementing Emirates' existing twice-daily services. I wish also to inform the House that I will be chairing a committee to review our air access policy.

Greater emphasis will also be laid on showcasing Mauritius' unique culture, sustainability initiatives, eco-tourism experiences, inland attractions and the authentic Mauritian way of life. Furthermore, a digital E-Visa system will be put in place to facilitate pre-travel visa applications, reduce waiting times at the arrival terminal, and enhance the overall travel experience.

As for the construction industry, it is expected to pick up gradually with the implementation of a number of major infrastructure projects such as the M4 Motorway, the Phase 2 of the Ring Road project, the Island Container Terminal, the Special Economic Zone at Côte d'Or, and the Rivière des Anguilles Dam, as well as major private projects in the renewable energy and other emerging sectors.

With regard to part (b) of the question, as announced in the Budget Speech, an additional amount of Rs2 billion has been provided under the Price Stabilisation Fund to subsidise essential products for the fiscal year of 2026-2027. The subsidy has also been extended to cover additional consumer goods.

Over and above the Price Stabilisation Fund, Government is implementing a range of additional initiatives to mitigate the impact of the rising cost of living, which is largely driven by external factors. These include –

(1) the introduction of a new legislation to crack down on abusive pricing as well as a clear framework for the parallel imports which are being worked out by the Ministry of Commerce;

(2) bulk-purchase of essential consumer goods by the STC, which will be sold with capped profit margins;

(3) review of the framework for the retail sector including trade fairs, shopping mall practices and hawker issue;

(4) introduction of a new e-commerce legal framework to regulate online commercial activities, strengthen consumer safeguards and improve enforcement in the digital marketplace, and

(5) increasing the threshold for eligibility under the SRM system from Rs14,000 to Rs16,400 as from 01 July 2026 and to Rs17,500 as from 01 July 2027.

Through these policy changes, Government aims to cushion the impact of global price increases on households and ensure that the cost-of-living challenge is addressed in a sustainable and responsible manner.

With regard to the productive investment, as I mentioned earlier, a number of major infrastructure projects will be implemented in the coming years to strengthen the country's productive capacity. In addition, a new Business Facilitation Bill will be introduced in the National Assembly to streamline procedures and reduce administrative burdens, creating wider productive investment opportunities for local and foreign entrepreneurs, particularly in the renewable energy sector, the blue economy and AI technologies.

Madam Speaker, Government remains committed to achieving higher, inclusive and sustainable growth while addressing cost-of-living pressures. By implementing appropriate support measures, advancing productivity reforms and promoting investment in key productive sectors, Government will continue to strengthen economic resilience, protect household purchasing power and build a more competitive economy.

Madam Speaker: Do you have a question? Yes.

Mr Baboolall: I thank the hon. Prime Minister for his answer. Can the hon. Prime Minister state to the House whether Government intends to revise its debt reduction strategy in light of the credit rating agencies' warning, that current fiscal adjustments are insufficient to meaningful lower public debt, and if so, on what timeline?

The Prime Minister: This is what we tried to do when we had to back down on certain things because people were complaining, including the Opposition. That is what we have done. We have to pay the price of what we do.

Madam Speaker: Okay. We will not be able to reach another question. In any case, B/1151 has been transferred to be replied by the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning, right? Yes.

Now, I have to announce – I have to read what is being sent to me. I will look at this in a while; I cannot deal with everything.

The Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/1155, B/1157, B/1159, B/1160, B/1161, B/1164, and B/1166.

Let me try and see if I can work out this.

PQ B/1165, addressed to hon. Prime Minister, could be withdrawn. Okay, so, we add B/1165. *Il faut écrire un peu mieux la prochaine fois*. *Un peu de* penmanship *ne fait pas de mal*. Thank you very much.

Now, we go to questions to Ministers. We have 35 minutes for that.

I am calling on hon. Fourth Member for Rodrigues, Mr Edouard!

MAURITIUS- RODRIGUES – IMPORT PERMIT REQUIREMENTS – GOODS & CEMENT

(No. B/1167) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the requirement for an import permit for the transfer of goods, including cement, from mainland Mauritius to Rodrigues Island, he will state the legal and administrative justifications therefor, indicating whether, with a view to facilitating internal trade between mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues Island, consideration will be given for a review thereof.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Madam Speaker, there is no requirement for any import or export permit for Rodrigues Island, given that it forms part of the Republic of Mauritius.

I am informed that the Ministry of Health and Wellness does not issue any permit for the export of food items to Rodrigues because the food stocks are purchased from local suppliers in Mauritius, and these food stocks are already verified and cleared by the Public Health Food Inspectorate Division at the port of entry upon import by the said suppliers from abroad.

I am also informed that for the transfer of cement to Rodrigues, no health certificate is required as it is not listed under the Dangerous Chemicals Control Act.

As regards the movement of agricultural materials and agricultural produce between Mauritius and Rodrigues, I am informed by the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries that such movements are subject to phytosanitary controls.

Madam Speaker: I am sorry. I am so sorry. I am forever being solicited. Yes, please.

Mr Edouard: Yes, thank you. I thank the hon. Minister for his reply. May I ask the hon. Minister, can individuals who are facing problems report to the Ministry, mainly concerning cement? There are individuals, other than construction companies, who are facing problems to ship cement to Rodrigues.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Well, I am informed that there is no requirement for import permit. However, there is an issue with one company which is asking to import at a subsidised rate. I understand that the Rodrigues Subsidy Account Management Committee is working on it. They are considering it, and they will let them know.

Madam Speaker: Okay now? Right.

Let's call hon. Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue, Mr Caserne!

BOIS MARCHAND – PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLE (TAXI) LICENCE – APPLICATIONS

(No. B/1168) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the Public Service Vehicle (Taxi) License, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to where matters stand as to the invitation for applications for the issue thereof from the residents of Bois Marchand.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the NLTA that further to my reply to PQ B/137 at the Sitting of 24 March 2026, appropriate actions have been initiated for the issue of additional Public Service Vehicle Licences for taxi operators at Bois Marchand. Indeed, a survey carried out on 25 March 2026, confirmed that Bois Marchand, having a population of approximately 2,500 inhabitants, remained largely dependent on public transport, given the relatively low level of private car ownership. One taxi car is licensed to operate from the locality at the moment and this is manifestly inadequate to meet the requirements having regard to the said population figure.

Based on the survey findings, the level of existing bus services and the generally applicable rule of thumb of one taxi per 600 inhabitants, the NLTA has determined that there is a need for the provision of three additional taxi licences in the locality.

I am further informed by the NLTA that a communiqué, inviting applications from residents of Bois Marchand, which is a requirement, will be issued by mid of August in a few days' time.

Madam Speaker, as I informed in my reply to PQ B/1101 last Tuesday, the NLTA has an acute shortage of officers in the inspectorate cadre, with only 15 Inspectors in post against an establishment of 45, and this is not our fault. This has been ongoing for many years. Hence, it is taking time to resolve issues. I am, however, given to understand that the recruitment exercise by the PSC is nearing completion and that the first batch of Inspectors is expected to join the NLTA in the coming weeks.

Pending the filling of all vacancies, the NLTA has been instructed to consider the possibility of performance of overtime work by the Inspectorate Cadre, especially after office hours, at times when taxis are reportedly scarce on our roads and when they are needed the most, with a view to expediting surveys and inquiries for the issue of licences island-wide, which is a common request for a lot of my colleagues.

Madam Speaker, to end, up to now, some 7,802 taxis have been licensed by the NLTA. However, it appears that a significant number of them do not provide the required service despite they are benefiting a 100% duty-free concession on the purchase of cars, 50% road tax regime, and a one-off grant of Rs100,000, which has been the practice for many years already. But still, they do not provide service as they should.

The disciplinary committee of the NLTA has assured me that they are adopting a harsher approach and that there will be no leniency of tolerating those who do not provide the adequate level of service. If required, their licences will be revoked. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Hon. Caserne!

Mr Caserne: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. May I ask the hon. Minister whether any assessment has been carried out on the number of additional taxi licences that may be required in view of the coming into operation of online platform taxi services such as Uber?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, I would not like to use a particular commercial name like Uber because there is an ongoing court case. It is generally believed among the public and taxi operators that such a platform – there are a dozen of them – does provide accessibility for people wanting to have taxis, many times at odd hours. If you look for a taxi at 11 o'clock at night, sometimes you do not get it because there is no one on the road. But such platforms can indeed go a long way to make taxi services more readily available to the public. I think the current budget makes provision for us to prepare a framework for this.

Madam Speaker: Okay! Good.

Now, hon. Second Member for Grand’ Baie and Poudre d'Or, Mr Beejan!

MELVILLE BEACH – AMENITIES & FACILITIES

(No. B/1169) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand’ Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the Melville Beach, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether consideration will be given for the upgrading of the facilities thereat and the provision of additional amenities and recreational facilities for the visitors.

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Beach Authority that the region of Melville in Grand Gaube comprises three proclaimed public beaches –

(i) the first beach of an extent of 2.15 hectares with a sea frontage of 525 meters was proclaimed as *Pas Géométriques* Melville Public Beach through General Notice 560 of 2010;

(ii) The second beach was proclaimed as *Pas Géométriques* Melville Public Beach through G.N. 560 of 2010 and is of an extent of 2.13 hectares with a sea frontage of 330 meters, and

(iii) the third beach was proclaimed through General Notice 687 of 1963 as Îlot Matapan and part of *Pas Géométriques* Melville Public Beach and is of an extent of 4.96 hectares and a sea frontage of 1,050 meters.

Madam Speaker, the House may wish to note that for the financial year 2026-2027, funds amounting to Rs1 million have been earmarked at the level of the Beach Authority for the refurbishment of the existing toilet block and one mini kiosk including benches on the first beach. The upgrading works on the toilet block include replacement of the metal roof, upgrading of the lighting and plumbing system, painting of the building. All other amenities are in good conditions.

The second beach has been kept in a natural state due to the calmness of the area and the presence of wild vegetation on the beach.

Regarding the third beach, upgrading works were effected in October 2025 and all existing facilities are currently in good condition.

Madam Speaker, the House may further wish to note that the Beach Authority will consider providing additional amenities and recreational facilities for the visitors on the three public beaches subject to availability of funds in the coming financial years and compliance to all requirements for development along coastline. Any suggestion from any hon. Member will be most welcome.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Beejan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Minister whether in view of the forthcoming Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations, during which beaches at Melville, Grand

Gaube, Anse La Raie, Poudre d'Or Village, among others, are visited by a large number of devotees and members of the public, can his Ministry ensure that cleaning, maintenance and any necessary minor repair works are carried out prior to the festival so as to provide a safe and pleasant environment for all devotees?

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, we are working on the forthcoming Ganesh Chaturthi festival, not only in Melville, but around all the coast where the devotees will be going.

Madam Speaker: Okay, thank you.

Yes, hon. First Member for Vacoas and Floréal.

CENTRALISED LODGING ACCOMMODATION – MIGRANT WORKERS

(No. B/1170) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to the Centralised Lodging Accommodation for migrant workers, he will state the policy governing the location, size and concentration thereof in a given locality or residential area, giving details thereof.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, after holding several consultations with relevant stakeholders, including tripartite consultation at the level of the Advisory Council for Occupation Safety and Health and with the technical assistance of the International Office for Migration, my Ministry made the Occupational Safety and Health Centralised Lodging Accommodation Regulations 2026, which came into operation on 30 June 2026.

The regulations allow an owner of a building who holds a Centralised Lodging Accommodation Permit to accommodate foreign workers of different employers centrally in their lodging accommodation. Instead of an employee having to rent a house to convert it into a lodging accommodation to accommodate foreign workers, the employer now will only need to rent one or more rooms in a licensed centralised lodging accommodation.

The regulations also enhance the standard of lodging accommodation provided to migrant workers and require owners and employers to provide foreign workers with such amenities as are necessary to ensure a decent living condition.

These amenities include, among others, internet and Wi-Fi facilities, common recreational area equipped with adequate sitting facilities and a television set, water storage tank, common areas, water closet, a suitable treatment room, a kitchen equipped with adequate cooking facilities, suitable clothes storage facilities, a suitable living and dining area, and suitable washing and drying facilities.

The regulations also prescribe the size of the rooms, the floor area, which varies depending on the number of persons who will stay in those rooms. A maximum of eight persons can stay in a room.

The regulation, however, does not provide any minimum or maximum number of persons that can be accommodated overall in a centralised lodging accommodation. This was a deliberate policy to give greater flexibility to building owners, bearing in mind the demand for such centralised lodging accommodation.

Madam Speaker, as regard the location and concentration of centralised lodging accommodation in any given locality or residential area, there is currently no restriction in the regulation. Currently, there is no policy at the level of the Ministry in that respect. However, a Building and Land Use Permit is required for all centralised lodging accommodation. It will be up to each local authority to have its own policy when authorising a centralised lodging accommodation to be built in an area falling under its jurisdiction.

Madam Speaker, as at date, my Ministry has received no application to operate a centralised lodging accommodation.

Madam Speaker: Okay, yes !

Ms J. Bérenger: J'aimerais savoir si le ministère évalue dans un premier temps et ensuite tient compte du nombre de facilités d'hébergements qui opèrent déjà dans une localité avant qu'un *Centralised Lodging Accommodation Facility Permit* ne soit délivré ?

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Uteem: As I mentioned, Madam Speaker, there is currently no such policy. It will be up to the local authorities. At the level of my Ministry, we will request a valid Building and Land Use Permit. So, it will be for each local authority to have recourse to the number of existing dormitories, and to have recourse to the number of complaints received by neighbours before they grant a Building and Land Use Permit.

Madam Speaker: Okay, second question.

Ms J. Bérenger : D'un point de vue procédural, Madame la présidente, si un bâtiment est déjà construit, il n'aura pas besoin d'un permis de construction.

Madam Speaker: Question, s'il vous plaît !

Ms J. Bérenger : Il n'aura pas besoin d'un BLUP. Donc, dans ce cas, il n'y aura pas de consultation ni d'évaluation des hébergements déjà existants. Dans ce cas-là, qu'est-ce que son ministère prévoit …

Madam Speaker: Qu'est-ce que le ministère…

Ms J. Bérenger: Qu'est-ce que son ministère prévoit pour évaluer les hébergements déjà existants, pour qu'il n'y ait pas trop de concentration dans un même endroit ou alors est-ce que son ministère envisage de collaborer avec les autres ministères, dont le ministère des Collectivités locales pour faire cette évaluation?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister?

Mr Uteem: Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, the hon. Member is mistaken. Existing buildings which will be converted into a dormitory or a centralised dormitory will require a Building and Land Use Permit and this has been the policy of Local Government. We have opinion to the effect that even if you have a private house, resident property, and you want to convert it into a dormitory, you need a Building and Land Use Permit. So, even for existing buildings, if they want to use it as centralised accommodation, they would require a Building and Land Use Permit.

Madam Speaker: You can still keep in touch with the Minister of Local Government.

Mr Uteem: As I said, Madam Speaker, at the moment, the policy is on each local authority.

Madam Speaker: Each one, yes.

Mr Uteem: Maybe going forward, there can be a policy at the level of my Ministry, but for the time being, there is no such policy.

Madam Speaker: Okay, good. Next question, the hon. First Member for Montagne Blanche and Grand River South East!

PRIVATE PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS – REVISED GRANT-IN-AID SCHEME – IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(No. B/1171) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the implementation of the revised Grant-in-Aid Scheme for private pre-primary schools with effect from 1 January 2027, including the reduction of the operational cost reimbursement to

50 percent, the capping of the rent reimbursement at Rs 5,000 and the withdrawal of the Rs 400 per-student subsidy from the 106 fee-charging private pre-primary schools, he will state –

(a) the reasons therefor, and

(b) whether an assessment of the estimated impact thereof on low-income households was carried out prior thereto and, if so, indicate the findings thereof.

Dr. Gungapersad: Madam Speaker, the current Grant-in-Aid (GIA) Scheme for Private Pre-Primary Schools was approved in 2023 and became operational on 01 January 2024. At present, 417 private pre-primary schools benefit from the Scheme at an annual amount of approximately Rs825 million. In addition, 106 private pre-primary schools which did not opt to join the GIA Scheme currently receive a monthly per capita grant of Rs400 per child, representing an amount of Rs26 million annually. These schools are authorised to charge tuition fees from parents. Following the announcement made in the Budget Speech 2025-2026 regarding a review of the Scheme, Government established an Interministerial Committee to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the existing arrangements and to make appropriate recommendations aimed at ensuring the Scheme's long-term financial sustainability while preserving access to quality early childhood education.

Madam Speaker, in carrying out its mandate, the Interministerial Committee examined the existing Scheme and considered representations received from private pre-primary school operators, the *Confédération des Travailleurs des Secteurs Public et Privé* (CTSP), and other relevant stakeholders. Following its deliberations, Government approved the committee's recommendations, namely –

a. the continued payment of salaries of employees of schools operating under the GIA Scheme;

b. the introduction of a revised staffing model whereby schools with an enrolment of up to 20 pupils will operate under a teacher-manager model, replacing the existing manager post. The incumbent will receive the salary applicable to a teacher together with a monthly managerial allowance of Rs5,000;

c. the phased upgrading of qualifications of existing managers;

d. the gradual phasing out of the grades of assistant teacher and assistant manager;

e. the phased adoption of a teacher-pupil ratio of 1 to 20 in lieu of the current ratio of 1 to 15;

f. reimbursement of a monthly rental expenses up to maximum of Rs5,000 for the 33 schools with an enrolment of up to 20 pupils;

g. the discontinuation of rental reimbursement for the 117 schools with an enrolment exceeding 20 pupils;

h. a 50% reduction in the reimbursement of operational expenses, and

i. the strengthening of governance, accountability and monitoring mechanisms to ensure the transparent and efficient utilisation of public funds.

In addition, the monthly per capita grant of Rs400 currently payable to the 106 fee-charging private pre-primary schools outside the GIA Scheme will be discontinued. These measures were formulated after careful consideration of a long-term financial sustainability of the Scheme, prevailing economic conditions and the need to safeguard public resources and the objective of preserving employment within the private pre-primary education sector.

Madam Speaker, the reimbursement of operational expenses has been reviewed following inspections conducted by officers of the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority, which revealed instances where certain items claimed under operational expenditure, including furniture and equipment, which were either not utilised for educational purposes or were not being used in accordance with the objectives of the Scheme. Similarly, rental reimbursement has been capped at Rs5,000 per month for the 33 schools with an enrolment of up to 20 pupils.

I wish to inform the House that disparity in the rental. There are some schools which have only 13 pupils, which have a monthly rental of Rs35,000, Rs38,000, Rs16,000, whereas other schools which manage with Rs1,000, Rs2,000, etc. Government considers that the grant represents only a limited contribution towards the fees paid by parents. Its discontinuation will enable available public resources to be redirected towards strengthening the support to the GIA Scheme.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (b) of the hon. Member's question, I wish to inform the House that the Interministerial Committee did assess the likely impact of the revised Scheme, including its implications for low-income households. The assessment concluded that parents will continue to have access to free pre-primary education by enrolling their children either in the public pre-primary schools or in private pre-primary schools operating under the revised GIA Scheme. It is pertinent to note that public pre-primary schools currently operate with approximately 50% unused capacity, thereby providing sufficient places to accommodate any increase in enrolment.

Allow me to inform the House that there are currently 4,467 vacancies in our public pre-primary schools which can cater up to 7,735 pupils, and we have 790 vacancies in our pre-primary schools operated by local authorities which can cater up to 1,460 pupils. Let me reassure the hon. Member that our children coming from low-income households remain our main concern. For example, 357 children are registered under SRM Scheme and benefit from the facilities they are entitled to. Besides this, currently all our children attending pre-primary schools in the 26 ZEP schools in the four zones are eligible for free meals. I wish to inform the House that in the same line of thought, my Ministry is currently examining the feasibility of introducing, on a pilot basis, a programme for the provision of free breakfast and free lunch to children attending public pre-primary schools situated in socially and economically disadvantaged areas.

In parallel, my Ministry will engage with the local authorities responsible for 39 public pre-primary schools under their jurisdiction with the view of encouraging them to consider the implementation of similar initiatives. The revised grant-in-aid Scheme therefore seeks to ensure the prudent, transparent and sustainable use of public funds while safeguarding equitable access to education in the pre-primary sector. It will also enable the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority to focus more effectively on its statutory responsibilities of regulating, monitoring and enforcing compliance within the early childhood education sector.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Member?

Mr Baboolall: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. Can the hon. Minister confirm the total number of children currently enrolled across those 106 fee-charging private schools, losing the 400 per student subsidy and what proportion of their families are estimated to fall within lower income threshold?

Dr. Gungapersad: Now, as I have already mentioned, especially low-income group children, they are already looked after by the SRM Scheme. And the next batch of children who go to ZEP primary schools, there when we have the Pre-Primary Unit (PPU), the children going in those schools are also looked after, and are provided free meals like the primary school students. We care for them.

Madam Speaker: Yes, second question!

Mr Baboolall: My question was straight forward. How many children are concerned?

Madam Speaker: Do you have figures?

Dr. Gungapersad: I will have to check the number, but I gave you for SRM. I gave you the number earlier in my answer.

Mr Baboolall: I asked for the 106 fee charging private schools.

Dr. Gungapersad: For 106, I can give you the figure. It is 5,942.

Madam Speaker: Okay, next question!

MAURITIUS EEZ – ILLEGAL & UNREPORTED FISHING – CATCH DATA & CATCH VOLUME RECORDS

(No. B/1172) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the Exclusive Economic Zone of the Republic of Mauritius, he will state whether he has taken cognizance of reported significant discrepancies between actual catch volumes and officially declared catch data, indicating the measures taken and/or being envisaged to enforce stricter control in relation thereto.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, hon. Member.

Madam Speaker, pursuant to Section 168 of the Fisheries Act, the operator of a fishing vessel is presumed to have engaged in illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing or fishing related activities, where the vessel has failed to record or report its catches in accordance with any applicable conservation and management measure. Second, the vessel has made false reports. Now, in practice, the catch volume is estimated by the captain of the vessel during fishing operations at sea and, accordingly, recorded in the fishing log books, whereas the officially declared catch data is recorded once the catch has been weighed after landing in the port. A difference between the two figures is considered acceptable as long as it is within a

10% variance, in line with the margin of tolerance established under the EU Regulation 2023/2842. Any deviation beyond that range is promptly investigated.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that as per the recorded figures for years 2025-2026, no significant discrepancies have been observed between the officially declared catch data and the actual catch volume recorded with regard to either tuna fisheries or bank fisheries, which are two major types of fisheries in our Exclusive Economic Zone.

Madam Speaker, our Ministry is very strict in its approach to IUU despite its limited manpower to ensure the monitoring, control and surveillance of EEZ of more than 2 million kilometres. However, in line with best fisheries management practices, a risk assessment exercise is undertaken by the Ministry to identify high-risk vessels for inspection. The Ministry will continue to intensify monitoring, surveillance and enforcement actions against any operator found to be in breach of the law. Measures which have already been put in place to ensure that catches declared by fishing vessels accurately reflect the actual quantities caught and landed, including the following –

(i) Licensed fishing vessels are being monitored in near real time regarding the reported catch volume through the electronic reporting system which was introduced by the Ministry in July last year.

(ii) The fishing log books of fishing vessels are verified at the time of boarding and inspection to ascertain that there is no discrepancy between the daily estimated catch data and the declared catch data. In case of any significant difference, a contravention is established for Mauritian fishing vessels, whereas the flag state or relevant regional fisheries maritime organisation are notified for foreign vessels.

(iii) The movement and activity of licenced fishing vessels in our EEZ is monitored by the Fisheries Monitoring Centre of the Ministry on a 24/7-hour basis through satellite data. Any suspected IUU fishing is promptly referred to the National Coast Guard for interception at sea or any other appropriate action.

(iv) Vessels engaged in IUU fishing are prevented from accessing port and port services in Mauritius.

My Ministry, Madam Speaker, is progressively enhancing our monitoring, control and surveillance framework for bank fishery, including through the development of mechanisms to improve the verification of log books declaration against actual landed catch. These measures will ensure greater accuracy of catch data and strengthen fisheries management.

To further enhance the monitoring, control and surveillance framework –

- officers will be trained in monitoring fishing operations;
- advanced technologies and AI analysis will be used to improve traceability and data sharing among stakeholders;
- new regulations will be introduced under the Fisheries Act, and
- regional cooperation for combating IUU fishing in the Western Indian Ocean will be enhanced.

Madam Speaker, I do not know whether our good friend is referring to an article regarding the scale of fishing in the Chagos Archipelago being 25 times higher than the official statistics. The House may wish to know or be informed that Mauritius has, as of now, no operational control in enforcing fisheries laws in the Chagos Archipelago. But of course, we are slated to take over ownership, and I hope it will not be too long.

Madam Speaker: Yes, do you have a question?

Mr Etwareea: Oui. Merci pour la réponse, M. le ministre. Quels sont les moyens dont dispose le ministère de la Pêche pour contrôler les bateaux de pêche qui sont en haute mer, notamment les bateaux étrangers ?

Dr. Boolell: Well, we interact with other relevant countries, but as you know, we have our EEZ, and control is being done through the monitoring surveillance system. But otherwise, we rely on support from member countries, for example, like members of the IOTC or other relevant organisations.

Madam Speaker: Happy? No? Second question.

Mr Etwareea: La deuxième question. Le Premier ministre, ce matin, a énuméré une longue liste d'accords bilatéraux et plurilatéraux qui sont actifs pour le contrôle dans l'océan

Indien. Est-ce que le ministre peut envisager une coopération avec ces pays, avec les pays partenaires, pour un contrôle plus précis de la pêche ?

Dr. Boolell: If my hon. friend had paid heed to what I have said, as member of IOC (Indian Ocean Commission) and Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, we collaborate and cooperate. If you recall, during the visit of the French President, we strengthened bilateral cooperation, and rely upon those who have the means to dispense the information so that there is proper coordination to ensure good surveillance and monitoring.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. We will end here for this morning. So, I will suspend for one and a half hour. Thank you everyone.

At 12.57 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

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

The Deputy Speaker: Please be seated. Hon. Second Member for Rodrigues. Yes!

RODRIGUES – INTERNATIONAL MARITIME TRADE ROUTES – OIL SPILL CONTIGENCY PLAN

(No. B/1173) Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to Rodrigues Island, he will state whether, following the recent changes in international maritime trade routes exposing the coastal and marine zones thereof to risks of oil spills, any National Oil Spill Contingency Plan has been put in place thereat and, if so, give details thereof, including the response capacity thereof and, if not, indicate whether consideration will be given therefor.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the number of vessels transiting in our waters has increased by approximately 62% between 2020 and 2025. In fact, from January to June of this year, maritime traffic has further increased by 5.7% with a peak of 3,210 vessels transits recorded in May.

This increase in marine traffic in our water may be attributed to the recent disruptions to international shipping routes due to the war in the Middle East and the greater use of the Cape of Good Hope route. This situation represents a heightened risk of maritime accidents which may result in oil spills in our region.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following the MV Wakashio oil spill disaster in August 2020, the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan of 2003 was reviewed in 2005 and approved by Government in March this year. In the same vein, instructions have been given for the review of the Rodrigues Oil Spill Contingency Plan and consultations have already started at the level of my Ministry in 2024 with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

The National Oil Spill Contingency Plan 2025 is the national framework for preparedness for and response to oil spills incidents throughout the exclusive economic zone of our Republic, including Rodrigues. The plan makes provision for the setting up of an organisational structure and necessary operational procedures to ensure a prompt and coordinated response to all by all relevant stakeholders.

It adopts a new tiered response whereby the environmental sensitivity of an affected area and the severity of impact in case of an oil spill are taken into consideration. The plan also makes provision for pre-spill baseline data and post-spill survey to support claims for compensation against damages to the marine ecosystem.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in addition to the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan 2025, I am informed that there is a specific Rodrigues oil spill contingency plan dating back to 2009 which must be updated and made fully operational. I am further informed that an oil spill contingency planning and response for Rodrigues, including the custody, maintenance and deployment of the oil spill response equipment available on the island, currently falls under the responsibility of the Commission for Environment in accordance with the section 24 of the Environment Act 2024.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the aftermath of the MV Wakashio oil-spill disaster in 2020, my Ministry has taken several measures to reinforce oil spill preparedness and response in Mauritius and Rodrigues –

First, with the assistance of the *Agence Française de Développement* in 2021, my Ministry prepared the following in respect of both Mauritius and Rodrigues –

(i) an inventory and assessment of oil-spill response equipment;

(ii) an Oil Spill Waste Management Plan;

(iii) an Oil Spill Volunteer Management Plan, and

(iv) an environmental and socio-economic impact assessment framework.

Second, an international maritime organisation level 1 training course was held in Rodrigues from 15 to 19 January 2024. 41 officers from various departments of Rodrigues Regional Assembly attended the course and obtained level 1 certification. The programme sensitised local stakeholders on the then existing National Oil Spill Contingency Plan, provided tactical first responder training, included desktop and equipment-deployment exercises and strengthened the capacity of officers from the National Coast Guard, Mauritius Ports Authority, and Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services in equipment maintenance.

Third, in July 2025, my Ministry, in collaboration with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, finalised the Coastal Sensitivity Atlas and technical and operational maps for Rodrigues. These tools identify shoreline types, environmentally sensitive areas and the potential effects of an oil spill and guide the protection and cleanup strategies to be adopted during an incident. Capacity building was also provided to the concerned stakeholders on their use.

Fourth, seven officers from Rodrigues had attended an International Maritime Organisation level 1 training course organised under the Japan International Cooperation Agency technical assistance programme in Mauritius from 23 to 26 April 2026.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to further strengthen Rodrigues preparedness, officers from my Ministry with the support of the National Coast Guard and the Special Mobile Force will undertake a technical visit to Rodrigues from 29 July to 08 August 2026 under the lead of the Director of Environment.

The mission will –

(i) review the Rodrigues Oil Spill Contingency Plan to align it with the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan 2025.

(ii) develop a standard operating procedure in the event of an oil spill.

(iii) audit of the available oil spill combat equipment and identify further equipment requirements for Rodrigues, and

(iv) provide international maritime organization level 0 training to around 100 members of the civil society and non-technical Government staff, including non-governmental organizations, fishers, village counsellors, women's association, youth, private sector and media representatives. The training will include theoretical sessions, field exercises and a table top simulation exercise in respect of an oil spill.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, furthermore, I am informed that the Mauritius Ports Authority launched a bidding exercise on 11 May 2026 for the acquisition of dedicated oil spill response equipment for Port Mathurin. However, the bidding exercise was unsuccessful. In the meantime, the Mauritius Ports Authority is considering relocating part of its existing oil spill response assets from Port Louis to Port Mathurin to provide a minimum immediate response capability thereat. This measure will complement the equipment already available under the custody of the Chief Commissioner's Office.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr François: Thank you, hon. Minister. May I ask the hon. Minister, with regards to existing equipment thereat, do you have a list that you can circulate or table?

Mr Bhagwan: Definitely, we are updating the list and we will circulate it to the House and the hon. Member.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. The hon. Third Member for Pamplemousses and Triolet!

FINANCIAL SERVICES ENTITIES – LICENCE FEES – INCREASE – BENCHMARKING & REPRESENTATIONS

(No. B/1174) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning whether, in regard to the recent increase in licence fees applicable to financial services entities, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether –

(a) benchmarking exercise was carried out against competing jurisdictions prior to the implementation thereof, and

(b) representations have been received from industry stakeholders in relation thereto and, if so, indicate the actions taken, if any.

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for this question. Let me remind the House that last year, in the Annex to the Budget Speech 2025-26, it was announced that the Financial Services Commission would review its annual licence fees to reflect evolving market conditions. It is also important to recall that the FSC had not reviewed its processing fees since the year 2008, that is 19 years ago, whilst the licensing fees were last adjusted in 2019, that is seven years ago. So, during that period, FSC has absorbed the rising operational costs, inflationary pressures and significantly expanded international compliance obligations with heightened supervisory demands.

As regards part (a) of the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the FSC has consulted with the Ministry of Finance, with Mauritius Finance, with industry stakeholders and with my Ministry, and the FSC was advised by my Ministry that international benchmarking should be done to ensure that the MIFC remains internationally competitive in terms of cost of doing business. I am informed that a benchmarking exercise was indeed undertaken by the FSC against competing jurisdictions such as Singapore, Rwanda, India, Gibraltar, Luxembourg, UK, Cayman Islands, Cyprus, South Africa, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Hong Kong, Isle of Man, Bahamas, Bermuda and Guernsey. The benchmarking exercise has shown that in most cases, Mauritius remains by and large a competitive jurisdiction, and I am tabling a sample from the benchmarking exercise that has been carried out by the FSC.

I am informed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that overall, in the new fee structure, the processing and/or annual fees of 33 licences have been reduced, and the processing and annual fees for 83 and 87 licences respectively, have remained unchanged to promote growth of these sectors. On the other hand, 25 out of 145 types of licences saw an increase in the processing fee and/or the annual fee, and out of these 25 licences, 24 have increased within the range of 10 to 40%, while there is one licence for which the processing and licensing fee has increased by 300%, namely for Authorised Companies. For this category of licence, the annual fee has increased from USD 350 to USD 1,400, and the processing fee has increased from USD 150 to USD 600.

With regard to part (b) of the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following the Budget Speech, Mauritius Finance, which is the industry association, asked for a meeting with me, and indeed I met six representatives of the organisation on 02 July 2026. They had a number of concerns with regards to certain measures that were announced in the budget and also some concerns regarding the increase of the fees by the FSC. I explained to them that while we were very sensitive at the Ministry regarding the cost of doing business, which is one of the main pillars of our Strategy Report, that Government and Ministry of Finance had their own imperative and that we will do our best to see how certain measures can be mitigated.

However, it has been noted that there were public commentaries and outcry to the effect that there has been an unreasonable increase in the cost of doing business, especially highlighting the isolated case of the increase in fees of Authorised Companies. While these differing views from stakeholders form part of a healthy consultation process, the public narrative, wherein some of our own operators are criticising the sector and the jurisdiction in the press and the social media, it can cause harm to our global reputation. It risks creating a misperception that the jurisdiction's only attractive feature rests on low cost or competitive cost rather than on high quality of service and regulatory compliance. Public narratives portraying Mauritius as losing competitiveness purely on the account of the licence fee of one product out of 145 products may inadvertently undermine the image of the IFC ecosystem.

I am also informed by the Commission that the Commission has emphasised that the targeted adjustment reflects the complex cross-border nature and higher inherent risk profile of these entities called Authorised Companies, as they operate with significant international exposure requiring more intensive risk-based supervision. Aligning processing and annual fees with the supervisory effort required supports the effective implementation of international standards set by international standard bodies such as the recommendations of FATF. However, if we wish to compare fees being charged by the different jurisdictions, the total cost of doing business is a more realistic parameter instead of just the regulator's licence fee.

I further wish to point out, as mentioned, ACs are strategic structuring vehicles that support wealth, private wealth, investment holding and cross-border group structures. To this effect, an increase in the USD of about 1,050 dollars should not have a considerable impact, particularly given the fact that the cost of relocation to the above-mentioned jurisdiction is likely to outweigh the additional fee charge, and therefore, an exodus of ACs moving to any jurisdiction is an unlikely scenario.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has been informed that FSC will continue in engaging closely with relevant industry stakeholders to ensure that the jurisdiction remains both competitive and reputable while preserving the strategic interest of the sector and the country. And let me reassure the House that the Government remains committed to maintaining Mauritius as a competitive and reputable IFC, while ensuring that the regulatory framework remains aligned with evolving market conditions and international standards. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: You have one supplementary?

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

The Deputy Speaker: Try to be brief with the reply to the supplementary, please.

Mr Rookny: Est-ce que l'honorable ministre pourrait informer la Chambre si son ministère a considéré la possibilité que notre juridiction perde les *Authorised Companies* en faveur des Seychelles et quel serait l'impact sur les acteurs économiques dans ce secteur ?

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Indeed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there have been reports that there is a risk of exodus of our authorised companies to the Seychelles. In fact, there are some misconceptions about the international business companies, the IBCs, which are being compared to the authorised company. The IBC in Seychelles is not regulated by the Financial Services Authority. It is only registered with the FSA. That is, the company has a legal existence, but it is not undergoing any oversight, compliance or obligations and licensing fees. If an IBC goes into a regulated activity, then they require another licence.

From my assessment and the Ministry's and FSC's assessment, this one isolated case of companies moving to Seychelles is quite exaggerated, but we will continue monitoring the situation. But as of now, there is no major concern.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

The hon. Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac!

VICTORIA HOSPITAL – MALE WARD C12 – INSPECTIONS & MONITORING

(No. B/1175) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the male wards of the Victoria Hospital, he will state whether officers of his Ministry have carried out any site visit or inspection thereat to assess the conditions thereof, particularly in Ward C12 and, if so, indicate the –

(a) findings thereof and whether infestations of pigeons and rats were identified, and

(b) measures taken and/or being envisaged to improve hygienic conditions and ensure a safe environment for patients, staff and visitors thereat.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that officers of my Ministry, namely those from the Infection Prevention and Control Unit, the Public Health Inspectorate, the Vector Biology and Control Division and the Rodent Control Unit, carry out regular inspections in all the public health institutions, including Ward C12 of Victoria Hospital to monitor environmental and hygienic conditions.

I wish to highlight that Ward C12 is located in an old stand-alone building within the Princess Margaret Orthopaedic Centre, at Victoria Hospital, which was inaugurated back in 1956. The Ward is surrounded by open grassy areas and is regularly cleaned and maintained.

With regard to part (a) of the question, targeted inspections of Ward C12 were carried out on 19 March 2025 and 18 April 2025 by officers of the Public Health Inspectorate, together with officers of the Vector Biology and Control Division, in response to a bed bug infestation. The inspections revealed no evidence of rat infestation or the presence of pigeons within the wards.

Following the admission of a notified case of leptospirosis, Ward C12 was inspected again on 30 April 2026. No evidence of rat or bed bug infestation was detected and no bugs were observed within the ward.

A further joint inspection was carried out on 23 July 2026 by officers of the Public Health Services and the Rodent Control Unit in the presence of the Ward Manager. It was observed that the adjoining yard had been properly cleaned and maintained and that a refuse receptacle, fitted with a close-fitting cover, was available near the scullery. No bird resting places, rat burrows, rat droppings or any other signs of rodent infestation were found in Ward C12 or the adjoining wards.

As part of the routine rodent control programme at Victoria Hospital, regular baiting and surveillance are undertaken at strategic locations, including the vicinity of Ward C12. During one routine operation, one dead rat was recovered in the yard adjoining the ward. However, no evidence of rodent infestation within the ward was identified. According to the Ward Manager, pigeons may occasionally enter the ward through open windows. As stated above, there is no nesting area in Ward 12.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, my Ministry continues to implement the necessary measures to maintain appropriate hygienic conditions and ensure a safe environment for patients, staff and visitors. These measures include –

- regular inspections;

- routine environmental cleaning;
- proper waste management;
- continuous rodent surveillance and control through the strategic placement of rat baits and glue traps, and
- regular monitoring of the ward and its surroundings.

In addition, it is proposed to further strengthen bird and rodent prevention measures through the installation of bird netting at windows and other openings, the fitting of self-closing devices on the external access doors of Ward C12 to minimise the risk of rodent entry, and the installation of bird deterrent devices, including reflective deterrents or bird risers on the roof of Ward C12 and nearby buildings.

My Ministry will continue to monitor the situation closely and implement such additional measures as may be necessary to maintain appropriate standards of hygiene and ensure a safe environment for patients, staff and visitors at Victoria Hospital.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, thank you.

The hon. Second Member for Savanne and Black River!

FRUITS/VEGETABLES SEEDLINGS DISTRIBUTION & PRODUCTION QUOTA SYSTEM

(No. B/1176) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the production and consumption of local fruits and vegetables, he will state whether consideration will be given for the –

(a) distribution of fruit/vegetable plants seedlings on an annual basis to each local authority for distribution to members of the community, and

(b) introduction of a production quota or production planning mechanism for selected crops, with a view to ensuring food security and maintaining affordable prices for consumers.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, hon. Member.

The Ministry attaches great importance to the production and consumption of local fruits and vegetables in line with its policy of 'Produce what we eat and eat what we produce'.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry is already implementing programmes for the production and distribution of seedlings to targeted beneficiaries, namely vulnerable families, school children and community groups. These programmes are aimed at sensitising the public and promoting the cultivation and consumption of locally produced food.

The Ministry has, in fact, started the provision, free of charge, of fruit plants and vegetable seedlings to educational institutions for youth in agricultural projects, as well as to other Ministries and government institutions for their initiatives such as Environment Day, blood donation activities, health awareness campaigns, amongst others. In this respect, a total of 2,201 fruit plants were distributed for the period July 2025 to June 2026.

I am further informed that during the Financial Year 2025-2026, 43,000 fruit trees comprising mango, litchi, banana, pawpaw, citrus and avocado were sold to the public for backyard cultivation and to planters. These planting materials are provided to the farming community and the public at highly subsidised prices.

Furthermore, in the Budget 2026-2027, an initial budget of Rs2 million has been provided for development of household micro gardens on a pilot basis to be implemented by Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute. Under this initiative, at least 1,000 families will be provided with the necessary tools and equipment to establish household gardens, thereby promoting local production and strengthening food resilience.

As regards local authorities, I wish to inform the House that for the Financial Year 2026-2027, provision has been made for the production and free distribution of 10,000 potted plants to members of the community. So, my Ministry plans to at least double the number for Financial Year 2027-2028, with a view to enhancing food security.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, the House may wish to note that there is already in place a targeted production quota system for potatoes and onions, with a view to improving food security and maintaining affordable prices for customers. The Ministry is currently working on extending the targeted production quota system to other vegetable crops such as carrot, beans and pumpkins.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in line with 25by35 food security initiative announced in the Budget this year, the Ministry has started working on a production planning mechanism based on coordinated crop calendars, market intelligence, digital tools and the active participation of farmers to better align domestic production with domestic demand and reduce our vulnerability to climate-related events and disruption in global freight and supply chain. The production planning mechanism will constitute a key component of the food security programme currently being developed by the Ministry, with particular emphasis on coordinated production planning, market intelligence and contract farming. It marks a strategic shift towards a more integrated, market-oriented and climate-resilient agricultural sector which aims to boost domestic production, reduce reliance on imports and drive the modernisation of agricultural sector.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ministry is closely monitoring production, market requirements and import trends for vegetable and fruits. This aims at ensuring adequate supply, avoiding shortages and excessive market surpluses and supporting the availability of local produce at reasonable prices. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

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

Mr Etwareea: Merci, M. le président, de la session d'aujourd'hui. Ça va chauffer avec la question B/1177.

AGRO-SOLAR ENERGY – ONGOING PROJECTS – CONDITIONS & INCENTIVES

(No. B/1177) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the development of agro-solar energy, he will –

(a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of ongoing projects, and

(b) state the conditions imposed and incentives granted by Government for the promotion thereof.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the CEB has launched two schemes for the development of Agrivoltaic Projects in July 2024 and December 2025. Under the CEB Agrivoltaic Scheme I, launched in July 2024, 136 applications have been received for a cumulative electricity capacity of 49.8 MW. None of these applications were implemented in 2024. Under the second CEB Agrivoltaic Scheme, launched in December 2025, 52 applications have been received representing a cumulative capacity of 140.9 MW, which is three times more since the coming in office of this Government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regards to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that while there is no application for land conversion permits in respect to Agro-Solar Projects currently at the Ministry, a fast-track mechanism has been put in place by the Ministry to process land conversion permits for Agrivoltaic Projects within 15 days. This has been achieved through close consultations with the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities, and other stakeholders, underscoring our commitment to efficiency and responsiveness.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that under the CEB Agrivoltaic Scheme I, 60 letters of intent had been issued throughout the year 2025, out of which 25 connection agreements were signed in 2025 and 2026, representing a cumulative capacity of only 10 MW. The remaining 35 applications are still under process at the CEB. Under the CEB Agrivoltaic Scheme II, 35 letters of intent have been issued, mostly in February 2026, representing a capacity of 1.1.5 MW. To date, 26 connection agreements have been signed, all in March 2026, with 9 applications progressing steadily. I wish to emphasise that these applications are yet to be referred to my Ministry for land conversion permit.

With regard to part (b), Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, applications for agro-solar projects are only considered on land classified as having low to moderate agricultural potential in line with the land suitability map prepared by MCIA to safeguard agricultural production. Applicants are required to plough back into agricultural use an extent equivalent to 50% of the area requested for conversion as provided under the Sugar Industry Efficiency Act.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government has also ensured that investors benefit from targeted incentives, all solar energy projects are exempted from land conversion tax. In addition, the CEB offers premium feed-in tariff, Rs5 per kilowatt hour under Agrivoltaic Scheme and Rs6.21 per kilowatt hour under Agrivoltaic Scheme II, which integrates battery energy storage system. These tariffs are significantly higher than that of Rs4.20 per kilowatt hour offered under other solar schemes, thereby encouraging investment in advanced energy solutions and battery storage.

The measures taken by the Ministry and the Government reflect a balanced approach, promoting renewable energy, safeguarding agricultural land and ensuring food security. The strong response to the Agri-Voltaic Scheme demonstrates confidence in our vision of a sustainable, resilient and fast-looking agro-industry sector.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East!

TRIBECA MALL FUN PARK – SAFETY CERTIFICATIONS & OPERATING PERMITS – ELECTRICITY OUTAGE INCIDENT

(No. B/1178) Mr E. Juman (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Tribeca Mall fun park, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

(a) whether it has been issued with the required safety certifications and operating permits in respect of the requirement thereat, giving details thereof, and

(b) the recent electricity outage which occurred thereat, give details thereof, including incidences of visitors thereof having been trapped, injured or otherwise, if any, and measures taken to ensure the safety thereof.

Mr Woochit: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to both parliamentary questions B/1178 and B/1187 together as they relate to the same subject matter and I am tabling all relevant documents, clearances, notices and conditions applied by all competent authorities.

With regard to part (a) of the questions, I am informed that the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes received three Building and Land Use Permits (BLUP) applications on 10 October 2025 and 05 December 2025 from Hermes Properties Limited for the setting up of an amusement park at Tribeca Central, Trianon, Quatre Bornes on the National Electronic Licensing System (NELS). These applications were automatically set aside due to incomplete information. The promoter subsequently submitted a third application on 10 February 2026 with all the required information. According to the plan submitted by the promoter, the project would comprise three amusement rides, a storm water drainage system, a waste water disposal system, as well as food trucks, toilets, ticket office and control rooms, all of which would occupy an area of 1,123 square metres.

During the processing of the BLUP application, clearances were favourably obtained from the Central Water Authority, Central Electricity Board and the Wastewater Management Authority. Taking into consideration safety norms as well as the potential traffic impact that such a development would have on the existing amenities, the Municipal Council has also sought the views of the Ministry of National Infrastructure, the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations, the Road Development Authority and the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the mechanical engineering section of the Ministry of National Infrastructure reported that it did not have the necessary expertise to carry out the assessment of such structures and advised that the consultant of the promoter would have to take full liability for any mechanical design of the proposed structures.

On the other part, the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations informs that in line with provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Act 2005 and the relevant regulations, the promoter should ensure that the safety of health of workers involved in the installation of amusement parks rides. It further indicated that its national occupational safety and health department did not have any norms in place regarding the equipment to be utilised.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, upon submission of amendment plans and additional documents by the applicant, the application was approved by the Permits and Business Monitoring Committee of the Council at its sitting on 18 March 2026 subject to general as well as special conditions being strictly adhered to. As per one of the general conditions of the BLUP, an occupation certificate has to be obtained prior to the start of economic activities. Since the promoter started his activities without obtaining this certificate, the planning inspectorate carried out a site visit on 23 July 2026 whereby it was noted that –

(i) the setting up of the amusement park rides were not in line with the approved plans;

(ii) two additional amusement rides had been put up on site and same were not part of the building and land use permit issued;

(iii) a covert podium had been set up on the site next to the front park to hold musical performance and two generators, and

(iv) over and above the four containers that had been approved in the BLUP for use as toilet blocks, ticket booths and food trucks, seven additional containers had been put on site for the setting up of one security post, three CCTV chambers and additional tickets booths and two additional food trucks.

Taking into account the non-compliance with the BLUP issued, the Municipal Council caused an enforcement notice to be served on 23 July 2026 upon the developer, namely Hermes Properties Limited, requiring it to stop all development works forthwith and to pull down all the illegal developments works within a period of 30 days from the time of service of this notice. Due to the serious legal implications, the Municipal Council has sought legal advice regarding non-compliance to the condition of the BLUP enforcement notice issued among others.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the Parliamentary Question B/1178, I wish to inform the House that the CEB, which was consulted on the matter, confirms that there was no tripping or disturbance on the feeder supplying the Tribeca region, and no fault pertaining to the electricity supply on that area was recently reported to the CEB call centre. Moreover, during the inspection held on 23 July 2026, the promoter clarified that the electricity was not supplied by the CEB network, but through generators. The outside operations and equipment of the fair were connected to the main generator, and the food outlets were connected to the secondary generator. He further added that the incident occurred for approximately three minutes due to the defective sensor.

However, the operators provided prompt assistance to the visitors and the problem was quickly resolved. The inspectors of the Municipal Council did observe two generators on site, adjacent to a tower ride, along with their service area, including their associated equipment as well as fire extinguishers. This area is properly enclosed with a metal fence. An ambulance belonging to St. John's was also observed on site, further to which the Director clarified that same is provided for by the company during the activities to ensure immediate assistance and safety of the visitors. I wish to highlight that following the incident at the Tribeca Mall Fun Park on 18 July 2026, the Police Department, Western Division, Rose Hill, was also consulted and informed that no complaints have been reported.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of Parliamentary Question B/1187, the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service apprised that pursuant to section 19 of the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service Act 2013, all premises to which the public has access are required to hold a valid fire certificate to ensure compliance with the prescribed fire safety regulations. With regard to the amusement park located at Tribeca...

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, with regard to part (b) of the other question, you can file it because the mover of the question is not in attendance. Let us move, hon. Juman, you have...

Mr Woochit: But we have some more information.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, but you have been talking for nearly seven minutes. Your reply has to be within… minutes.

Mr Woochit: But it is important because...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Yes…

(Interruptions)

Mr Woochit: It is important, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Everything is important in this House. I do not like the word 'important'. Every question, every answer is important.

Mr Woochit: Okay.

The Deputy Speaker: So, there is no question which is more important than another one.

Mr Woochit: Okay, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, come on!

Mr Juman: Merci, M. le président. D'abord, je tiens à saluer l'initiative de la compagnie qui a investi dans le projet de parc d'attraction, contribuant ainsi à la diversification de loisirs de notre pays, mais…

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question!

Mr Juman: …la sécurité demeure primordiale.

M. le ministre, vous avez dit qu'à partir du 3 juillet les inspecteurs de la municipalité de Quatre Bornes ont su qu'il y a un problème là-bas, avec les infrastructures installées. Elles ne sont pas aux normes d'après les permis qu'ils ont eu, mais pourquoi avoir attendu une question parlementaire pour demander l'arrêt des opérations ?

Mr Woochit: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the conditions that have been given in the BLUP, in clause 13 – I will table all the conditions – you will notice in clause 16, that the promoter has to inform the Municipal Council before starting the business, where he has failed to do so. This is why, as soon as we have seen the starting of operations of these amusement rides, we have gone on the site on the 23rd.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr Juman: Merci, M. le président. D'après la réponse de l'honorable ministre, on n'a aucun officier dans aucun de nos ministères, de nos départements qui peuvent certifier ces équipements-là ?

Mr Woochit: I have already replied. The MNI, even the Ministry of Labour does not have the expertise to analyse, but they have said that the promoter has to give a clearance from a registered engineer - from the promoter itself.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. The hon. First Member for Vacoas and Floréal!

MOTORWAY M4 PROJECT – GOVERNMENT OF REPUBLIC OF INDIA – LINE OF CREDIT

(No. B/1179) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the line of credit from the Government of Republic of India for the Motorway M4 Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

(a) the annual repayment schedule in respect of loans contracted therefor, indicating the capital and interest components until full repayment thereof, and

(b) whether payment to the contractor will be effected directly by the Exim Bank of India or through the Government of Mauritius, indicating the currency in which the transaction will be effected.

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Motorway M4 Project consists of a dual carriage way of approximately 30 kilometres extending from Forbach on the M2 motorway to Bel Air. The route will bypass several villages including Poudre d'Or Hamlet, Rivière du Rempart, Plaine des Roches, L'Aventure, Pont Blanc, Constance, Queen Victoria and Clemencia. As the House is aware, following the state visit of the hon. Prime Minister to India in September 2025, the Government of India generously extended a Special Economic Package of USD 680 million to Mauritius. This package includes a line of credit of USD 432 million to be contracted in Indian rupees on concessional terms to finance, amongst others, the Motorway M4 Project.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that an umbrella line of credit agreement equivalent to USD 432 million for several projects, including the Motorway M4 Project, has been signed on 22 July 2026 with the Exim Bank of India. Given that the projects under the SEP have different implementation phases and timelines, individual credit agreements will subsequently have to be signed for each project or a combination thereof, depending on their readiness for implementation and cost estimate after finalisation of the detailed project report. Therefore, the actual annual repayment schedule in respect of the loan for the Motorway M4 Project, including the capital and interest components until full repayment, will be available only after the individual credit agreement for the project has been signed. Since the estimated cost of the Motorway M4 Project is currently approximately Rs10 billion, the repayment schedule cannot be established on the basis of the estimated project cost. Same can only be determined upon the award of the works contract, that is when the contract value is known.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards to part (b) of the question, I am informed that as per the LOC agreement, payment to the contractor will be effected directly by the Exim Bank. The Exim Bank will pay to the contractor in Indian rupees after receipt of payment authorisation from the Government of Mauritius. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to further inform the House that the funds to the tune of Rs10 billion under the Special Economic Package have been earmarked exclusively for the implementation of the Motorway M4 Project. Therefore, these funds cannot be diverted or used for any other projects.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I seize this opportunity to thank the hon. Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi Ji, and the Government of India for the invaluable financial assistance towards the implementation of the Motorway M4 Project. Without this support, the realisation of this transformative project would not have been possible. This generous financial support reflects the strong bonds of friendship and cooperation that exist between our two countries and will contribute significantly to the development of Mauritius.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Member?

Ms J. Bérenger: L'honorable ministre peut-il confirmer s'il y a eu un appel d'offres à l'international pour le financement du projet en lui-même ?

Mr Gunness: It is a G2G. We all know that when the hon. Prime Minister went to India, I said in my answer that we get a Special Economic Package and at a concessional interest rate, and part of that package is in terms of grants. So, I do not think there is any other country that would have offered grants to Mauritius or a concessional rate. So, this is part of it.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Ms J. Bérenger: Pour la partie dite construction, est-ce qu'il peut confirmer s'il y aura un appel d'offres international et si les contracteurs mauriciens pourront participer ?

Mr Gunness: What I understand is that Exim Bank will be launching the bids in India. The technical evaluation will be done there, and then the financial evaluation will be done by the RDA in Mauritius. So, all the bidding process will be done in India.

Obviously, for Mauritian firms, once we have an agreement, it will be 75% Indian side and 25% Mauritian side, which means that 25% of that sum which will be spent, they will buy material and will use contractors. 25% will be Mauritian people; entrepreneurs and small entrepreneurs will benefit from that project.

Ms J. Bérenger: Juste une dernière question.

The Deputy Speaker: Just one last question.

Ms J. Bérenger: Juste pour savoir si le ministre peut donner ce taux concessionnel qu'il vient de mentionner.

Mr Gunness: The rate of interest on the loan, as I said, I think it is 5.3 per annum, payable semi-annually, and there is a grace period of five years. It is 2%. MCLR 2%. Sorry, it is 2%.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Second Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or!

LONDON – MAURITIUS HIGH COMMISSION – MAINTENANCE COST & RENT

(No. B/1180) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Mauritian High Commission in London, he will, for the period 2015 to 2024, state the –

(a) total amount of expenditure incurred for the maintenance of the premises thereof, giving a yearly breakdown thereof, and

(b) annual rent paid for the official residence of the former High Commissioner/s.

Mr Ramful: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government owns three properties in London –

(i) the Chancery and staff apartments situated at Elvaston Place;
(ii) official residence of the High Commissioner at Braham Gardens, and
(iii) one residence at Wimbledon Park.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, the total expenditure incurred from 2015 to 2024 for the maintenance of the Mauritius High Commission in London, that is, the Chancery building situated at Elvaston Place, is Rs9,640,800. I would also wish to point out that the building also houses residential apartments for home-based staff.

As regards part (b) of the question, the total rent paid in favour of the former Ambassador, who was posted in London, is 612,820 GBP, British pounds, which is approximately 38 million Mauritian rupees. But I also wish to point out that this figure does not include the rent paid for the period 2015 *à* 2016 because as per our Mission, the record has gone missing.

Now, I have to point out that in the current budget, provision has been made for the renovation of the residence of the High Commissioner. The renovation procedure has been initiated in October 2025, with the appointment of an evaluator. My Ministry is awaiting the final report and scope of works of the evaluator before launching a tender exercise for the renovation works for which there is a budgetary provision of Rs9 million that has been earmarked for this financial year. Thank you.

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

Mr Beejan: Thank you, Deputy Speaker, Sir. In view of the public funds spent on the maintenance of the official residence and payment of rent, will the hon.Minister confirm whether the former High Commissioner actually occupied the residence for the intended period? And if not, what justified the continued expenditure?

Mr Ramful: From my information, the High Commissioner was accommodated in a rented accommodation, from 26 August 2015 to September 2016, for an amount of 5,611.67 British pounds, monthly. Afterwards, he moved to the government-owned apartment from

October 2016 to January 2019. Then in January 2019, from the records, apparently, there was a major water leak and boiler issues. Therefore, he moved out and stayed in a rented apartment till the termination of his contract of employment, which is on 19 November 2024. He was paying a monthly rent of 7,367.67 British pounds, which is approximately half a million rupees monthly.

But well, it is quite surprising, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that for five years, they could not find a contractor to remedy the problems that they were having.

The Deputy Speaker: You have a last question?

Mr Beejan: Yes, one last. Thank you, Deputy Speaker, Sir. Will the hon. Minister inform the House as to the name of the former High Commissioner of Mauritius in the UK? Also, following the departure of the former High Commissioner from the official residence, has the landlord submitted any claim whether for damages, outstanding obligation or compensation against the Government of Mauritius, and if so, what is the status of such claim? Thank you.

Mr Ramful: The name of the former Ambassador is Mr Nunkoo. Apparently, the landlord has retained approximately Rs534,000 for damages that have been caused to the…

Ms Anquetil: Incroyable!

(Interruptions)

Mr Ramful: No, no, rupee.

An hon. Member: Rupee?

Mr Ramful: *Oui*, damages.

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

STREET LIGHTING INSTALLATION – MOTORWAYS & PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS – MAINTENANCE

(No. B/1181) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the new street lighting systems installed on motorways, overhead pedestrian crossings and bridges, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, the list thereof not yet vested in the local authorities for maintenance and payment of electricity bills, indicating, in each case, the –

(a) date as from which same ought to have been so vested;

(b) reasons therefor, and

(c) expected timeline for the vesting thereof.

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to my reply to Parliamentary Question B/196 of the Sitting of 18 March 2025, wherein I explained that the Road Development Authority is responsible for the construction of road infrastructure, including the installation of street lighting networks as part of the new road projects, and upon completion of a project and its handover by the contractor, the street lighting network is vested in the respective local authorities. Consequently, responsibility for the payment of electricity bills for the street lighting network rests with the respective local authority. However, it is to be highlighted that during the defects liability period, which is generally for a period of two years, the contractor remains responsible for the maintenance of the street lighting installation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a), (b) and (c) of the question, out of the 10 projects undertaken by the RDA in the last five years, all projects have already been handed over to the respective local authorities, except for the following three projects –

(i) Construction of a flyover on Motorway M1 at La Vigie. The start date of the project was 01 January 2024 and was completed on 01 April 2025. The electrified street lighting network found along M1 is already under CEB's purview. However, the solar street lightings along slip lanes would be handed over after the completion of the defects liability period in April 2027.

(ii) Upgrading of Roche Bois Footbridge across Motorway M2. The project started on 06 February 2025 and was completed on 10 October 2025. I am informed that street lighting systems came into operation in December 2025, and the handing over to the local authority will be effected after the defects liability period by 10 October 2026.

(iii) Construction of Sorèze Interchange along Motorway M1. The project started on 06 April 2018 and was completed on 21 July 2022. I am informed by the RDA that the handing over exercise was delayed in view of the completion of the necessary contractual and technical requirements by the contractor, including responsibility for reinstatement works. These have been completed and the as-built drawings were eventually submitted by the contractor in August 2025 and were thereafter forwarded to the respective local authorities. However, the handing over of the street lighting system was further delayed due to repeated theft of electric cables along A1-M1 Link Road, and more recently, during a site visit carried out in June 2026, which revealed additional instances of cable theft. The handing over of the street lighting system to the local authorities is now expected to be done in September 2026.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes!

MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE ARBITRATION COMMITTEE – BACKLOG CASES – 2019 to 2024

(No. B/1182) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the backlog of 1,635 cases pending before Motor Vehicle Insurance Arbitration Committee during the period 2019 to 2024, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof heard and determined by the newly reconstituted Committee.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank the hon. Member for following up on this matter further to the question she raised exactly one year ago through PQ B/753 regarding the backlog of cases before the Motor Vehicle Insurance Arbitration Committee, in short, MVIAC. I wish to remind the House that MVIAC has been established as a quasi-judicial administrative body under the Road Traffic Act to determine disputes arising between two insurers or between a policy holder and an insurer regarding their respective liability on the amount of compensation to be paid following a road accident not involving bodily injuries. The MVIAC sits in four divisions, each presided over by a chairperson or one or of the three vice-chairpersons.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am pleased to inform the House that all the 1,635 cases which were pending before the MVIAC for the period 2019 and 2024, that is, prior to the general elections of 2024, have now been heard and determined by the newly reconstituted committee which has been in office since April 2025.

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the chairperson, the three vice-chairpersons and their respective teams for this remarkable achievement and their dedication in addressing the long-standing backlog.

To end, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since 19 July 2025 and up to 25 July 2026, that is over the period of one year, the MVIAC has held 147 sittings during which 2,126 applications have been considered. Of these, 1,446 applications have been determined reflecting the Committee's sustained efforts to process applications efficiently and make significant progress in reducing the backlog.

Thank you.

Ms Anquetil : Je vous remercie, M. le président. J'ai pris bonne note que le *backlog* des dossiers antérieurs à 2024 a été entièrement résorbé.

Would the Minister inform the House what measures have been introduced by the newly reconstituted committee to ensure that such a backlog does not recur?

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Well, I am told that the Committee meets every week, back-to-back with the four divisions in order to have achieved that good progress and they are adopting that same pace of work going forward. So, hoping that, if *ceteris paribus*, meaning everything else remains the same, the current backlog would be cleared by end of 2027. But demands keep coming in, there is a rolling stock. But they are doing their best.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East!

GOVERNMENT & GRANT-AIDED PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS – STUDENT ENROLMENT & STAFFING

(No. B/1183) Mr E. Juman (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to Government and grant-aided primary and secondary schools, he will state, since 1 January 2026 to date, the total number of –

(a) students enrolled and teaching and non-teaching staff in post, giving in each case, a breakdown thereof for primary and secondary schools, respectively, and

(b) days of absenteeism recorded in respect of students, teaching and non-teaching staff, respectively, giving in each case, a breakdown thereof for primary and secondary schools, respectively.

Dr. Gungapersad: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that there are a total of 420 Government and grant-aided primary and secondary schools as follows –

(i) 219 Government Primary Schools;

(ii) 53 Grant-Aided Primary Schools;

(iii) 66 State Secondary Schools including 6 MGI/RTI Schools, and

(iv) 82 Grant-Aided Secondary Schools.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the number of students enrolled in these schools are –

(i) 61,093 in Government Primary Schools;

(ii) 17,098 in Grant-Aided Primary Schools;

(iii) 37,358 in State Secondary Schools including MGI/RTI schools;

(iv) 42,218 Grant-Aided Secondary Schools including PSEA, MEDCO and REDCO.

As regard to the staffing position, I am informed that there are –

(i) 4,880 teaching staff, 1,898 non-teaching staff in Government Primary Schools;

(ii) 1,193 teaching staff and 538 non-teaching staff in Grant-Aided Primary Schools;

(iii) 5,279 teaching staff and 2,061 non-teaching staff in State Secondary Schools including six MGI/RTI Schools;

(iv) 4,821 teaching staff and 2,256 non-teaching staff in the Grant-Aided Secondary Schools.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, the House would appreciate that it will take some more time to compile the information requested by the hon. Member. This information is currently being compiled by the officials of my Ministry and same will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly as soon as the compilation is completed.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: You have one, hon. Member?

Ms Savabaddy: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister inform the House the fact that unions and managers heavily criticize the Private Secondary Education Authority (PSEA) for retroactively declaring legitimate operational expenses as disallowed after funds are spent creating immense financial instability. What will be done in such cases? Yes?

Dr. Gungapersad: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I cannot see how this question is related to the number of schools.

The Deputy Speaker: So, you do not have an answer?

Dr. Gungapersad: The question is not related to this.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, you do not have an answer. Thank you.

METHADONE SUBSTITUTION THERAPY PROGRAMME – EXPENSES – NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

(**No. B/1184) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the Methadone Substitution Therapy Programme, he will state –

(a) the monthly expenses incurred per patient thereunder, indicating the outcome thereof, and

(b) whether consideration will be given for the introduction of a new strategic plan for the social and economic reintegration of the patients being treated thereunder, including provisions for the engagement thereof in productive activities.

(Withdrawn)

The Deputy Speaker: Question B/1184 has been withdrawn. So, we go to the hon. First Member for Vacoas and Floréal.

RDA – POST OF CHAIRPERSON – TERMS & CONDITIONS

(No. B/1185) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the post of Chairperson of the Road Development Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether –

(a) same is held on a part-time or full-time basis, indicating the terms and conditions attached thereto, and

(b) a chauffeur driven car is put at the disposal of the incumbent thereof.

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, Mr Seewoonarain Koonjul has been appointed as Chairperson of the Board of the Road Development Authority in accordance with Section 7(3) of the Road Development Authority Act for a period of two years with effect from 23 December 2024 on a part-time basis. He is eligible to an all-inclusive monthly allowance of Rs75,000 as approved by government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the chairperson is provided with transport facilities by the RDA as and when required to enable him to effectively discharge his roles and responsibilities, that is, for official purposes and to attend board meetings.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Member.

Ms J. Bérenger : Est-ce que l'honorable ministre peut nommer un autre *part-time Chairperson* d'un corps para étatique tombant sous son ministère qui bénéficie d'un véhicule avec chauffeur qui lui est dédié pour ses besoins personnels ?

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I know of the parastatal bodies in my Ministry. Anyway, we wrote to the Secretary for Public Service and we got the reply on 18 February whereby, the Secretary for Public Service informed the Ministry that the RDA may consider providing alternative transport facilities as and when required to the Chairperson to enable him to effectively discharge his roles and responsibilities.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member…

Ms J. Bérenger : M. le président, j'ai une autre question…

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

Ms J. Bérenger: Merci. Je me réfère à l'affirmation faite par le Ministre comme quoi il est possible de procurer un véhicule pour *discharge his responsibilities*. L'honorable Ministre peut-il informer la Chambre de quelle responsabilité le *Chairperson* de la RDA s'acquitte-t-il lorsqu'il est à sa résidence pendant le weekend ou après les heures de travail, après 22h ? Et s'il peut *table* le *logbook*.

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not have the information that the hon. Member has. What I know is that the Chairperson, anyway, the Road Development Authority, we have many site visits and I know that the Chairperson is undertaking his duty, his job as Chairperson. He makes many site visits. So obviously, I do not think a Chairperson will travel by bus to go to visit the roads, broken roads or any project that we are inaugurating, he will come by bus to do that.

Ms J. Bérenger: Can he table the logbook, please?

The Deputy Speaker: I cannot answer for him.

The hon. Fourth Member for Rodrigues!

Ms J. Bérenger: C'est l'argent des contribuables.

The Deputy Speaker: I cannot control his answer.

Yes, I have already called the next person.

You can come back with a substantive question for the logbook if you want.

RODRIGUES – ORGANIC TRANSITION 2030 INITIATIVE – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/1186) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the Organic Transition 2030 Initiative being implemented by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly aiming at transforming Rodrigues Island into an entirely ecological island by shifting its complete agricultural sector to organic farming by 2030, he will state the measures being taken by his Ministry for the achievement thereof, including the establishment of certified organic supply chains in support thereof.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it gives me an opportunity to highlight a showcase in the making. At the outset, I wish to inform the House that the Ministry fully supports the Organic Transition 2030 initiative being implemented by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, which aims to progressively transform Rodrigues into an ecological island through organic and sustainable agricultural practices.

I wish to inform the House further that the Ministry continues to collaborate with Rodrigues Regional Assembly within our respective mandate to create an enabling national framework for organic agriculture. I am informed by the Commission for Agriculture of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly that in May 2023, a project entitled Supporting Organic Farming for Crop and Livestock and Improving Water Irrigation System in the Island of Rodrigues was initiated in collaboration with the *Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement* (CIRAD), a French public entity involved in agricultural research. The final report submitted in January 2025 provides a strategic roadmap for the transition of Rodrigues' agricultural sector towards organic production while addressing sustainable water management. I am further informed that following the report, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly started implementing several measures, including –

- a bio-farming scheme;
- providing bio-fertilisers and bio-pesticides;
- farmer training on sustainable production;
- conservation of local seeds;
- integrated pest and disease management, and
- support to crop producers.

In parallel, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Ministry is finalising the Organic Agricultural Bill, which is currently being fine-tuned at the Attorney General's Office. The Bill, which reflects internationally recognised principles of organic agriculture, will establish a comprehensive legal framework for the production, processing, certification, labelling, and marketing of organic products in the Republic of Mauritius.

Through the newly established National Organic Office, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ministry will collaborate with stakeholders, including Rodrigues Regional Assembly, to develop a certified organic supply chain covering production, certification, processing, packaging, storage, marketing, and value addition. Support will be provided to producers and operators to comply with organic standards, strengthen traceability, protect the integrity of organic products, and improve access to domestic, tourism, and export markets.

Through the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute, the Ministry is currently implementing research, extension, demonstration, and capacity building programme in collaboration with Rodrigues Regional Assembly. Training will be provided to officers and farmers to strengthen organic production practices, promote the efficient use of organic resources, improve soil fertility, and enhance resilience to climate variability. The successful implementation of the Organic Transition 2030 initiative requires coordinated action involving Government, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, farmers, private sector, and development partners. The Ministry remains strongly committed to support Rodrigues in achieving its vision of becoming a model ecological island while enhancing food security, protecting biodiversity, and creating sustainable opportunities for resilient value chain.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Edouard.

Mr Edouard: Yes, I thank the hon. Minister for his reply. May I ask the hon. Minister about certification? Will there be a unified organic certification framework extended directly to Rodrigues to ensure local smallholders can access and afford certified labels?

Dr. Boolell: Well, your valuable suggestion, of course, will be taken on board, but as far as I know, it is being done.

TRIBECA FUN PARK – PERMITS, AUTHORISATIONS & CLEARANCES – POWER OUTAGE INCIDENT

(No. B/1187) Mr R. Beechook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Tribeca Fun Park, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether –

(a) it has been issued with all the requisite permits, authorisations and clearances for the operation thereof, and

(b) the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services has initiated an inquiry into the recent power outage that occurred thereat and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof and the measures being envisaged to ensure compliance with safety protocols and avert any recurrence thereof.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/1178)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Third Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle!

FOREIGN WORKERS – PRIVATE RECRUITMENT AGENCIES

(No. B/1188) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to the recruitment of foreign workers, he will state whether it is obligatory to have recourse to the services of private recruitment agencies therefor.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following extensive stakeholders' consultation and international guidelines, my Ministry prepared the Private Recruitment Agencies Regulations 2025, which came into operation on 06 October 2025. The regulations were developed having regard to International Labour Organisation General Principle and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment and the International Organisation for Migration, International Recruitment Integrity System (IRIS), with a view to strengthening safeguard for workers, reducing the risk of exploitative recruitment, debt bondage, and forced labour, and ensuring ethical recruitment in line with internationally recognised standards.

According to Section 4 of the Private Recruitment Agencies Act 2023, no person shall recruit a worker or carry out recruitment activities unless licensed as a private recruitment agency. On 18 March 2026, my Ministry issued guidelines for employers recruiting a non-citizen worker on the website of my Ministry, which provide that employers should, as a general rule, recruit non-citizen workers through a duly licensed private recruitment agency, whilst direct recruitment will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances by the Permanent Secretary. The guidelines also provide the relevant procedure to follow, as well as the compliance requirement for direct recruitment in exceptional circumstances. A further communiqué was issued by my Ministry on 06 May 2026, informing employers that the recruitment of non-citizen workers should henceforth be carried out through duly licensed private recruitment agencies, unless otherwise authorised by the Permanent Secretary in exceptional circumstances.

Accordingly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is now mandatory as a general rule for employers wishing to recruit foreign workers to engage the services of a duly licensed private recruitment agency, unless the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry authorises them to recruit directly. The requirement to use licensed recruitment agencies is central to our commitment to fair, transparent, and ethical recruitment practices to protect migrant workers from exploitation –

(i) it is ensured that recruitment activities are undertaken only by persons who have been duly licensed by the Ministry and who remain subject to statutory obligation, monitoring, and enforcement;

(ii) licensed agencies are required to comply with prescribed legal obligations relating to ethical recruitment, transparency, due diligence, contractual requirements, and proper record keeping;

(iii) it strengthens Government's oversight over the entire recruitment chain from the country of origin to employment in Mauritius, thereby reducing opportunities for illegal recruitment, human trafficking, and forced labour;

(iv) it gives practical effect to the Employer Pays Principle by ensuring that recruitment fees and related costs are borne by employers and not migrant workers, thereby reducing the risk of debt bondage and exploitation;

(v) finally, it promotes greater accountability among all parties involved in the recruitment process and contributes to safeguarding the dignity, rights, and welfare of migrant workers while ensuring that employers recruit workers through lawful, transparent, and ethical procedures.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to report that ever since that this requirement to recruit through a recruitment agency has been made compulsory, we have received, at the level of the Ministry, many representations from many employers who wanted to be able to continue recruiting directly. Accordingly, the Permanent Secretary in my Ministry is considering allowing direct recruitment in the following cases –

- where the identity of the individual is material, for example, jockeys, priests, sports person, and certain employees of religious associations. In that case, you do not need to go for a recruitment agent;
- where there is specialised recruitment, for example, a hospital recruiting a medical specialist or a bank recruiting a highly specialised executive, and
- the first category is intra-group transfers, where a Mauritian employer has employees within the same group from another country, they can ask for these employees to be transferred to Mauritius without going through recruitment agencies.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. You have one supplementary? Yes.

Mr Ramdass: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In relation to the numerous applications which had been made and which were pending at the Ministry prior to the coming into force of the regulation, *pendente lite*, *c'est-à-dire* prior to May 2026, *est-ce que le ministre serait disposé à considérer la possibilité de dispenser ces applications de ce règlement, c'est-à-dire d'avoir recours à un* private recruitment agency?

Mr Uteem: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for all applications received before May 2026, we have already allowed direct recruitment but for those applications received after May 2026, we are also considering, on a case-by-case basis, for the PS to exercise his discretion to allow direct recruitment.

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

B24 ROAD, ST JULIEN D'HOTMAN – PIPE LAYING WORKS

(No. B/1189) Mr G. P. Venkatasami (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the proposed pipe laying works to be carried out along B24 Road at St Julien d'Hotman, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to where matters stand.

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, la CWA m'informe que le contrat de renouvellement de tuyaux dans la région de St Julien d'Hotman a été attribué à Quality Builders Co. Ltd, le 23 octobre 2023, pour un montant de R 76,846,000. Les travaux ont débuté le 18 décembre 2023 et devaient s'achever le 12 avril 2025.

Le long de la route Higginson B24, le projet prévoit la pose de deux tuyaux de chaque côté de la route sur une longueur de 2,56 km. La totalité des 5,6 km a été posée d'un côté de la route, tandis que 2.2 km ont été posés de l'autre côté. De plus, 1 km de tuyaux posés de chaque côté de la route, soit 2 km, a été mis en service et remise en état de façon permanente. L'asphaltage a été réalisé dans le cadre d'un contrat distinct conclu avec Beemanique Stone Crusher Ltd le 3 novembre 2025.

Sur la route B24, il reste encore des travaux à faire, par exemple le remplacement des tuyaux. Il faudra poser 300 m de tuyaux. Il faudra aussi faire les essais de pression dans les tuyaux sur 5 km. Il y aura des travaux de raccordement pour les domestiques, fixation des selles et fixation des accessoires.

M. le président, en 2025, alors qu'une enquête était en cours auprès de l'entrepreneur par la FCC, la CWA a suspendu les paiements et l'entrepreneur a quitté le chantier en juillet 2025. En février 2026, cette année-ci, la FCC a informé la CWA de la conclusion de son enquête. Un paiement partiel a donc été effectué et l'entrepreneur a repris ses activités sur le chantier le 20 avril 2026 de cette année-ci, effectuant à nouveau des raccordements.

M. le président, la CWA m'informe que lors de l'exécution des travaux, il a été constaté, encore une fois, que l'entrepreneur n'avait pas procédé à la remise en état provisoire de la route après les travaux d'excavation. Malgré plusieurs injonctions de la CWA, lui demandant de renforcer les effectifs sur ce chantier parce qu'on a pas mal de complaintes des députés de l'endroit, l'entrepreneur a refusé de s'y conformer. Aucun travail supplémentaire de pose de tuyaux n'a été réalisé depuis la reprise des travaux en avril 2026. Donc, le chemin est dans un état terrible. L'entrepreneur, donc, Quality Builders Co. Ltd, attendait qu'il soit payé pour poursuivre les travaux.

Le 4 juin 2026, l'entrepreneur a signifié une mise en demeure à la CWA invoquant des non-paiements des sommes certifiées et indiquant son intention d'engager des poursuites judiciaires et de suspendre les travaux jusqu'au règlement. L'entrepreneur a cessé toute activité sur le chantier, Monsieur le député, depuis le 26 juin 2026.

Compte tenu des dangers pressants sur le site et l'absence d'une réponse de l'entrepreneur, Quality Builders Co. Ltd, la CWA a chargé Beemanique Stone Crusher Ltd de réaliser des travaux de remise en état provisoire de ces chemins. Ces travaux ont été achevés le 14 juillet 2026.

M. le président, suite à la certification par la CWA que les travaux ont été réalisés à sa satisfaction, la CWA fera le nécessaire pour payer le contracteur, mais l'entrepreneur devra soumettre un nouveau calendrier pour achever les travaux.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Member!

Mr Venkatasami: Est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire si les travaux de pose de tuyaux ont été complétés ?

Mr Assirvaden: Non, il reste encore 3 km. Je suis un peu perdu dans mes papiers, mais deux ou trois kilomètres de tuyaux restent encore à être posés et des raccordements domestiques individuels restent à faire. Donc, c'est pour cette raison que jusqu'ici sur les R 76 millions, nous avons payé R 28 millions. Donc, on va essayer de terminer ce projet à R 46 millions, moins de 76 millions, parce que nous avons dû payer Beemanique Stone Crusher Ltd pour la l'asphaltage.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes!

Mr Venkatasami: Est-ce qu'on peut savoir quand le projet va être réalisé complètement?

Mr Assirvaden: On attend d'abord le nouveau calendrier de l'entrepreneur. Dès que nous recevrons ce calendrier-là, nous allons payer la somme de R 1,4 millions pour pouvoir continuer le travail. Je suppose que quelques kilomètres de tuyaux, on peut s'arranger pour que dans 2 mois le travail et l'asphaltage aussi soient faits.

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

VALLÉE DES PRÊTRES, COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE – EQUIPPED WAITING ROOM PROVISION

(No. B/1190) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the Vallée des Prêtres Community Health Centre, he will state whether consideration will be given for the provision of a dedicated waiting room equipped with adequate seating and ventilation facilities to cater for the increased number of patients attending thereat for blood sampling.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that Vallée des Prêtres Community Health Centre is situated on the ground floor of a multi-purpose complex owned by the Municipality of Port Louis, which also accommodates other public services, including a post office. The CHC has a dedicated waiting area with a seating capacity for 55 persons. The area is adequately ventilated through functional windows, fans, and air conditioning system. In addition, three units of five-seater bucket chairs have been recently fixed in the adjoining covered veranda to enhance patients' comfort during these peak attendance periods.

Blood collection services, at Vallée des Prêtres Community Health Centre, are conducted every Tuesday and Wednesday from 6.45 a.m. to 8.00 a.m. prior to the commencement of medical consultation sessions. However, the blood collection sessions may extend beyond 8.00 a.m., particularly when a significant number of patients arrive at or after 7.30 a.m. On average, 80 patients attend each blood collection session, while some 50 to 60 patients attend the CHC for general consultations and other primary healthcare services on a daily basis.

The average waiting time for patients attending the CHC is approximately 10 to 25 minutes. Temporary congestion occurs in the waiting area when the arrival of other patients attending the CHC or medical consultations and dressing services overlap with those who are already at the CHC for blood collection. To address this issue, arrangement has been made to deploy a Healthcare Assistant during blood collection sessions in order to improve patient flow and ensure that blood collection activities are completed before the commencement of the medical consultation sessions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, accordingly, while the existing waiting area is adequate in terms of ventilation and functionality, operational measures are being implemented to improve patient flow and accommodate patients attending for blood collection more efficiently.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/1151, B/1152, B/1191, B/1194, B/1196, B/1197, B/1198, B/1204, B/1205, B/1206, and B/1207.

We will not have time for another question. Time is over!

Madam Speaker will take the Chair.

At this stage, Madam Speaker took the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Please be seated. I am very happy to see you are in a good mood.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

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

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

On motion made and seconded, the following Bills were read a first time –

(a) The Finance Bill (No. XII of 2026).

(b) The Economic and Financial Measures (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. XIII of 2026).

Second Reading

THE FINANCE BILL (No. XII of 2026)

&

THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL MEASURES (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL (No. XIII of 2026)

Order for Second Reading read.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

(4.02 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I move that the Finance Bill (No. XII of 2026) and the Economic and Financial Measures (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. XIII of 2026) be read a second time and considered together.

Madam Speaker, we are not here today to reopen the debate on the measures announced in the Budget Speech and its Annex. These two Bills simply give legal effect to the measures that have already been debated and approved by the National Assembly.

These two Bills, Madam Speaker, bring amendments to a total of 83 enactments relating to policies and measures announced in the Budget Speech 2026-2027 and its Annex, and for matters connected, consequential or incidental thereto.

Madam Speaker, I will start with the amendments being brought under the Finance Bill (No. XIII of 2026).

Clause 2 amends the Customs Act in order to tighten customs compliance and penalties, by requiring full pre-payment of duties and taxes before clearance and by enhancing risk-based controls on imports. This, Madam Speaker, will close loopholes, will reduce leakages and reinforce the integrity of our border tax regime.

Clause 3 amends the Customs Tariff Act to clarify tariff administration and to adjust selected customs duties and exemptions, in line with the measures announced in the Budget. Through these adjustments, we support productive sectors, ensure greater predictability for importers and maintain coherence between tariff policy and our broader economic objectives.

Clause 4 amends the Excise Act to extend an excise duty on all plastic bottles and to update excise measures on hard liquor, tobacco, sugar-sweetened products and related duty-free facilities. This clause reflects our commitment to public health and environmental sustainability.

Clause 5 amends the Finance and Audit Act to shorten timelines for financial reporting and audit, and to align central government and public sector accounts with International Public Sector Accounting Standards. By doing so, we are improving the timeliness, the transparency and comparability of our public finances, which is essential for fiscal discipline and credibility.

Clause 6 amends the Gambling Regulatory Authority Act to modernise the gambling framework for interactive and digital gaming, and to strengthen governance, supervision and responsible gambling. This clause brings our regulatory architecture in line with technological developments, while at the same time safeguarding vulnerable groups and reinforcing oversight of this sensitive sector.

Clause 7 amends the Income Tax Act to rebalance the income tax structure and incentives, to implement technical changes related to the Qualified Domestic Minimum Top-up Tax, and to adjust exemptions and tax holidays. Through these measures, Madam Speaker, we are maintaining our competitiveness within the evolving international tax landscape.

Clause 8 amends the Inscription of Privileges and Mortgages Act to mandate the electronic registration of deeds by Attorneys-at-Law instead of only Notaries. This modernisation supports digitalisation, improves efficiency and reduces the scope for errors and delays in the registration process.

Clause 9 amends the Land (Duties and Taxes) Act to maintain the competitiveness of real-estate schemes, while introducing a special levy and rationalising exemptions. The intention is to balance the attractiveness of Mauritius as an investment destination with a fair contribution to government revenue and overall development.

Clause 10 amends the Mauritius Revenue Authority Act to –

1) introduce a framework for compliance agreement;

2) authorise the MRA to share information on individuals and businesses involved in online commercial activities, including unregistered traders with the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection;

3) extend the application of provision relating to stay of assessment in cases involving non-remission of tourist fees collected, where the matter is referred to a law enforcement agency for parallel investigation, and

4) provide for flexibility in the registration of a tax agent.

Clause 10, therefore, promotes a more collaborative approach between the tax administration and taxpayers, while ensuring that intermediaries operate to the highest professional and ethical standards.

Clause 11 amends the National Assembly (Retiring Allowances) Act to modernise the pension arrangements of Members of Parliament, including the introduction of a new defined contribution scheme with appropriate grandfathering provisions. It preserves acquired rights, while placing parliamentary pensions on a more sustainable and transparent footing for the future.

Madam Speaker, as I have already stated, we have not abandoned the gist of the pension reform, except for the means test which is out. We took note of the concerns and decided to discard the means test.

Listening to people does not mean ignoring reality or denying the challenges we face. The demographic and fiscal pressures remain, and reform is, therefore, still necessary. That is our responsibility.

The real choice before the country is not between reform and comfort. That choice does not exist. The real choice is between a controlled reform today or a brutal crisis tomorrow.

Clause 12 amends the National Pensions Act to –

1) support the transition from the Basic Retirement Pension to the State Age Pension;
2) adjust eligibility and residency rules, and
3) set up a Steering Committee to advise on the establishment of a new pension regulatory framework.

Madam Speaker, although I believe that the current provision is clear in regard to our policy intention regarding the increase in State Age Pension after taking into consideration the cost of living, I will nevertheless bring an amendment at Committee Stage, as per the amendments, which I hope, has been circulated, to section 3C in Clause 12 of the Bill to remove any possible confusion or doubt in the mind of the public.

Clause 13 amends the Pensions Act to clarify the circumstances in which retirement requires Presidential approval and to allow recovery of sums due to Government when an officer exits the public service.

Clause 14 amends the President's Emoluments and Pension Act to recalibrate the pensions of the President, the Vice-President and their surviving spouses, net of any non-contributory State pensions.

Clause 15 amends the Public Debt Management Act to strengthen reporting obligations and standards for public sector debt and fiscal risks. This, Madam Speaker, will improve quality, completeness and timeliness of debt data, thereby reinforcing our capacity to manage public debt prudently and transparently.

Clause 16 amends the Registration Duty Act to adjust registration duties, penalties and remission powers, particularly in respect of first-time buyers and land surveyor reports. It refines our regime to deter abuse, provides targeted relief, where warranted, and provides the Ministry of Finance with a structured mechanism to address technical and administrative cases.

Clause 17 amends the Revenue Tribunal Act to standardise the amount payable on tax and customs appeals lodged with the Revenue Tribunal. This, Madam Speaker, promotes consistency, predictability and fairness in the appeals process for taxpayers.

Clause 18 amends the Social Contribution and Social Benefits Act to provide for the payment of Retirement Benefit or Disability Allowances due but unpaid at the time of the beneficiary's death to the spouse or legal heirs of the deceased.

Clause 19 amends the Schedule of the Social Integration and Empowerment Act to increase the monthly income threshold to be eligible for beneficiaries under the Social Register of Mauritius with effect from 01 July 2026.

Clause 20 amends the State Lands Act to remove the deferment facilities granted to industrial site lessees during the COVID-19 pandemic, with effect from 01 July 2027, in order to strengthen Government revenue mobilisation while allowing stakeholders sufficient time to settle outstanding amounts.

Clause 21 amends the Statistics Act to recognise public sector debt statistics as official statistics, thereby enhancing the credibility and the transparency of public debt reporting, while providing greater operational flexibility to Statistics Mauritius in the collection and dissemination of statistical information.

Clause 22 amends the Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act to require that at least 25 per cent of the members of every Board should be women and to bring the Real Estate Agent Authority under the scope of the Act.

Clause 23 amends the Statutory Bodies Pension Funds Act to clarify the benefits payable to officers leaving a statutory body, allow the recovery of outstanding amounts owed by an officer to Government or a statutory body before any refund is made, and include the Real Estate Agent Authority in the First Schedule to enable it to establish a pension fund for its employees.

Clause 24 amends the Transcription and Mortgage Act to require Attorneys-at-Law to submit registration documents electronically through the Registrar-General's online system and increases the fees for searches on the immovable property database.

Clause 25 introduces several amendments to the Value Added Tax Act to modernise the VAT framework, strengthen tax administration and improve compliance. The amendments provide for charging of VAT on the commission received by foreign operators of online marketplaces, and enforce enforcement measures, revise VAT obligations for digital service providers, introduce a 5 per cent Insurance Premium Tax on short-term general insurance from 01 January 2027, and clarify VAT treatment for various sectors and transactions. They also include measures to facilitate e-invoicing compliance, improve recovery and reporting procedures, align VAT provisions with international standards, and extend exemptions or zero-rating on selected goods and services.

Clause 27 validates the Resolution passed by the National Assembly on 19 June 2026 relating to the increase in excise duty rates on hard liquor, tobacco products and sugar-sweetened products.

Madam Speaker, I now turn to the Economic and Financial Measures (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2026.

This Bill introduces amendments across a wide range of legislations to secure financial stability, enhance governance, and support our economic and social priorities.

Clause 2 amends the Bank of Mauritius Act to –

1) enable Government to issue longer-term bonds of up to 30 years in line with our strategy to lengthen debt maturity and reduce risk;

2) establish a Cyber Threat Intelligence Sharing Platform for the financial sector;

3) provide for the Minister of Finance, after consultation, with the Governor of the Bank of Mauritius, to transfer funds to the Bank of Mauritius to increase its paid-up capital, and

4) upgrade the qualifications requirements of the Chairperson of the Banking Services Review Panel.

Clause 3 amends section 64 of the Banking Act to ensure that bank secrecy cannot be used to block access to customer information needed for investigations under the Financial Crimes Commission Act or under the UN sanctions law. It clarifies the process, Madam Speaker, for disclosure orders, extends disclosure beyond money-laundering to a broader range of financial crimes, and confirms that these disclosures and reporting obligations override the statutory duty of compliance, but it has to follow a due process, while also fixing a drafting cross-reference.

Clause 4 amends the Business Registration Act to allow a business to display its business registration in any format and at its principal place of business.

Clause 5 amends the Captive Insurance Act to empower the Financial Services Commission to extend, on application and for valid reasons, the time limits for regulatory returns and filings by captive insurers.

Clause 6 amends the Civil Service Family Protection Scheme Act to improve representation on the Board and thereby strengthen its governance.

Clause 7 amends the Civil Status Act to allow a non-citizen married to a Mauritian outside Mauritius to either submit an official document from a competent authority attesting marital status when applying for a temporary residence permit or provide an affidavit sworn before the Supreme Court of Mauritius. This is consequential to the amendments to the Immigration Act.

Clause 8 amends the Clinical Trials Act to provide for expanded electronic processes, fast-track committees, clinical trials in public hospitals, clearer licensing and investigator accreditation and liability protections. The aim is to refine the clinical trials framework and bring it in line with the international best practices.

Clause 9 amends the *Code Civil Mauricien* to remove the obligation for a seller of a motor vehicle to remit a "*certificat de gage sans déplacement*" where the registration is initiated through the Registrar-General's online portal. This amendment, therefore, cuts one administrative step, reduces paperwork and the need to queue up at multiple counters, and speeds up online registration of second-hand vehicles.

Clause 10 amends the Companies Act to strengthen beneficial ownership transparency, extend name reservation periods, adjust various technical provisions, and facilitate the adoption of sustainability reporting standards.

Clause 11 amends the Competition Act to reinforce the framework for market inquiries by empowering the Competition Commission to issue directions, extend undertakings and appeal rights to such inquiries, and enhance transparency and participation.

Clause 12 amends the Co-operatives Act to modernise the regulatory framework, including updated definitions, minimum capital and eligibility requirements, stronger internal controls, risk-based supervision, and clearer rules for dormant societies and fees.

Clause 13 amends the Courts Act to broaden the category of forensic reports admissible in evidence without requiring the attendance of the scientific officer, unless the Court considers the officer's attendance absolutely necessary.

Clause 14 amends the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority Act to clarify that a pre-primary school is not limited to a school or to a unit located within the premises of a primary school. This amendment removes a long-lasting anomaly regarding pre-primary school sector.

Clause 15 amends the Economic Development Board Act to introduce the Golden Visa and the AI City Scheme, to rationalise certain schemes, and review Occupation Permit criteria. The amendment will enable the EDB to attract more productive investment and higher skills.

Clause 16 amends the Energy Efficiency Act to establish a regulatory framework for Energy Performance Contracting, strengthen the role of the Energy Efficiency Management Office, and increase penalties and regulatory powers to promote energy efficiency. This amendment is necessary to set a strong foundation for economic growth that would be led by the energy sector.

Clause 17 amends the Environment Act to clarify the scope and coverage of the Environment Protection Fee relating to an enterprise engaged in stone crushing or the processing of aggregates, rock sand, or basalt sand to avoid double payment of the environment protection fee. It also allows for the increase of fines or offences relating to illegal dumping of waste or other materials, littering in public places and natural sites, non-compliance with an eyesore abatement notice, and the unauthorised display of posters or defacement of designated sites. This amendment, Madam Speaker, strengthens environmental sustainability by reinforcing deterrence against activities that harm our natural environment.

Clause 18 amends the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act to expand the definition of credit unions to include societies under the Co-operatives Act which provides financial services to their members. The amendment also removes the limitation on the power on the Financial Services Commission to sanction financial institutions for non-compliance with the AML/CFT requirements. The same amendment excludes low-risk third-party administrators from the AML/CFT obligations.

Clause 19 amends the Financial Reporting Act to introduce sustainability reporting standards and provide for their enforcement by the Financial Reporting Council.

Clause 20 amends the Financial Services Act to establish a National Fintech Governance Committee, strengthen the FSC's supervisory and enforcement powers, including conservatorship and advertising controls and introduce a Private Wealth Management Licence.

Together, Madam Speaker, Clauses 18 to 20 strengthen Mauritius' reputation as a clean, transparent and forward-looking financial sector.

Clause 21 amends the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute Act to –

(1) introduce definitions of "food security" and "National Food Security Strategy";

(2) broaden the objectives of the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (FAREI) by designating it as the national authority responsible for planning, coordinating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating food security programmes and for leading the implementation of national food security, food sovereignty and food self-sufficiency targets;

(3) preparation of annual food security reports, and

(4) empower FAREI to –

    (i) establish inter-institutional committees;

(ii) require relevant Ministries, institutions and agencies to submit information required to monitor food security targets;

(iii) appoint food security experts on a contractual basis, and

(iv) facilitate public-private ventures and contract farming.

Clause 22 amends the Foundations Act to clarify which charitable foundations are subject to AML/CFT inspections and to require dates of birth in beneficial ownership registers.

Clause 23 amends the Freeport Act to remove the prescribed time limit on private freeport developers for warehousing authorisation.

Clause 24 amends the Higher Education Act to strengthen quality assurance, including for micro-credentials and foundation programmes, and to clarify the role and funding functions of the Higher Education Commission.

Clause 25 amends the Immigration Act to modernise occupational permits, align with EDB reforms, introduce prescribed fees and documentation for spouses, and establish a Digital Travel Authorisation regime. This amendment, Madam Speaker, represents an important step towards a more modern, predictable and secure immigration framework at a time when demographic growth is negative with the consequential decline in our labour force.

Madam Speaker, importantly, in Clause 25, I am removing the discretionary power of the Minister to whom the responsibility for the subject of Home Affairs is assigned, that is, in our case, the Prime Minister himself, to cancel the visa of a non-citizen in public interest. That discretionary power is being removed completely. As a result, such decision will henceforth be based on rules rather than discretion.

Clause 26 amends the Industrial Property Act to give effect to the Harare Protocol on ARIPO titles and to align the institutional framework accordingly.

Clause 27 amends the International Financial Organisations Act to update references and governance provisions relating to the Bretton Woods and related institutions and to repeal obsolete schedules.

Clause 28 amends the Irrigation Authority Act to allow authorised officers to enter specified lands within irrigation areas to verify compliance with land-use conditions.

Clause 29 amends the Jewellery Act to extend the Assay Office's supervisory remit over dealers in precious metals and stones for AML/CFT purposes, allow sanctions for non-compliance, and lengthen record-keeping periods.

Clause 30 amends the Land Drainage Authority Act to enhance coordination between the Land Drainage Authority and the National Development Unit, provide for fees and charges to be levied, and improve governance of drainage projects. This amendment will facilitate the timely implementation of land drainage projects, strengthen flood mitigation efforts and provide better protection to families, communities and businesses affected by recurrent flooding.

Clause 31 amends the Law Officers Act to update provisions following institutional changes and to clarify the circumstances in which a law officer and State Attorney may appear on behalf of entities in which the State has an interest.

Clause 32 amends the Limited Liability Partnerships Act, and Clause 33 the Limited Partnerships Act, to extend name reservation periods, raise the turnover threshold for "small partnerships" and require dates of birth in beneficial ownership registers.

Clause 34 amends the Mauritius Agricultural Marketing Act to increase applicable fines and imprisonment terms, thereby strengthening enforcement.

Clause 35, again, Madam Speaker, amends the Mauritius Citizenship Act to remove the discretionary powers of the Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs to deprive citizenship without reasons and to make the regime more rules-based. This is to address the infamous Hoffman law, which was passed specifically for one person.

Clause 36 amends the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development Act to add a representative of the Ministry of Tourism to the Board and increase the quorum.

Clause 37 amends the Mauritius Qualifications Authority Act to provide for the registration and deregistration of trainers and to strengthen the National Qualifications Framework.

Clause 38 amends the Morcellement Act to remove certain requirements relating to "*Association Foncière*" and "green forest" and to provide transitional arrangements.

Clause 39 repeals the National Environment Cleaning Authority Act to wind up that authority. Thus, only Mauri-Facilities Management Co. Ltd will operate in that sector, avoiding duplication and sub-optimal use of resources. The detailed transitional provisions for staff, assets, liabilities and acts of NECA are being addressed at Clause 60.

Clause 40 amends the National Land Transport Authority Act to review the Licensing Board's framework, introduce structured procedures and rights of appeal for licence applications, and reinforce conflict-of-interest rules.

Clause 41 amends the Non-Citizens (Employment Restriction) Act to create a student employment permit regime, with associated procedures, offences and penalties for foreign students and employers who fail to comply with the new requirements.

Clause 42 amends the Ports Act to require the Director of Shipping to verify vessels' compliance certificates before granting inwards clearance, thereby enhancing maritime safety and environmental protection.

Clause 43 amends the Private Health Institutions Act to introduce a formal application and "approval in principle" process for new or expanded private health institutions.

Clause 44 amends the Private Pension Schemes Act to provide that abandoned entitlements are transferred to the Curator of Vacant Estates.

Clause 45 amends the Public Health Act to introduce fixed penalty notices for unlawful waste disposal and storage that create public health risks.

Clause 46 amends the Public Holidays Act so that when a public holiday falls on a Sunday, the following Monday is also a public holiday.

Clause 47 amends the Public Procurement Act to allow direct procurement of specialised services from diaspora members under prescribed conditions. This will facilitate greater engagement of the Mauritian diaspora and leveraging their expertise and international experience for national development.

Clause 48 amends the Road Traffic Act to establish a Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, modernise vehicle registration procedures, expand regulation-making powers, and penalise excessive noise from altered silencers.

Clause 49 amends the Small Farmers Welfare Fund Act to clarify key definitions and to increase the maximum number of cattle from 40 to 50 to qualify for support from the Small Farmers Welfare Fund.

Clause 50 amends the Sugar Industry Efficiency Act to abolish the land conversion exemption following the discontinuation of the Integrated Modern Agricultural Morcellement Scheme.

Clause 51 amends the Tourism Authority Act to regulate outdoor accommodation and motorised water sports, harmonise alcohol limits with what is prescribed under the Road Traffic Act, and enhance safety on pleasure crafts.

Clause 52 amends the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care Act to broaden its functions to perform the duties conferred to it under the Clinical Trials Act.

Clause 53 amends the United Nations (Financial Prohibitions, Arms Embargo and Travel Ban), that is, the Sanctions Act to improve the functioning of the National Sanctions Committee and clarify procedures and third-party rights in relation to freezing and prohibition orders.

Clause 54 amends the Variable Capital Companies Act to allow Protected Cell Companies to convert into Variable Capital Companies with legal continuity. The amendment allows a Protected Cell Company to be converted into a Variable Capital Company, thereby providing greater flexibility for investment structures, facilitating businesses and ensuring continuity of existing legal rights, obligations and operations during the conversion process, that is, for the whole restructuring of the business.

Clause 55 amends the Veterinary Council Act to revise the quorum requirements.

Clause 56 amends the Virtual Asset and Initial Token Offering Services Act to tighten governance of virtual asset service providers, to prohibit unlicensed solicitation, and allow tax authorities to access crypto-asset information.

Clause 57 amends the Waqf Act to ensure compliance with the Mauritius AML/CFT/CPF framework.

Clause 58 amends the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Act to redefine the definition of "waste carrier", strengthen licensing and registration for waste transport and importation, and clarify responsibilities.

Clause 59 amends the Workers' Rights Act to introduce paid menstrual leave, extend maternity leave to 6 months with, of course, an additional option as we said for another 6 months on half pay, and lengthen paternity leave.

Finally, Madam Speaker, Clause 28 of the Finance Bill of 2026 and Clause 61 under the Economic and Financial Measures (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill provide for the commencement of the various amendments under these Bills, either on specified dates, or by proclamation, or on publication in the Government Gazette.

Madam Speaker, an amendment will be made to Clause 61, Subclause (2) and Subclause (7) of the Economic and Financial Measures (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill at Committee Stage to provide for the measure on the extension of the maternity leave and the paternity leave to be effective as from 01 January 2027 instead of 01 July 2026 to allow proper human resource planning.

I would like to inform the House, Madam Speaker, that we will come with the required legislative and operational framework for the implementation of the digital e-Visa system, parallel imports and anti-abusive pricing practices. These measures require more time for preparation before implementation.

Madam Speaker, to conclude, as I bring this Second Reading speech to a close, I reaffirm the unwavering commitment of this Government to the vision set out in Budget 2026-2027. These Bills give legislative effect to the reforms that are guided by the four principles that define our approach to nation-building –

1) Responsabilité,

2) Solidarité,

3) Efficacité économique, et

4) Justice sociale.

They are more than a collection of legislative amendments. Together, they provide the legal framework to restore fiscal sustainability, strengthen our institutions, modernise our economy, reinforce our social contract and prepare Mauritius for the challenges of an increasingly uncertain world.

The future, Madam Speaker, cannot be secured by postponing difficult decisions. It is built by having the courage to act today. Fiscal consolidation is not an end in itself. It is the means by which we restore the strength of the State, preserve confidence in our public finances and ensure that future generations inherit a country that is resilient, competitive and able to protect the most vulnerable.

As I said in the Budget Speech, the future depends on what we do in the present. These Bills translate that conviction into action. They lay the foundations of a future-ready Mauritius, that is, one which is fiscally responsible, economically stronger, socially fairer and better equipped to seize the opportunities of tomorrow.

The reforms, Madam Speaker, which are before this House demand courage and perseverance. But they are reforms undertaken not for the next election, but for the next generations.

With confidence in our people and faith in our country's future, this Government will continue to take the decisions that are necessary to secure lasting prosperity for all Mauritians.

Madam Speaker, with these words, I now commend the Bills to the House.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Prime Minister. I have an announcement**.**

ANNOUNCEMENT

FINANCE BILL & ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL MEASURES (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL – RULES OF DEBATE

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, now that the hon. Prime Minister has made his speech on the Second Reading of both Bills before the House, I have an announcement to make because I have taken time to ponder on the rules that concern such an important debate.

The measures in the Bills were already in the Annex to the Budget Speech provided to hon. Members. Those measures provide for the implementation of what was already announced.

Each Bill has what is known as a long title which describes the object of the Bill. For the Finance Bill, it is –

"(…) to provide for the implementation of measures announced in the Budget Speech 2026-2027 relating to taxation and national finance, and for the matters connected, consequential and incidental thereto."

For the Economic and Financial Measures (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, it is –

"(…) to provide for the implementation of measures announced in the Budget Speech 2026-2027 relating to economic and financial measures, and for the other miscellaneous economic, financial and related measures."

During the ensuing debate, hon. Members will be expected to refer to matters which are directly connected to the measures already announced and those which are consequential or incidental thereto only. Standing Order 42 (1) clearly stipulates that debate must be relevant to the Bill and the amendments brought.

Hon. Members will not be allowed to debate on policy matters which have already been the subject of full-fledged debates of the Appropriation 2026/2027 Bills.

Hon. Members have to restrict their observations to the amendment of the legislation proposed in the two Bills being debated and not to the main legislation been amended. Thank you.

Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. With your permission, Madam Speaker, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Friday 31 July 2026 at 3.00 p.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned!

At 4.41 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Friday 31 July 2026 at 3.00 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

BRITISH AMERICAN INVESTMENT CO. LTD. & SUBSIDIARIES – ASSETS DISPOSAL – CONDITIONS & CIRCUMSTANCES

(No. B/1151) 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 British American Investment Co. Ltd., and the subsidiaries thereof, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the conditions and circumstances under which the assets thereof were disposed of, indicating, in each case, the –

(a) selling price thereof, and
(b) account, fund or entity to which the proceeds thereof were transferred.

(Withdrawn)

SUICIDE – REPORTED CASES – CAUSES & MEASURES

(No. B/1152) 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 suicide, he will –

(a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

(i) the number of reported cases thereof on a yearly basis over the past five years, giving a breakdown thereof by age group, and

(ii) whether any study has been carried out to identify the principal causes and contributing factors thereof, and

(b) state the measures being taken and/or envisaged, in collaboration with the relevant Ministries and stakeholders, to address the causes thereof and curb the incidence thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS REVENUE AUTHORITY – E-SERVICES PORTAL – TECHNICAL ISSUES

(No. B/1153) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the e-services portal of the Mauritius Revenue Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the reasons for the technical issues pertaining thereto preventing the registration of 18-year-old citizens to benefit from the one-off Independence Allowance of Rs20,000, indicating whether same has been addressed.

Reply: As from July 2025, a one-off Independence Allowance of Rs20,000 is payable to young Mauritians who attain the age of 18 provided that they are members of a household registered on the Social Register of Mauritius (SRM).

An eligible person is required to make an application using the online facility of the MRA and provide the particulars of his bank account or a bank account held by him jointly with his mother, father or guardian. An application can be made by an eligible person within one year after reaching the age of 18.

The MRA obtains a list of persons who are on the SRM on a monthly basis, from the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity. The applications made for the Independence Allowance are verified against this list and the Rs20,000 is credited to the bank accounts provided by the beneficiaries.

Where a person who is not registered on the SRM attempts to submit an application for the Independence Allowance, the person receives a message that the application has been rejected.

I am informed by the MRA that its e-services portal is fully functional and there are no technical issues. No complaint has been received by the MRA from eligible persons who have failed to apply for the Independence Allowance.

However, only in two cases issues were encountered during the validation of the beneficiaries' bank accounts. These have since been resolved and the beneficiaries have been paid the allowance.

Out of 269 youths who have benefitted from the Independence Allowance for the year ended 30 June 2026, 104 youths are from Rodrigues Island.

DOMESTIC FOREIGN EXCHANGE MARKET – HIGH TRANSACTION COSTS – REMEDIAL MEASURES

(No. B/1154) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the domestic foreign exchange market, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius information as to the reasons for the widening, since May 2026, of the USD/MUR spread applied by commercial banks from around 2 percent to 3 percent, giving details thereof and indicating whether Government or the Bank of Mauritius proposes to introduce any measures to ensure that foreign exchange transaction costs charged to customers remain fair, transparent and competitive.

Reply: Let me first remind the House of the chaotic situation in which the previous Government left the foreign exchange market. The Mauritian rupee was in free fall, depreciating sharply against all major currencies, especially the US dollar. Between December 2014 and October 2024, the rupee depreciated by 46 percent against the US dollar, 21 percent against the British pound and 28 percent against the Euro. It is apparent that this depreciation was deliberate.

This dramatic depreciation of the rupee coupled with the excessive money printing to the tune of Rs181 billion, thus fuelling inflationary pressures in the economy, was rapidly eroding the purchasing power of the rupee. This is the situation we have inherited.

Upon taking office, one of our foremost priorities was to address the disastrous mismanagement of the foreign exchange market left by the previous Government. The Bank of Mauritius responded promptly by taking decisive actions to stabilise the value of the rupee. Government complemented these actions with new measures to generate additional foreign exchange inflows into the country. These measures have contributed to a noticeable improvement in foreign exchange inflows in the domestic market.

As regards the US dollar to Mauritian rupee exchange rate spread, that is, the difference between the buying and selling exchange rates for the US dollar applied by commercial banks, I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that, at the beginning of this year, it noted that the foreign exchange market was being distorted by some arbitrage trades practiced by commercial banks. This led to wider spreads on some currencies, higher transaction costs for customers, and reduced transparency in the pricing of foreign exchange, that in turn risked undermining confidence in the orderly functioning of the domestic forex market.

I am further informed by the Bank that these arbitrage opportunities arose because, since April 2018, different rules had been applied to the exchange rate spreads for different currencies. For the US dollar, the buying and selling rates were fixed at a difference of 90 cents. At that time, this was roughly equal to a spread of about 2.7 percent. For the euro and the pound sterling, however, the spread was set at a maximum of 3 percent.

During the COVID-19 period, the Mauritian rupee depreciated significantly. As a result, the fixed 90-cent difference for the US dollar became much smaller in percentage terms, falling to around 1.5 percent. However, the 3 percent spreads for the euro and pound remained unchanged.

Thus, the difference in spreads created arbitrage opportunities, which was detrimental to the effective functioning of the forex market.

In a bid to reduce these arbitrage opportunities, tackle market distortions and ensure that the domestic foreign exchange market operates in a fair and orderly manner, the Bank of Mauritius decided, as from May 2026, to apply the same maximum spread of 3 percent to the rupee exchange rate against all the major currencies, namely the US dollar, the euro, the pound sterling, the Japanese yen and the Swiss franc.

At the same time, the Bank of Mauritius also instructed authorised foreign exchange dealers to apply the same spreads as commercial banks for these major currencies, so as to harmonise the pricing policies practiced by banks and foreign exchange dealers and thus ensure that all customers are treated on a more consistent basis.

I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that these measures have helped to reduce opportunities for unfair trading practices, make foreign exchange pricing clearer and more transparent, ensure fairer treatment of customers across currency transactions, and support the orderly and efficient functioning of the domestic foreign exchange market.

The Bank of Mauritius continues to monitor conditions on the domestic foreign exchange market closely and stands ready to intervene as and when required in order to address any inappropriate or abusive trading practices.

PRISONS PREMISES – ILLEGAL MOBILE USAGE & POSSESSION

(No. B/1155) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the illegal use and possession of mobiles phones within prisons premises, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to the number of mobile phones seized since November 2024 to date, indicating the –

(a) number of persons charged in connection therewith, and

(b) measures taken and/or being envisaged to prevent the occurrence thereof.

(Withdrawn)

DIRECTOR OF AUDIT REPORTS – FY 2021-22 /2023-24 – CORRECTIVE MEASURES

(No. B/1156) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Reports of the Director of Audit for financial years 2021-2022 and 2023-2024, he will state –

(a) the corrective measures being envisaged in relation to the findings thereof, and

(b) whether a mechanism will be established to determine accountability in respect of losses of public funds highlighted therein.

Reply: Every year, the Director of Audit keeps on highlighting a number of issues which continue to recur in the following sectors –

(a) Serious and persistent deficiencies in procurement as well as in project and contract management, resulting in delays and cost overruns in the implementation of projects, and poor maintenance of assets;

(b) Failure to uphold prudent and accountable use of public funds, leading to wastage and loss of public funds and fraud, and

(c) Non-compliance with applicable laws and established procedures, giving rise to seriously flawed decision-making, misallocation of resources, and a total disregard for accountability.

With regard to the Director of Audit Report for FY 2021-2022 and 2023-2024, over and above the recurring issues that I have already mentioned, specific weaknesses have been identified –

(a) For Financial Year 2021-2022, the Director of Audit highlighted major breaches in the emergency procurement of COVID-19 drugs, such as procurement of Molnupiravir, including non-competitive procurement and major failure in supplier due diligence. Contracts were awarded at exorbitant prices, with poor compliance with legal and contractual obligations, thus undermining transparency, accountability, and in achievement of value for money, and

(b) For Financial Year 2023-2024, the Audit Report identified inadequate oversight, and ineffective service delivery, resulting in financial losses, delays, and inefficient use of public resources. Examples are the deficiencies in management of VIP Car Pool, the lapses in Project Management for the Safe City Project, Deposit of some Rs55 million with 'Silver Bank' by one Local Authority which cannot be withdrawn as the bank has been placed under conservatorship by the Bank of Mauritius in February 2024, and the overpayment of Pensions of Rs71 million.

With respect to part (a) of the question, the House will recall that in my previous reply to PQ B/318 on 14 April 2026, I mentioned the various actions have already been taken by this Government, which include the following –

(i) The Ministry of Finance has issued two Circulars to Supervising Officers urging them to take appropriate measures to effectively address the issues raised in the Internal Audit Report and implement the recommendations as well as to exercise greater oversight over the statutory bodies under their responsibility.

(ii) The Director, Internal Audit has been instructed to promptly alert the Ministry of Finance whenever a major weakness in a system is identified or an irregularity or a fraud is detected. Henceforth, the Internal Audit Plans will include key areas of inefficiency and loss of public funds.

(iii) The introduction of Performance-Based Budgeting has provided Government with a powerful tool to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the use of public funds. The PBB sets out Key Performance Indicators, which Ministries and Departments have to achieve.

This is compelling Ministries and Departments to review their processes, eliminate wasteful and sub-optimal practices, and improve service delivery.

Henceforth, the allocation of funds under PBB will be subject to greater scrutiny and a more results-oriented approach as it links financial resources to measurable outcomes.

Allow me to further inform the House that as part of our economic reform and fiscal consolidation programme, several measures are being implemented, including –

(a) the development of a Fiscal Responsibility Legislation in collaboration with the IMF;

(b) a Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) exercise is being conducted this year to provide a comprehensive diagnostic of Mauritius' Public Financial Management System, with the assistance of the European Union;

(c) the Public Procurement Act is being reviewed and a new e-procurement platform will be developed to modernise the existing procurement framework, with the assistance of AfDB, and

(d) a new Capital Project Process Manual has been developed to provide a structured approach to analyse and appraise capital projects.

With respect to part (b) of the question, a Public Expenditure Review Committee, chaired by a Deputy Financial Secretary, has started examination of expenditure of Ministries to identify savings and reduce waste of public expenditure with focus on the findings of the National Audit Office.

In addition, the House will recall that in my reply to PQ B/318 on 14 April 2026, I have announced the setting up of a National Accountability Enforcement Authority (NAEA) which will examine and make public officials accountable for the implementation of the recommendations arising from the reports of the entities, including Public Accounts Committee, National Audit Office/Director of Audit, Audit Committee, Internal Audit and Office of Public Sector Governance.

This Authority will be a powerful accountability mechanism to reduce unjustified and irresponsible behaviour in the public sector. It will enforce fiscal discipline, transparency, and accountability with a view to strengthening public trust in governance. It will be conferred with adequate powers and operate as an independent body in the proper discharge of its functions.

The NAEA will also initiate administrative or disciplinary actions in cases of repeated financial mismanagement, wasteful expenditure and non-compliance with its directives.

I wish to inform the house that a draft Bill for the National Accountability Enforcement Authority has already been submitted to the Attorney General's Office for legal vetting and will soon be presented to the National Assembly.

It is also envisaged, as announced in the Budget Speech 2025-2026, for the Report of the Director of Audit to be debated in the National Assembly. Furthermore, the powers of the Public Accounts Committee will be extended to address issues of accountability in the Public Sector.

FINANCIAL CRIMES COMMISSION – INQUIRIES STATISTICS

(No. B/1157) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles and 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 Financial Crimes Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of inquiries the Commission has initiated since November 2024 to date, indicating the number thereof completed and referred to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice and/or for decision to prosecute and the outcome thereof.

(Withdrawn)

PALMA/LA LOUISE – SAFE CITY SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS – RELOCATED/UPGRADED

(No. B/1158) 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 Systems, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether cameras thereof installed in the region of Palma/La Louise have been displaced, relocated, replaced or upgraded since 2020 to date and, if so, in each case, give details as to the locations thereof, reasons therefor and dates on which same were carried out.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that in the region of Palma/La Louise, there are 12 Intelligent Video Surveillance (IVS) cameras and 1 Intelligence Traffic Surveillance (ITS) camera which have been installed in the following sites –

(i) 3 IVS cameras at Palma roundabout, near SSS Palma;

(ii) 5 IVS cameras at La Louise Taxi Stand;

(iii) 2 IVS cameras at Vacoas Road, opposite Engen Petrol Pump Station, La Louise;

(iv) 2 IVS cameras at Palma Road, near 'Ashoka' hardware store; and

(v) 1 ITS camera at Palma Road, after Save Mart Supermarket.

Since 2020 to date, 6 faulty cameras have been replaced on the following sites –

(i) 1 camera at Palma Road, near 'Ashoka' hardware store on 23 May 2025;

(ii) 1 camera at Palma roundabout, near SSS Palma, on 27 November 2025, and

(iii) 4 out of 5 cameras at La Louise Taxi Stand on 23 May 2025, 07 June 2025, 11 September 2025 and 16 December 2025, respectively.

As at 24 July 2026, all the 13 cameras of the Safe City Surveillance System in the region of Palma/La Louise are operational.

I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that no camera has been displaced, relocated or upgraded in the region of Palma/La Louise.

OVERSEAS PARLIAMENTARY MISSIONS – POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVENESS – COMPLIANCE

(No. B/1159) 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 overseas parliamentary missions, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether the rules and practices of international parliamentary organisations regarding the political representativeness of Mauritian delegations thereto are complied with, indicating, since November 2024, whether any concern was raised and/or request for amendment to the composition of the Mauritian delegation submitted by the said organisations and, if so, give details thereof.

(Withdrawn)

VALUE ADDED TAX – VAT REGISTERED ENTITIES – REVENUE COLLECTED

(No. B/1160) Mr R. Beechook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Value Added Tax (VAT), he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority information as to the total amount of VAT revenue collected from newly VAT registered entities following the implementation of the reduction of the registration threshold thereof from Rs 6 million to Rs 3 million, indicating the number of new VAT registrations and VAT de-registrations, respectively, recorded to date.

(Withdrawn)

AIR MAURITIUS LTD. & AIRPORT HOLDINGS LTD. – DISMANTLEMENT

(No. B/1161) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to Air Mauritius Ltd., and Airport Holdings Ltd., he will state whether consideration will be given for the dismantling of the said holding company and the relisting of Air Mauritius Ltd., on the official market of the Stock Exchange of Mauritius.

(Withdrawn)

BANK OF MAURITIUS – INFLATION RATE – PRICE CONTROL MEASURES

(No. B/1162) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) 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 inflation, he will –

(a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to the reasons why the targeted rate of 3.5% has not been attained, and

(b) state –

   (i) the measures being envisaged to control prices of essential commodities such as bread and edible oil, and

   (ii) whether the current CORE2 inflation rate of 6.4% as published by Statistics Mauritius has increased compared to last year's corresponding period.

Reply: As per Section 4(1) of the Bank of Mauritius Act, one of the main objectives of the Bank is to maintain price stability and promote orderly and balanced economic development. The Bank of Mauritius operates within a monetary policy framework with a flexible inflation targeting regime with a range of 2 to 5 percent, with the aim of achieving the mid-point of 3.5 percent over the medium-term.

The Monetary Policy Committee meets every quarter, or as may be required, to set the policy interest rate that it views as appropriate to achieve the target inflation rate and anchor inflation expectations.

Headline inflation was, throughout 2025, well within the inflation target range of 2 to 5 percent and very close to the medium-term target of 3.5 percent. It ranged from 2.5 percent in March 2025 to 3.7 percent in December 2025.

However, the headline inflation rate rose to 4.1 percent in February 2026 and has since hovered around this level.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that the inflation rate exceeded the medium-term target mainly as a result of the outbreak of the conflict in the Middle East in February 2026. The resulting disruption to shipping due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz has triggered significant increases in international oil prices, freight charges and overall logistics costs that have pushed up prices in Mauritius.

With regard to part (b) (i) of the question, in May 2026, the Bank of Mauritius raised the Key Rate by 25 basis points to 4.75 percent. This aimed at containing potential second-round effects and anchoring inflation expectations.

At the level of Government, a number of measures are being taken to mitigate the impact of the increase in prices of essential commodities. These include –

(a) introducing a regressive maximum mark-up system for the retail prices of medicines, whereby medicines with higher import costs are subject to lower mark-up margins;

(b) putting additional commodities such as canned vegetables and frozen packed vegetables under a maximum mark-up regime;

(c) extending the price control list to new products such as canned sausages, luncheon meat, canned tuna, canned prawns, butter and margarine;

(d) extending the subsidy scheme under the Price Stabilization Fund to seven additional essential commodities such as corned beef and corned mutton, canned tuna, macaroni, pulses and chicken luncheon meat, and infant food, and

(e) bulk-purchase of essential consumer goods by the STC, which will be sold with capped profit margins and thus at much lower prices.

As regards part (b) (ii) of the question, let me first refer to the definition of CORE2 inflation. It is measured by excluding from the CPI basket of goods and services, items like food, beverages, tobacco, mortgage interest on housing loans, electricity cost, gas and other fuels as well as items whose prices are controlled.

In June 2026, CORE2 inflation stood at 6.4 percent, up from 4.7 percent in June 2025. This increase was mainly driven by higher prices in transport, restaurants and accommodation services, furnishings and household equipment.

The Bank of Mauritius is closely monitoring economic and inflation developments and, where necessary, will take appropriate policy action to ensure that inflation remains within its target range, converges towards the mid-point of 3.5 percent over the medium term, and that CORE2 inflation gradually declines to lower levels.

PUBLIC SECTOR DEBT – CAPITAL AND INTEREST REPAYABLE

(No. B/1163) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to public sector debt, he will state the current amount thereof, giving a breakdown thereof by lender and currency, indicating the amount of capital and interest repayable in connection therewith, on a yearly basis.

Reply: As the House is aware, when we left office in December 2014, public sector debt stood at Rs238 billion, representing 58.8% of GDP, which was comfortably below the statutory ceiling of 60% then in force. What followed under the previous Government was a prolonged period of fiscal indiscipline, financial irresponsibility, reckless spending and a complete disregard for the principles of sound public financial management. As a result of this irresponsible stewardship, the level of public sector debt surged to an alarming Rs608.3 billion, equivalent to 87.7% of GDP by December 2024.

Rather than taking corrective actions, the previous Government chose to weaken the fiscal framework by raising the statutory debt ceiling from 60% to 80% to mask the extent of the deteriorating public finances. Even then, they failed to contain the debt ratio, which ultimately exceeded the very limit they had set for themselves, leaving the country with an unsustainable debt burden.

We all know the outcome of the 2024-2025 Budget presented by the previous Government. The budget deficit reached Rs66.8 billion, significantly higher than the original estimate of Rs26.8 billion. As a ratio of GDP, the budget deficit was higher at 9.3%, compared with the original estimate of 3.4%. Likewise, public sector debt at end-June 2025 rose to Rs634.7 billion, substantially exceeding the budget target of Rs574.5 billion.

Faced with this unprecedented level of public debt, upon assuming office, we had no choice but to take bold yet responsible decisions to restore fiscal soundness, reduce fiscal imbalances, and put public finances on a sustainable path. Without these decisive interventions, public debt would have continued to spiral out of control, seriously undermining investor confidence, increasing borrowing costs, constraining Government's ability to finance essential public services, and ultimately jeopardising the welfare and prosperity of the Mauritian people.

The measures introduced in the 2025-2026 Budget have allowed us to contain the public sector debt level to Rs683.4 billion as at end June 2026. The debt to GDP ratio has been brought down from 88.5% as at end June 2025 to 88% as at end June 2026.

Out of the Rs683.4 billion of public sector debt –

(a) Rs311.8 billion, i.e., 45.6% were contracted from domestic commercial banks;

(b) around Rs246 billion, or 36% were held by domestic non-bank institutions such as pension funds and insurance companies, including the National Pension Fund and the National Savings Fund, and

(c) the remaining Rs125.6 billion were sourced internationally from institutions like the African Development Bank, the Agence Francaise de Developpement, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, and other international lenders including the Government of India.

With regard to the currency composition of public debt, the majority of the debt, representing 80%, was denominated in Mauritian rupees. Foreign currency-denominated debt accounted for the remaining portion, comprising 9.7% in US dollars, 6.1% in euros, 1.1% in Japanese yen, and the balance in other currencies.

Given the high level of debt inherited from the previous Government, debt servicing requirements are expected to remain substantial over the medium term. It is estimated that capital repayments and interest payments on the amount of public sector debt as at end-June 2026, are Rs180.8 billion and Rs29.2 billion, respectively for fiscal year 2026-2027. This represents interest payments of around Rs76 million per day.

The rapid accumulation of public debt by the previous Government has resulted in a substantial increase in debt servicing costs, placing significant pressure on the national budget and reducing the fiscal space available for investment in key sectors and essential services. It is, therefore, imperative that we continue to implement prudent and responsible fiscal policies to restore fiscal sustainability, and safeguard the economic future of Mauritius for the current and future generations.

JUNIOR MINISTER – VACANT POSITIONS – PARLIAMENTARY PRIVATE SECRETARIES APPOINTMENT

(No. B/1164) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the office of Junior Minister, he will state whether he will consider advising the President to declare the positions currently being held therein vacant and to appoint instead such number of Parliamentary Private Secretaries, as required.

(Withdrawn)

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT – OFFICIAL VEHICLES –COSTS INCURRED

(No. B/1165) 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 official vehicles acquired over the period December 2014 to November 2024 for use by the then Honourable Members of Parliament entitled thereto other than the Honourable Ministers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

(a) number thereof;
(b) names of the beneficiaries thereof, and
(c) total costs incurred therefor.

(Withdrawn)

MBC – ALLEGED FRAUD CASES – FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES

(No. B/1166) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the alleged cases of fraud and other financial irregularities at the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation over the period 2015 to 2024, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the names of the suspects, indicating in each case, the –

(a) nature of the alleged offence, and

(b) where matters stand as to the inquiry initiated thereinto.

(Withdrawn)

POLICE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE BILL – PROPOSED INTRODUCTION

(No. B/1191) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Attorney General whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of the Police and Criminal Justice Bill, as announced in the Government Programme 2025–2029, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

LODGING ACCOMMODATION PERMIT – APPLICATIONS – PROCEDURES REVIEW

(No. B/1194) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to applications for the grant or renewal of a Lodging Accommodation Permit, he will state whether consideration will be given for a review of the relevant procedures governing the location, size and concentration thereof in residential areas.

(Withdrawn)

TRIOLET, MAHESWAR NAGRI ROAD – FLOODING – COMPLAINTS & REMEDIAL MEASURES

(No. B/1196) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to Maheswar Nagri Road, in Triolet, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Land Drainage Authority, information as to whether representations have been received from residents thereat regarding flooding caused by the flow of storm water from Bon Air Road during heavy rainfalls, indicating the –

(a) remedial measures being envisaged in relation thereto, and

(b) timeframe for the implementation of drain projects thereat.

(Withdrawn)

ICTA – BOARD MEMBERS – OVERSEAS MISSIONS

(No. B/1197) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the overseas missions undertaken by officers and board members of the Information and Communication Technologies Authority, since November 2024 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof, indicating, in each case, the –

(a) names and capacities thereof;

(b) duration, destination and purposes thereof, and

(c) cost incurred, giving a breakdown thereof in terms of airfares, *per diem* allowances and any other related expenses.

(Withdrawn)

RIVIÈRE DU POSTE – PONT ROUGE FOOTBRIDGE – REPAIR & REHABILITATION

(No. B/1198) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the proposed repair and rehabilitation of the Pont Rouge Footbridge in Rivière du Poste, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand, indicating the –

(a) reasons for the delay, if any, that occurred in the implementation thereof, and

(b) expected completion date thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MINI DAMS – PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION – IMPLEMENTATION TIME FRAME

(No. B/1201) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the proposed construction of mini dams, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand, indicating the timeframe, if any, set for the implementation thereof.

Reply: The construction of mini dams and weirs forms an integral part of the Marshall Plan for water resources mobilisation approved by the Government in October 2025.

I am informed that the *Agence Française de Développement* (AFD) is financing, under a Technical Assistance programme, the services of a Consultant to carry out a study on 'Sustainable Integrated Water Management Master Plan' for the Republic of Mauritius. The study which is expected to be completed by January 2027, will include a thorough assessment of the available water resources and identify opportunities for mobilising under-utilised water resources to address existing and future water supply deficits. Among the potential interventions to be examined is the construction of diversion weirs and mini dams across selected rivers and watercourses.

Mini dams are compact, low-cost hydraulic structures built across rivers or watercourses to facilitate the capture and storage of surface water. Typically ranging from 2 m to 15 m in height, they are used for localised irrigation, rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge, flood control, and micro-hydroelectric power generation. In the context of Mauritius, such structures can reduce the loss of freshwater resources discharged into the sea, while ensuring that appropriate environmental flow requirements are maintained.

Based on the findings and recommendations of the Consultant and in line with the Marshall Plan, my Ministry will undertake a feasibility study for the development of diversion weirs and mini dams at sites that are technically feasible, economically justified, environmentally sustainable and socially acceptable.

Funds to the tune of Rs50 million have been provided in Financial Year 2026/2027. Following completion of the study, the feasibility study is expected to start during the first quarter of 2027.

RODRIGUES – MR P. R. – RETIREMENT PENSIONS – ALLEGED NON-PAYMENT

(No. B/1203) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the alleged non-payment of the Contributory Retirement Pension payable under the National Pensions Act to Mr P. R., a retired fisherman from Rodrigues Island in spite of having allegedly contributed over Rs 50,000 to the National Pensions Fund since 1998, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the reasons therefor.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that the National Pensions Fund (NPF) was established under Section 37 of the National Pensions Act and contributions into the Fund were made by insured persons in employment in accordance with Section 13 of the said Act. Self-employed and non-employed persons could also contribute voluntarily into the Fund under Section 18 of the National Pensions Act.

Under the National Pensions Act, insured persons who had contributed to the National Pensions Fund may qualify for the following contributory benefits which are intended to provide income protection in case of retirement, invalidity, death or employment injury –

1. Contributory Retirement Pension (CRP);
2. Invalid's Contributory Pension (CIP);
3. Widow's or Widower's Contributory Pension;
4. Orphan's Contributory Pension, and
5. Industrial Injury Benefits.

I am informed that Mr P. R. lodged a claim for Basic Retirement Pension and Contributory Retirement Pension, at the Port Mathurin Social Security Office, on 05 February 2024. Following examination, his claim was found to be in order and was duly approved. He was awarded a Basic Retirement Pension at the monthly rate of Rs11,000 and a Contributory Retirement Pension at the monthly rate of Rs801. Payment of both pensions, together with the corresponding arrears, was made in April 2024.

The monthly rate of Contributory Retirement Pension was determined on the basis of the contributions credited to his National Pensions Account. According to records available, the total contributions standing to his credit amounted to Rs32,659.99, and not over Rs50,000 as alleged. Both his Basic Retirement Pension and Contributory Retirement Pension continue to be paid regularly, together with all applicable increases accrued to date.

I wish to highlight that presently, Mr P. R. is in receipt of a monthly Basic Retirement Pension of Rs15,555 and a monthly Contributory Retirement Pension of Rs801.

NLTA – BUS ROUTES 5 & 243 – BUS SERVICES

(No. B/1204) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to bus routes 5 and 243, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to where matters stand regarding the measures being explored to address the bus services being offered along same, giving details thereof.

(Withdrawn)

CAF B COACHING LICENCE COURSE – APPLICATION & ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

(No. B/1205) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the CAF B Coaching Licence Course, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Football Association, information as to the –

(a) eligibility admission criteria therefor, and

(b) number of applications received, places available and candidates selected, indicating whether –

(i) they all satisfied all eligibility requirements

(ii) the selection process was conducted by the Technical Director of the MFA or by a committee, and

(iii) his Ministry/Ombudsperson for Sports is in presence of complaints in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUES – QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL – UPGRADE

(No. B/1206) Mr F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital at Crève-Coeur, in Rodrigues Island, he will state whether consideration will be given, in collaboration with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, for the upgrading of the services and status thereof to that of a Regional Hospital, having regard to the demographic changes in Rodrigues Island, the increasing demand for complex health care services and the forthcoming Plaine-Corail Airport Development Project.

(Withdrawn)

SALAZIE – PONT BON DIEU ROAD – WIDENING

(No. B/1207) Mr R. Beechook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the proposed widening of the last stretch of the Pont Bon Dieu Road, in Salazie, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand, indicating the expected completion date thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS PORTS AUTHORITY – OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH – COMPLIANCE

(No. A/72) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Mauritius Ports Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the measures in place to ensure –

(a) provision of adequate health and safety equipment to employees posted thereat

(b) compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and

(c) adherence to the Code of Practice of the International Labour Organisation's regarding Safety and Health in Ports.

Reply: With regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed by the Mauritius Ports Authority that it complies with the Occupational Safety and Health Act and implements the following measures in strict compliance with the law –

(i) conduct of workplace risk assessment every two years to identify potential risks and determine the appropriate equipment that would be required to protect employees from such risks;

(ii) provision of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment based on the nature of their duties. Distribution is effected according to established uniform entitlement or task requirements, and

(iii) regular inspections, replacement and maintenance of this Personal Protective Equipment to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

As regards part (c) of the question, I am informed that although the Code of Practice of the International Labour Organisation on Safety and Health in Ports, is not a legally binding instrument, most of its provisions are already covered in the Occupational Safety and Health Act. I am informed by the Mauritius Ports Authority that it is fully compliant with relevant International Labour Organisation Conventions which Mauritius has ratified.

CAMP THOREL – WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM – ASBESTOS-CEMENT PIPES

(No. A/75) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to asbestos-cement pipes used in the water distribution system, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to whether –

(a) consideration is being given for the replacement thereof at Camp Thorel Village, and

(b) a strategic plan is being envisaged for the replacement thereof on a national scale.

Reply: I am informed by the CWA that the internal distribution network within Camp Thorel Village comprises Asbestos Cement pipes of a total length of 4.65 km. These pipes have reached their end of lifetime and are, therefore, regularly subject to burst, requiring repairs and causing frequent interruption in water supply.

According to the CWA, these pipes need to be replaced. The CWA has, accordingly, included this project in the priority list of its regular Pipeline Renewal activities funded through Government grant or loan.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the CWA that around 680 km out of 1500 km of old and defective pipes are made of Asbestos Cement.

The CWA intends to progressively replace the deficient Asbestos Cement pipes based on availability of funds.