No. 29 of 2026

REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD) (UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2026

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THE CABINET

(Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)

Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands
Hon. Mrs Marie Arianne Navarre-Marie	Deputy Prime Minister Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare
Hon. Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack Mohamed, GCSK	Minister of Housing and Lands,
Hon. Rajesh Anand Bhagwan, GCSK	Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, GOSK	Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries
Hon. Govindranath Gunness	Minister of National Infrastructure
Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo, GOSK	Minister of Health and Wellness
Hon. Christian Harold Richard Duval	Minister of Tourism
Hon. Ashok Kumar Subron	Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity
Hon. Gavin Patrick Cyril Glover, SC	Attorney-General
Dr. the Hon. Mrs Jyoti Jeetun	Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning
Hon. Patrick Gervais Assirvaden	Minister of Energy and Public Utilities

Hon. Dhananjay Ramful	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Hon. Darmarajen Nagalingum	Minister of Youth and Sports
Hon. Muhammad Reza Cassam Uteem	Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations
Hon. Mahomed Osman Cassam Mahomed	Minister of Land Transport
Hon. John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen	Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection
Dr. the Hon. Kaviraj Sharma Sukon	Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research
Hon. Sayed Muhammad Aadil Ameer Meea	Minister of Industry, SMEs and Cooperatives
Dr. the Hon. Mahend Gungapersad, PDSM	Minister of Education and Human Resource
Dr. the Hon. Avinash Ramtohul	Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Lutchmanah Pentiah	Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms
Hon. Ranjiv Woochit, OSK	Minister of Local Government
Hon. Mahendra Gondeea, OSK	Minister of Arts and Culture

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MAURITIUS

Eighth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 29 of 2026

Sitting of Tuesday 20 October 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)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OBITUARY

MR RAJNEE DYALAH

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, it is with deep sadness that we have learnt of the demise of Mr Rajnee Dyalah, former Member of Parliament, who passed away at the age of 79 on 17 September.

Born on 29 April 1947, Mr Dyalah completed his primary schooling at Sacré Cœur de Jesus School before pursuing his secondary education at the Trinity and then Bhujoharry colleges.

Mr Dyalah devoted his life to politics and to the service of his country, embarking on a political career at the age of 20.

In 1967, he became actively involved in the pro-independence campaign as a Labour Party activist in Constituency No. 4.

In 1969, he joined the *Club des Étudiants Militants* and he played an important role in the emergence of the MMM as a political party.

Mr Dyalah's dedication to trade union movement was equally significant. He served as an administrative cadre at the General Workers Federation from 1970 to 1976.

He contested the 1976 Legislative Assembly Elections under the banner of the Mouvement Militant Mauricien for Constituency No. 1 and was returned as the Third Member.

In 1982, he stood as a candidate in the Legislative Assembly Elections under the banner of the Alliance MMM-PSM for the same constituency and he was returned again as the Third Member.

He contested the 1983 Legislative Assembly Elections under the banner of the Mouvement Militant Mauricien again in the same constituency, that is, No. 1, and he was again returned as the Third Member.

Following his election, he was appointed as a member of the Public Accounts Committee in September 1983.

In 1987, Mr Dyalah contested the Legislative Assembly Elections under the banner of l'Union MMM-MTD-FTS for the same constituency, and he was returned again as the Third Member.

He also served as a Municipal Councillor for the city of Port Louis from April 1977 to October 1991. In 1992, he was appointed as a member of the Local Government Service Commission, a position he held until 1995.

With these words, Madam Speaker, may I request you to direct the Clerk of Assembly to convey the profound condolences of the Assembly to his wife and other members of the bereaved family. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr C. Baboolall): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Opposition, I fully associate myself to the tribute paid by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister to late Mr Rajnee Dyalah, former Member of Parliament.

Madam Speaker, may I kindly request you to direct the Clerk of the National Assembly to convey our deep condolences to the bereaved family.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Members, I associate myself with the tribute paid to the memory of late Rajnee Dyalah, former Member of Parliament, by the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I, of course, have known Rajnee, known as Rajen, very well for many years for

obvious reasons. I direct the Clerk to convey the deep condolences of the Assembly to the bereaved family and particularly to Ms Amrita Dyalah, his widow.

Thank you.

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION – PARLIAMENTARY GENDER CAUCUS – NOMINATIONS

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I wish to make an announcement regarding Parliamentary Committees.

With regard to the Committee of Selection, I have, in accordance with Standing Order 69 (1)(b), today nominated hon. Chetan Anand Baboolall, Leader of the Opposition as member of that Committee.

With regard to the Parliamentary Gender Caucus, following the resignation of Dr. the hon. Ms Rubna Begum Daureeawo and hon. Roshan Jhummun as members of the Caucus, the Committee of Selection has, in accordance with Standing Order 70(9)(a), on 25 September 2026, nominated hon. Jacques Edouard and hon. Kaviraj Rookny as members of the Caucus.

I thank you.

HON. PRIME MINISTER – OUT OF TURN STATEMENT

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I have allowed the hon. Prime Minister to make a Statement out of turn. Hon. Prime Minister, you have the floor.

The Prime Minister: I was hoping, Madam Speaker, that the Statement, if need be, I will make it; probably not, given that there is a PNQ on the same matter.

Madam Speaker: Alright, thank you.

PAPERS LAID

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the Papers have been laid on the Table.

A. Office of the President

(a) The Annual Report 2025-2026 of the Ombudsperson for children.

(b) The 52nd Annual Report of the Office of the Ombudsman for the year 2025.

B. Office of the Speaker

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Financial Crimes Commission for the year ended 30 June 2025.

C. 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 Constitution (Amendment) Bill (No. XVI of 2026);

(ii) The National Crime Agency Bill (No. XVII of 2026);

(iii) The National Crime (Interim) Agency Bill (No. XVIII of 2026);

(iv) The Secretariat of the Independent Advisory Panel Bill (No. XIX of 2026);

(v) The Secretariat of the Independent Advisory (Interim) Panel Bill (No. XX of 2026);

(vi) The Financial Crime Bill (No. XXI of 2026);

(vii) The Asset Recovery and Unexplained Wealth Bill (No. XXII of 2026);

(viii) The National Crime Agency (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. XXIII of 2026);

(ix) The Criminal Justice (Offenders Assisting Investigations and Prosecutions) Bill (No. XXIV of 2026); and

(x) The Police (Amendment) Bill (No. XXV of 2026).

(b) Retrospective Virement Warrant – (2025-2026): Nos. 273 to 276. (In Original)

(c) Virement Warrant – Quarter 1 (July – Sept 2026): Nos. 1 to 7 and 10. (In Original)

(d) Virement Certificate – Quarter 1 (July – Sept 2026) - Programme/Sub-Programme Nos.: 0105(2), 025302 (1), 0401(3), 0403(1-2), 0703(1-2), 2203(1), 2502(1-3). (In Original)

(e) The Customs (Use of Computer) (Amendment) Regulations 2026.(Government Notice No. 153 of 2026)

(f) The Customs (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 154
of 2026)

(g) The Excise (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 155 of 2026)

(h) The Value Added Tax (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 156 of 2026)

(i) The Income Tax (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 157 of 2026)

(j) The Public Procurement (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 158 of 2026)

(k) The Probation Hostel and Home (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 162 of 2026)

(l) The Immigration (Permits) (Prescribed Fees, Guarantees and Application Form) (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 166 of 2026)

(m) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Economic Development Board for the year ended 30 June 2025.

(n) The Curfew Order 2026. (Government Notice No. 170 of 2026)

(o) The Curfew (No. 2) Order 2026. (Government Notice No. 171 of 2026)

(p) The Curfew (No. 3) Order 2026. (Government Notice No. 173 of 2026)

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

(a) The Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanic Garden Trust for the year ended 30 June 2023.

(b) The Fisheries (Vessel Monitoring System) (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 151 of 2026)

(c) The Cane (Specification of Varieties) (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 152 of 2026)

E. Ministry of Health and Wellness

(a) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Mauritius Food Standards Agency for the year ended 30 June 2025.

(b) The Optical Council (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 169 of 2026)

F. Ministry of Tourism

The Tourism Employees Welfare Fund (Collection of Contribution) (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 174 of 2026)

G. Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity

(a) The Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Savings Fund for the year ended 30 June 2019.

(b) The National Pensions (Continuation of Benefits) (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 159 of 2026)

(c) The Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Savings Fund for the year ended 30 June 2020.

(d) The Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Pensions Fund for the year ended 30 June 2022.

H. Ministry of Financial Services and Economic Planning

(a) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Financial Reporting Council for the year ended 30 June 2025. (In Original)

(b) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Insurance Industry Compensation Fund for the year ended 30 June 2025.

I. Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities

(a) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Central Water Authority for the year ended 30 June 2025.

(b) The Central Water Authority (Water Supply for Non-domestic Purposes) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 160 of 2026)

J. Ministry of Land Transport

(a) The Road Traffic (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 3) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 167 of 2026)

(b) The Road Traffic (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 4) Regulations 2026.

(Government Notice No. 168 of 2026)

K. Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection

(a) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 7) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 163 of 2026)

(b) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 9) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 164 of 2026)

(c) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 10) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 165 of 2026)

(d) The Consumer Protection (Control of Sale of Petroleum Products) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 172 of 2026)

L. Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Open University of Mauritius for the year ended 30 June 2024.

M. Ministry of Industry, SME and Cooperatives

The Annual Report on Performance of the Ministry of Industry, SME and Cooperatives (Cooperatives Division) for the financial year 2025-2026. (In Original)

N. Ministry of Education and Human Resource

(a) The Annual Report of the Ministry of Education and Human Resource for the financial year 2025-2026.

(b) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Human Resource Development Council for the year ended 30 June 2025.

(c) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Mauritius Qualifications Authority for the year ended 30 June 2025.

(d) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate for the year ended 30 June 2025.

O. Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation

The Annual Report 2025 of the Data Protection Office.

P. Ministry of Local Government

(a) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the District Council of Pamplemousses for the year ended 30 June 2025. (In Original)

(b) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the District Council of Moka for the year ended 30 June 2025. (In Original)

(c) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Municipal Council of Curepipe for the year ended 30 June 2025. (In Original)

(d) The District Council of Flacq (Renting parking places for vehicles) Amended Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 161 of 2026)

(e) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the District Council of Grand Port for the year ended 30 June 2024.

Q. Ministry of Arts and Culture

(a) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Mauritius Telugu Cultural Centre Trust for the year ended 30 June 2025.

(b) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund for the year ended 30 June 2025.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

CIVIL UNREST & RIOTS (09 OCT 2026) – CAUSES & PREVENTIVE/CONTAINMENT MEASURES – CURFEW ORDERS & IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TAKEN

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr C. Baboolall) *(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 civil unrest and riots started on 9 October 2026, he will state the –

(a) causes/circumstances thereof, including alleged involvement of organised criminal networks;

(b) preventive and containment measures taken;

(c) justifications for imposition of curfew orders, and

(d) immediate actions undertaken to –

(i) address the underlying water crisis;

(ii) mitigate social grievances;

(iii) restore public order and confidence, and

(iv) safeguard citizens' constitutional rights.

Madam Speaker: Yes, thank you. Hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, on Wednesday, 07 October 2026, at about 18:30 hrs, Police received information that a group of persons had gathered along St Paul Road, Phoenix, to express their dissatisfaction over the disruption of water supply.

Police proceeded immediately to the location and found that approximately 100 residents had assembled on the street. They indicated that, despite several complaints made to the Central Water Authority, no action had been taken to restore water supply .

Police, together with two Members of the National Assembly of Constituency No.15 present at St Paul Road, Phoenix, appeased the situation. Police and the two Members of Parliament, thereafter, proceeded to Allée Brillant, Highlands, Clairfonds No.1, Phoenix, and Hermitage, where similar gatherings had taken place.

Water tanker lorries were subsequently deployed to supply water to the affected localities, and all the residents dispersed peacefully.

There was no damage to public or private infrastructure. Consequently, there was no arrest.

On the night of 08 October 2026, there were disturbances at Camp Levieux. On 09 October 2026, there were further disturbances at Camp Levieux, where certain persons had set up debris in the middle of the road and set a fire thereby creating an obstruction of the public road. Police had to proceed to the location in order to control a hostile crowd, which had gathered at that location. Police were manning a checkpoint and at a certain point in time a shot was fired from the service revolver of a Police Sergeant who was amongst the officers who were manning the checkpoint. The shot was aimed at a van and the bullet fired hit one of the passengers of the van. The circumstances around this shooting incident are now being investigated by the Independent Police Complaints Commission, which has taken over from the regular Police Force.

As from that moment, that is, from the 08 October 2026 and throughout the weekend, I was in constant touch with the Commissioner of Police, the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service, and the Secretary for Home Affairs to monitor the situation and be ready to take such steps as may be required by the rapidly evolving situation.

The unrest migrated to various localities around the island, and during the weekend, several businesses were attacked and looted. It was also reported that Police Stations had been attacked, a District Court had been ransacked and the metro station at Barkly had been almost destroyed. Later on, it became clear that these incidents were related as we came across attacks against other government facilities, including Safe City cameras, traffic lights and other CCTV equipment.

On Tuesday 13 October 2026, I called an emergency meeting of Cabinet and it was decided after having received the input of the Commissioner of Police and his teams that there was an imperative need to ensure the safety of all citizens and to protect property that a curfew ought to be declared at a number of locations across the island. The Order under Section 13C of the Police Act was issued that afternoon and 15 locations were mentioned in the schedule to the Order.

On Wednesday 14 October 2026, I again called an emergency meeting of Cabinet and it was then decided to extend the curfew for further 2 nights, that is, for Wednesday 14 October and Thursday 15 October 2026 from 20:30 hrs to 05:00 hrs in the morning, that is, the next day.

On Thursday 15 October 2026, I took cognisance of the report from the Police which made mention of the incidents occurring in the northern region, in the Port Louis region, in the western and central region, and in the southern region. These incidents related to looting, possession of explosive substances, breach of curfew order and damaging government property. That same report indicated that 84 individuals were arrested during the night of 13 October 2026, bringing the number of total arrests to 94 and 7 Police Officers had been injured.

On Thursday 15 October 2026, a meeting was held, as it had been on the previous day, under the chair of the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service, when the Commissioner of Police reported that on the night of 14 October, the deployment of various units, including SMF, SSU and GIPM throughout the island, especially at hotspots and curfew localities, together vehicle roadblocks and checkpoints with the aerial support of the DHRUV helicopter had the required effect and only minor incidents had been reported. It was also reported that 26 more persons were arrested. The new fact which emerged was the new trend of sugarcane fields set on fire at various locations across the island.

Cabinet met on Friday 16 October 2026 and took cognisance on the report of the Commissioner of Police which made mention of the continued deployment of the various Police units throughout the island, especially at the hotspots and curfew localities. It was noted that there were fewer incidents which were localised and only 16 persons were arrested for breach of Curfew Order. Cabinet decided on 16 October 2026 that given what had occurred during the previous weekend and the fact that there were still isolated incidents

across the island, that it would be in the best interest of the population to extend the Curfew Order for the weekend of 16, 17 and 18 October 2026 but with rearranged timeframes, that is, the Curfew Order would, henceforth, operate from 22:00 hrs on Friday, Saturday and Sunday to 04:30 hrs in the morning the next day.

On Monday 19 October 2026, the Commissioner of Police reported no major incident and a couple of arrests for breach of Curfew Order. Furthermore, the Commissioner of Police reported that no public road has been obstructed.

In the light of the latest reports of the Police and the general trend across the island, it was decided with the Commissioner of Police that there would be no need for any further Curfew Order following the original Curfew Order which had lapsed at 04:30 hrs on the morning of 19 October 2026.

As regards part (a) of the question, it appears that initially, the public protests at night were localised in regions where there was inadequate or no water supply. These were followed by the very unfortunate incident at Camp Levieux on Friday 09 October 2026. Thereafter, although the region of Camp Levieux remained a hotspot, incidents started mushrooming at various spots across the island seemingly unconnected with the initial protests in Vacoas-Phoenix and the subsequent incident at Camp Levieux.

Based on the reports of the Police and intelligence gathered, it came to light that there was a measure of coordination between the incidents giving rise to the irresistible inference that there were ill-intended people behind these coordinated attacks on police stations, Safe City Security cameras and other surveillance equipment, and more importantly, the attack and ransacking of a Court of Law.

As regards part (b) of the question, I have already highlighted earlier the measures taken to prevent and contain the civil unrest and riots.

As regards part (c) of the question, the measures taken, including the imposition of Curfew Orders, were not only justified in the circumstances, but were wholly proportional to the incidents which were being reported. Law and Order, Madam Speaker, is not an option; it is an absolute necessity in a country such as ours, and I am satisfied that they were justified in

imposing the Curfew Orders as we did, including the times which had been decided after taking into consideration the circumstances of each and every one across Mauritius.

As regards part (d) of the question, the House will note that I have, since Monday 12 October 2026, made it a point to address the nation in order to keep everyone informed of the situation, the decisions being taken and the reasons for such decisions being taken. Last night, I explained to the nation why there was no further need for Curfew Orders and stated unequivocally that our island is our own house and that peace in our country depends on each and every one of us. I sincerely hope that this message has been heard loud and clear and that we will not have any recurrence of the incidents that we had to live through for the past 10 days.

As regards to part (d)(i) of the question, Cabinet has decided last Friday to set up a Crisis Committee under my chairmanship which will include the following –

(i) The Minister of Housing and Lands;
(ii) The Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries;
(iii) The Ministry of National Infrastructure;
(iv) The Minister of Health and Wellness;
(v) the Minister for Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity;
(vi) The Minister for Energy and Public Utilities;
(vii) The Minister of Industry, SMEs and Cooperatives, and
(viii) The Minister of Local Government.

A first meeting is scheduled on Thursday next, that is, in two days' time. However, the Cabinet has also noted a number of measures as suggested by the hon. Minister of Energy and given the number of questions addressed to him on this issue, I am sure that the hon. Minister will give you the right details when he addresses the House later. However, the CWA has already taken a number of urgent measures to reinforce water supply and to provide relief to the affected households.

With regard to part (d)(ii) of the question, I have stated yesterday in my address to the nation, that I have heard the complaints and the calls. My words would not adequately translate my message and I beg, therefore, the indulgence of you, Madam Speaker, and of the House to repeat what I stated last night in creole.

I am quoting –

> "*Mo bien conscient qui sa bane troubles qui nu fine vive, zot pe révèle bane problèmes qui ena dans nu pays. Mo ti bizin dire, quand mo trouve ene zenfant Maurice pe mette diffé dans simin, pe arreté, mo bizin considère li ene drame pou nu pays.*
>
> *Donne ene l'avenir à nu zenfant, c'est nu plis grand responsabilité. Nou bizin assuré qui chaque enfant Maurice gagne bane chances égales, bane perspectives pu gagne ene travail kot zot capave épanoui.*
>
> *Dès cette semaine, nu pe lance bane consultation urgentes avec bane ONG, bane spécialistes du terrain, pu d'abord comprend kuma nu fine arrive là, mais aussi et surtout créé tout bane condition pu donne chaque enfants nu pays l'opportunité pu réalise zot bane rêves."*

As regards part (d)(iii) of the question, I reiterate that the measures taken were not only lawful, proportional and justified in a democratic state. The response of the population to the measures is testament to the approval of the measures taken.

As regards to part (d)(iv) of the question, I have not heard of or seen anyone complaining of any breach of constitutional rights of the citizens. The decisions to order curfew on localised spots were lawful and proportionate. Decisions were not in breach of any constitutional rights of the citizens.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister, if I may, since you cited yourself in creole, will you please, in due course, give us the translation for the purposes of our records? As I normally ask hon. Members to do.

The Prime Minister: Okay.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Baboolall: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House how many major drug barons have actually been arrested since he went on television

to blame them for financing the recent unrest and whether he has a concrete time frame for these arrests?

The Prime Minister: Of course, I cannot give a time frame for the arrest. We have intelligence, Madam Speaker, that the drug barons were financing these troubles. We have intelligence on that. Now, I can tell you that at least one drug baron has been arrested.

Madam Speaker: Alright. Next question, please.

Mr Baboolall: Will the hon. Prime Minister agree that his fiery rhetoric against drug lords is just a political distraction to hide his own intelligence failures?

Madam Speaker: No, that is not permissible.

(Interruptions)

That is not permissible.

(Interruptions)

It is a matter of opinion.

(Interruptions)

It is a matter of opinion.

(Interruptions)

It is a matter of opinion.

Mr Baboolall: When did the hon. Prime Minister first receive intelligence regarding these drug barons and why did his administration fail to act before the crisis erupted?

Madam Speaker: Alright. That is a good question. Yes, hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: You mean ‘failed to act before the crisis started’? You mean about water supply and all those things? I suppose that is what you mean. But I think he said why did we fail to act?

Madam Speaker: Regarding drug barons.

The Prime Minister: Drug barons. But we had no inkling that the drug barons were going to start this. It is only when it started that we got the intelligence.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Next question.

Mr Baboolall: Yes, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm how many children aged between 12 and 14 have been arrested by the Police for defying curfew orders and exactly where they were detained while in custody?

The Prime Minister: As far as I understand, Madam Speaker, below 14, no one was detained. No one below 14. But there were three arrests for breach of curfew for minors.

Madam Speaker: Yes, next question.

Mr Baboolall: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that a teenager, Master L, was arrested and detained at the Stanley Police Station, stripped naked and kept inside a cell with another naked individual?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware of this, Madam Speaker.

Mr Baboolall: Can you verify?

Madam Speaker: Do you know his age? You know his age?

The Prime Minister: I will certainly verify. But if you can give me more details; there has been no complaint as far as I see.

Madam Speaker: Okay. I just said if you want to give us the age.

Mr Baboolall: Madam Speaker, can the hon. Prime Minister state why after floating plans to lower criminal responsibility from 14 to 12, before retreating, his government is scapegoating children instead of enforcing sections…

(Interruptions)

…50 and 51 of the Children's Act to hunt down the adult criminal recruiters for exploiting minors?

Madam Speaker: Did you get the question properly?

The Prime Minister: I fail to understand what he is trying to say.

Madam Speaker: No. It is a very good question. Put the question!

Mr Baboolall: Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister stated…

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Oh-oh ! Il y a trop de bruit. Je n'entends pas ce qu'il dit et l'honorable Premier ministre non plus ne l'entend pas. Allez-y.

Mr Baboolall: The hon. Prime Minister stated that no one was arrested under 14.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr Baboolall: So my question was why: they planned to lower the criminal responsibility from 14 to 12?

Madam Speaker: No, that was not your last question.

Mr Baboolall: That was the question. I rephrased my question.

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member, I think he is mistaken in saying that we retrieved. We did not back down anywhere. But we looked at the situation, we acted according to what the situation was.

Mr Baboolall: Does the hon. Prime Minister realise that blaming teenagers for an explosion caused by government neglect is the ultimate confession of political bankruptcy?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: These kinds of questions are not allowed.

The Prime Minister: I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition, if he had listened to my speeches, I specifically said that minors were not arrested. In fact, I made an appeal that they do not get involved in anything, but they were not arrested.

Mr Baboolall: Madam Speaker, will the hon. Prime Minister explain why this Government prioritised…

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No comments, please, while he is speaking!

Mr Baboolall: …emergency curfew orders over fixing broken water infrastructure and tracking soaring inflation?

The Prime Minister: I cannot see how this is relevant to the question. Maybe you can explain.

Mr Baboolall: I am asking why this Government is not tackling the water crisis and this is the main reason why we have to get this...

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I am sure, later on, the hon. Minister will answer that question, but you will understand then what exactly is the problem with the water situation.

Madam Speaker: Yes, somebody is asking. Hon. Duval is asking. Are you going to…? He has got more questions.

Mr Baboolall: Yes. Madam Speaker, the Government has brandished the threat of applying the Prevention of Terrorism Act in response to the recent unrest. Is this intimidation tactic, the hon. Prime Minister's vision of governance? Or is it a desperate diversionary...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

An hon. Member: *Les li apran.*

Madam Speaker: You have to be…

(Interruptions)

Come on! You better keep quiet at the back.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, put your questions factual, please.

Mr Baboolall: Yes, Madam Speaker, this Government has brandished the threat of applying Prevention of Terrorism Act. By brandishing the threat of Prevention of Terrorism Act against citizens, is the Government not sending a disastrous signal to the international community regarding State stability?

The Prime Minister: I would have thought in the contrary. POTA exists since your Leader was the Deputy Prime Minister.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Can we listen to the hon. Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: This is on our statute book. The former President resigned on that matter if you do not know.

Mr Jhummun: *Ekoute do!*

Ms J. Bérenger: *Twa ki bizin ekoute!*

The Prime Minister: That is on the statute book.

Mr Jhummun: *Malelve!*

Madam Speaker: *Chut!*

The Prime Minister: The law is there; it is for the DPP.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Oh, ça suffit!

Mr Bérenger: Sa *bachara* la!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister, please!

I do not understand that in this time, which is very harsh for our country, we are wasting our time shouting at each other. I will not have this anymore.

Now, hon. Leader of the Opposition will put his questions. Sometimes I will have to tell him to be careful and hon. Prime Minister will have to listen to his question, hear him. I do not hear him because people are shouting all over the place. All over the place! Not just one side; both sides. So now, you please carry on, Prime Minister.

Ms J. Bérenger: *Bachara*!

Mr Baboolall: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the hon. Prime Minister state whether his Government deploy advanced Israeli surveillance equipment to intercept WhatsApp communication of citizens during the crisis?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: I do not want …

(Interruptions)

Ms J. Bérenger: Là, c'est *okay* la?

Madam Speaker: Je n'ai pas dit que c'était okay! Vous voulez venir vous asseoir encore à ma place?

Ms J. Bérenger: Depuis tout à l'heure-là, c'est un bazar.

Madam Speaker: Mais je suis en train de faire le maximum que je peux, Mademoiselle, hon. Member. We cannot carry on if we go on like this and time is running. Time is running.

So now, please, all of you, if you keep quiet, we will be able to go through this very important democratic exercise.

So, maybe we will ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition – he has been okay for the moment, except you cannot impute motives. Do not do that and do not ask for opinion, okay? I am only citing. I can cite but I do not want to waste time.

Please come back with your last question.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, it is a figment of his imagination. He brings in Israeli. I do not know where you get this from. Who tells you these things?

Madam Speaker: Are you going to give way? We have three people asking.

Mr Baboolall: I have more questions.

The Prime Minister: Substantiate it!

Madam Speaker : They have more questions.

Mr Baboolall: Will hon. the Prime Minister temporarily remove specific taxes, levies and social contribution to ease the crushing cost of living on Mauritian household? And if not, why not?

The Prime Minister: This is something that will have to be considered by Government in the context of the disastrous situation we inherited. We are improving the economy but now we have to look at things when time comes.

Madam Speaker: Okay, next question.

Mr Baboolall: Madam Speaker, can the hon. Prime Minister explain how frontline police officers were expected to maintain public order when the force is crippled by a massive 2,000 officers staffing deficit and severe shortages of operational vehicles?

Madam Speaker: Okay! That is a good question. Yes, hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: I would have thought he would have congratulated the Police Force. They acted brilliantly and they did their work. There is no complaint against the police.

Mr Baboolall: The hon. Prime Minister will agree that the situation is chaotic in the Police Force with no vehicles.

Madam Speaker: With no what?

Mr Baboolall: With a lack of vehicles and their basic working conditions and inadequate pay. They are suffering a lot.

The Prime Minister: According to the hon. Leader of the opposition, this happened yesterday. For 10 years, it has been like this. We are correcting all this difficult situation that we inherited. Now, burning police vehicles adds to the lack of vehicles. We have to get more vehicles. It will have to be done. So, somebody has to pay.

Madam Speaker: Okay. You want to give way? Yes, hon. Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister with regard to curfew orders, whether he is prepared to review the legislation; if not to penalise every Mauritian but go by age group like France is doing where it becomes evident that it is persons who are part of a certain age group that are in fact involved? Whether he is prepared to do so if those events are to reoccur and I hope not for the country?

The Prime Minister: We have to analyse this very carefully because this might lead to a situation where people will start complaining about discrimination. That is a problem.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Chief Whip.

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. L'honorable Premier ministre peut-il indiquer à la Chambre si dans le cadre des enquêtes en cours sur les récentes émeutes, il a été établi qu'un ancien ministre de l'ancien régime, aurait été impliqué dans le financement ou la fourniture d'argent, d'équipement ou tout autre matériel aux personnes ayant participé aux émeutes et si dans l'affirmative, quelles mesures sont prises à cet égard? Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

The Prime Minister: The inquiry is ongoing, Madam Speaker, and I cannot reveal details of the inquiry at this point.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, hon. Quirin asked first.

Mr Quirin: Merci, Madame la présidente. L'honorable Premier ministre ne reconnaît-il pas qu'au-delà des mesures de maintien de l'ordre, une politique efficace de prévention doit également s'attaquer aux difficultés sociales, à l'échec scolaire et au manque de perspectives auxquelles certains jeunes sont confrontés? Quelles mesures le gouvernement compte prendre à cet égard?

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: I did mention, Madam Speaker, that this is why I am presiding over a committee. I think I mentioned the different Ministries that will be present precisely to look at all this.

Madam Speaker: Okay! Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hon. Prime Minister, in his reply at the beginning, stated that with regard to the protesters at Phoenix, there were two hon. Members of Parliament present and they appeased the situation there. How does he reconcile the fact that one of the Members of Parliament, Minister stated that one of the Members of Parliament who was present there, provoked the protesters?

The Prime Minister: I am sure he was mentioning at the incident at this place.

Madam Speaker: Okay. I got two more minutes to go. Two more minutes. You have a last question? Yes? You want a last question? If not, it is okay.

Mr Baboolall: Madam Speaker, will the hon. Prime Minister tell this House and the population clearly how he intends to manage the water crisis? The population does not just need committees after committees, but how he will manage the water crisis and the rising cost the population is suffering.

Madam Speaker: I think hon. the hon. Prime Minister already said that the Minister who has that responsibility, will be replying to several questions. Do you want to answer, hon. Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: It is exactly what I said before. There are two things. Of course, committees will not resolve the problem. We have to act. The problem of water – we have no

control if there is no rainfall and we are repairing what has not been done for 10 years. We got help from the Indian Government to replace all these pipes which were leaking. We are doing this. It costs a lot of money but we are doing this. We are looking at other options. I think in a couple of days, if I am not mistaken, there is a group coming from Saudi Arabia to look at desalination plants in which they have been successful at. There are controversies about these plants but we will look at everything.

Madam Speaker: Okay! Hon. Beechook, that will be the last question.

Mr Beechook: Oui, Madame la présidente. En lisant les commentaires, on note que le manque de perspective …

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: I do not understand. One moment. You want to speak from a sitting position or you want to stand up?

Mr Bérenger: It has always been the tradition that the last question is for the Leader of the Opposition. You asked him to put the last question. When he puts the last question, you give the last question to somebody else. Bravo!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Member, I am talking to you. If you are not happy with the way I am dealing with things, you can always do the needful.

Mr Bérenger: Of course!

Madam Speaker: I have not said I am not giving him his last question. I have got more time, now we are wasting time. I asked him for his last question, he was hesitating.

Okay, your question and then I will give him.

Mr Beechook: Merci, Madame la présidente. Le manque de perspective professionnelle et de discrimination à l'embauche a été cité comme l'un des critères majeurs parmi ceux qui se sont manifestés. Est-ce que je peux demander à l'honorable Premier ministre de mettre en place un mécanisme de discrimination positive afin de permettre l'insertion professionnelle de personnes, de régions qui se sentent délaissées dans le milieu professionnel, que ce soit public ou privé ?

Madam Speaker: Yes. Hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: In fact, if the hon. Member looks at the report of the Truth and Justice Commission, it does mention what you are saying. We have to look very carefully about positive discrimination but we are looking at all this.

Madam Speaker: Alright. Last question.

You do not have a question. That is what I thought. No, no, that is enough.

Time is up. Time is up. Time is up!

Mr Beechook: On a point of order!

Madam Speaker: Point of order? Okay.

Mr Beechook: I heard the word '*bachara*' uttered sometimes before.

Madam Speaker: I did not hear.

Mr Beechook: Before. It is being recorded in the Hansard.

Madam Speaker: No, I did not…

Mr Beechook: Therefore, I would hereby request you; the one who uttered this word has to withdraw it. It is unparliamentary. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: I did not hear anything. Time is up! We are going to move on.

And I do not want all this lack of respect from Members, please! If anybody said that, that person knows that this was not correct. I am not going to waste time on this.

Now, we go to questions for the hon. Prime Minister, PMQT.

Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ B/1337 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms, PQs B/1345 and B/1387 will be replied by the hon. Prime Minister, time permitting.

Hon. Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac, hon. Jhummun!

FINANCIAL CRIMES COMMISSION – INQUIRIES CONDUCTED (NOV 2024-OCT 2026)

(No. B/1310) 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 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.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Financial Crimes Commission that the Commission has initiated 1,849 investigations from November 2024 to 15 October 2026. Out of the 1,849 cases, 1,029 have been completed and 820 are still under investigation.

Madam Speaker, the Financial Crimes Commission has referred 103 cases to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, out of which, 72 were recommended for prosecution and 31 were recommended for no further action. Out of the 72 cases recommended for prosecution, 32 have since been lodged since then before the Financial Crimes Division of the Supreme Court, 15 cases have been referred back to the Commission with queries. Furthermore, advice is awaited in 22 cases and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions has advised no further action in three cases.

I am further informed, Madam Speaker, that as at 15 October 2026, convictions have been secured in five cases.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Lobine, yes.

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister with regard to the introduction of the National Prosecution Service Bill, will matter be expedited and also strengthen the Office of the DPP in terms of financial resources and also personnel in view of the increasing number of cases being referred to the Office of the DPP? Of course, while safeguarding their constitutional independence.

The Prime Minister: That is precisely, Madam Speaker, why we are bringing a new National Prosecution Service to address these issues. Part of the reason is this.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Jhummun.

Mr Jhummun: Thank you. The hon. Prime Minister will reckon that the population is desperately waiting when the culprits/defaulters will be put behind bars and this is taking a bit too long. Thank you.

The Prime Minister: This is why I said earlier, Madam Speaker, that we will have to proceed according to the rule of law. This is what we are doing.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, next question, hon. Fourth Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue!

CAMP LEVIEUX – MRS E. T. SHOOTING – POLICE SERGEANT G. S. T. – ARREST & INQUIRY

(No. B/1311) 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 arrest of Police Sergeant G. S. T. in connection with the shooting of Mrs E. T. at Camp-Levieux, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand regarding the inquiry initiated thereinto, indicating –

(a) the provisional charges lodged against him, and
(b) whether he was subjected to an alcohol and a drug tests and, if so, indicate the date and time thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I will answer questions B/1311, B/1316, B/1323, and B/1333 together as they relate to the same subject matter.

Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 09 October 2026 at about 23.00 hours, following a report of disturbance, four Police Officers from Camp Levieux Police Station, accompanied by eight officers of the Special Mobile Force, proceeded to the vicinity of Ratsitatane Street and Arianne Avenue at Camp Levieux.

On reaching the site, the officers found that the road was obstructed by an old refrigerator set on fire. A group of hostile persons were also present nearby. The Police extinguished the fire, removed the debris and installed a checkpoint. Whilst Police were controlling the hostile crowd, I am informed that a contract van attempted to pass through the checkpoint. The Police stopped the vehicle and instructed the driver not to proceed because of the disturbance. At a certain point in time, it appears – this is what the investigation will show – that the driver tried to go through and a shot was fired from the service revolver of the Police Sergeant G. S. T. and a passenger of the van was seriously injured. Now, as I said, Madam Speaker, this is the information we have, but the investigation is ongoing. It will establish whether that is, in fact, the case or not.

I am informed, Madam Speaker, that the Police Main Command and Control Centre records indicate that, at 23.29 hrs, the driver of the van called to request assistance for a seriously injured female passenger. The Centre contacted the SAMU and Camp Levieux Police Station. The injured passenger, identified as Mrs Elodie Thomas, was subsequently taken to Victoria Hospital. The ambulance arrived at the hospital at 00.26 hrs on 10 October 2026 and was immediately taken on charge by the medical personnel. An enquiry was initiated by the Police and the Police Sergeant G. S. T. was arrested on 10 October 2026. CCTV and Safe City footages were secured and statements from 11 Police Officers and one Medical Practitioner were recorded.

On 11 October 2026, Police Sergeant G. S. T. appeared before the Bail and Remand Court under a provisional plaint of ‘Possession of firearm with intent to endanger life’ pursuant to Section 35 of the Firearms Act. Police objected to his release and he was remanded to Police cell up to 12 October 2026.

On 12 October 2026, Police Sergeant G. S. T. appeared before the Rose Hill District Court under the same provisional plaint. Police again objected to his release and he was remanded to Police cell up to 19 October 2026.

On 13 October 2026, upon advice from the Office of Director of Public Prosecutions, the provisional charge against Police Sergeant G. S. T. was replaced by new provisional charges which were lodged against him before the Rose Hill District Court for the following offences –

(i) Using firearm to intimidate in breach of Section 37 (1) of the Firearms Act, and

(ii) Involuntary Wounds and Blows by Imprudence in breach of Section 239 (1) of the Criminal Code.

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions also advised that the charge of 'Culpable Omission' be contemplated against all the Police officers.

The case against Police Sergeant G. S. T. as well as that of the other three Police Officers were referred to the Independent Police Complaints Commission for investigation. On 14 October 2026, an investigation was initiated by the Commission.

I am informed, Madam Speaker, by the Independent Police Complaints Commission that, on 16 October 2026, the Commission decided that the provisional charge for Culpable Omission be lodged in breach of Section 39A (1) of the Criminal Code against the other three Police Officers.

As regards the case of Police Sergeant G. S. T., the investigation is ongoing. The House will appreciate that as the matter is *sub judice*, additional information cannot be disclosed at this stage. However, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that four Police Officers have been interdicted from duty with effect from 11 October 2026.

Madam Speaker, with regard to drugs and alcohol tests performed on Police Sergeant G. S. T., I am informed that, on 10 October 2026 at 00.46 hrs, preliminary breath test was carried out on the officer and was found to be negative. On same day at 11.45 hrs, a field impairment test was performed on Police Sergeant G. S. T. and the result was negative. At 19.05 hrs, a preliminary drug test was performed and again the result was negative. Police Sergeant G. S. T. also volunteered to provide a specimen of his blood for laboratory testing. A blood sample was sent to the Forensic Lab for examination and the results were negative for both drugs and alcohol.

I must say, Madam Speaker, that there is no evidence that the gunshot incident is directly linked with the social unrest, but that, again, will be established by the inquiry. So far, that is the position.

According to the information obtained by the Police, the unrest at Camp Levieux had started on the night of 08 October 2026, that is, one day before the shooting.

Our institutions have acted promptly and are taking the necessary actions. As soon as I was informed of the incident, I immediately contacted the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness to ensure that all necessary facilities were extended without delay.

As the local medical team advised that Mrs Elodie Thomas could not travel overseas, immediate arrangements were made for a team of 11 medical personnel from India to come to Mauritius and to provide specialised medical care for her.

I am pleased to inform the House that Mrs Elodie Thomas is no longer in danger. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of India for its prompt response and invaluable assistance, as well as to our medical teams here for their dedication and professionalism in ensuring that she received the best possible care.

Madam Speaker, my Government will continue to act firmly against all those who have contravened our laws. They will have to bear the full consequences of their acts.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister, I am sorry. Did you reply to B/1316, B/1323 and B/1333 at the same time?

The Prime Minister: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Yes. So, we will allow people to put questions. Hon. Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Has the hon. Prime Minister taken cognizance of a video circulating, which has filmed the scene, as well as the statement of the driver and another passenger which fully corroborate the video, and which shows clearly, Madam Speaker, that first of all, the Police Officer Taukoor was aggressive from the start? He had been using offensive language and after firing the shot, he again used offensive language.

In view of this, is the Prime Minister today not prepared to make recommendations to the Commissioner of Police and to the DPP that the provisional charge, which is totally inappropriate, of involuntary wounds and blows, be substituted with attempted murder?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: I hope the hon. Member knows that I cannot advise the DPP on what charge to put or what charge not to put. It is for the DPP to decide, not for me.

Madam Speaker: Yes, yes, carry on!

Mr Bérenger: I listened carefully to the Prime Minister and to the question that has just been put. The Prime Minister insisted that an enquiry is ongoing, and yet, he clearly put the blame on the driver of that van.

Ms J. Bérenger: Shame!

An hon. Member: Non, non.

Mr Bérenger: Clearly put the blame! I listened carefully.

Ms J. Bérenger: Shame!

Mr Bérenger: Will the Prime Minister clear the point that he is not putting the blame on the driver; that a full inquiry and not just a police report will be carried on? We are playing with fire, hon. Prime Minister. Be very careful!

The Prime Minister: I never said. I said that there is an inquiry which will establish the facts. These are the different elements that we got, but it is for the inquiry to establish the facts. That is what I said.

Madam Speaker: Alright. Mr Lesjongard had asked. He has a question.

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will inform the House what assistance was provided to Mrs Thomas immediately after she was shot and whether the police officer present at the scene promptly took steps in providing such medical assistance, and whether there were any delays in providing that assistance, and whether that also is being investigated?

Madam Speaker: Yes!

The Prime Minister: It is being investigated. That is also the reason why there is this charge of ‘Culpable Omission’.

Madam Speaker: You spoke of 'Culpable Omission', yes.

Yes, one moment. Hon. Jhummun had a question. He asked. Yes, you are alright? Yes.

Okay, hon. A. Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, there are many questions…

Madam Speaker: I have two questions, in fact. Yes!

Mr A. Duval: The second question, Madam Speaker, is with regard to the reason why this Police Officer – the Sergeant who has a past with serious charges levelled against him during his career as a Police Officer – such a person, was deemed fit to carry a firearm on such a dangerous night at Camp Levieux, and whether the persons who have seen him fit should not be made to answer forthwith?

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: No option is …

Madam Speaker: Everybody wants to reply. You are all Prime Ministers today!

Hon. Prime Minister, please.

The Prime Minister: You should have added that he was promoted twice under the previous regime.

Mr A. Duval: Who gave him the revolver on that day?

The Prime Minister: Why was he promoted twice? Such a person should never have been promoted. This is why we look carefully at promotions. People who do not deserve promotion should not be promoted. This is the situation.

Ms Anquetil: *Demand Pravind!*

Madam Speaker: The question, Prime Minister… I am sorry.

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker…

Madam Speaker: One moment. Let me do my job! The question was whether you are going to look at this particular past of that Police Officer in the investigation that is being carried out?

The Prime Minister: The investigation will obviously look at all this, Madam Speaker. Yes.

Madam Speaker: Yes, alright.

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, may I?

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr A. Duval: This, Madam Speaker, is the moment that the Prime Minister and this Government can partially redeem itself by showing truly a serious and independent inquiry into this matter. So far, Madam Speaker, the charges are inadequate, drug test has been made more than 24 hours after the incident, and no serious action is being taken to hold the persons who have found this person to be fit and proper to carry a firearm to account.

I ask the Prime Minister, I urge him in fact, to *tourner le bateau* and to take this seriously. It is not a matter which can be swept under the carpet – not this time.

The Prime Minister: Nothing is being swept under the carpet! The hon. Member is a lawyer. He should know that you have due process. You must follow due process. Everybody cannot decide and say, I will choose this one or I will choose this one. You must follow due process. This is the basis of a democracy. There is the rule of law; you must follow due process.

Mr Bérenger: You should not have blamed the driver.

The Prime Minister: I did not blame the driver. It is in your head – your sick mind…

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: Can we listen to the recording?

Madam Speaker: Yes, we will…

Mr Bérenger: You want to listen?

The Prime Minister: I told the facts as they were related, Madam Speaker. I did not blame anybody. And I said clearly that the investigation…

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: I will.

The Prime Minister: You are trying again to put fire on oil. I know what you are doing. Again, same thing! Same thing!

(Interruptions)

You are the one! You are the one who is trying to disturb the course of the...

(Interruptions)

You are the one who is trying to put fire!

(Interruptions)

Ask Valayden!

Mr Jhummun: *Pyromane pe dir nou zoue ar dife*! *To mem pyromane*!

Madam Speaker: Ça suffit!

Ms J. Bérenger: *Pa'nn fout narien pendant 2 ans !*

Madam Speaker: Ça suffit !

Hon. Lesjongard…

Mr Jhummun: *To ti laem twa*! *To ti asiz laem twa*!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard, please.

(Interruptions)

Non, mais ce n'est pas possible, c'est un match de foot quoi !

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: Since the investigation is being carried out by the IPCC, that is the Independent Police…

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Twa ki met dife…*

Mr Jhummun: *Pyromane*!

Mr Bérenger: *Mo met twa* au défi! Prouve quoi que ce soit!

An hon.Member: *Ek to Valayden*!

The Prime Minister: …*twa ki habitie met dife partou*!

An hon. Member: *Pyromane*!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister is saying that '*Twa ki'nn met dife*.' May I ask…

You have just said that.

The Prime Minister: I did not say that.

Mr Bérenger: Ah, you did not say that! *Ah*! *Non mais n'importe quoi*!

Madam Speaker: I did not hear what you said…

The Prime Minister: *To zoue lor mot*!

Mr Bérenger: I heard what he said.

Madam Speaker: …because there is so much noise. It is most unfair on me that you are making so much noise. I cannot follow who is saying what. *Comment je vais faire pour gérer cette grande salle de classe* ? *Comment je vais faire* ? *Ce n'est pas possible*.

Hon. Prime Minister, if you said anything which was not proper, I am sure, as a gentleman, you will say…

The Prime Minister: I did not…

Madam Speaker: You did not say anything improper. Let's keep it at that. I will listen.

I want everybody to know that every week I go through my Hansard. I read my Hansard. Sometimes, I have to take it home because I have no time. Even when we were on holidays, I had no time, but I read everything. If there is anything which was wrong, I will come back to this House.

Hon. Lesjongard, you had asked or you have already put your question?

Mr Lesjongard: No, I have one question to put, Madam Speaker, may I?

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr Lesjongard: Since now the Independent Police Complaints Commission is carrying out the inquiry, can the hon. Prime Minister tell the House whether that Commission has full and independent control over all relevant evidence and investigative materials?

The Prime Minister: The answer is obvious, Madam Speaker. As far as I know, yes. That is what it is supposed to be. It is called independent.

Madam Speaker: Everybody who had a question has already gone through? Yes, hon. A. Duval, last question.

Mr A. Duval: Thank you. Madam Speaker, I had asked the hon. Prime Minister, on a number of occasions, with regard to body cameras and we have been told that body cameras were, in fact, now, something which was a reality. I will ask the hon. Prime Minister: why were the Police Officers present and participating in the incidents throughout all these nights,

not equipped with body cameras and whether, he should not see to it urgently that any Police Officer carrying a firearm and called upon to attend a request, be mandatorily equipped with a body camera for which the footage can be independently reviewed?

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

The Prime Minister: That has already been instituted. I did answer a question in Parliament. We have ordered others. At the moment, they have been modified so that they can actually film, but the proper cameras have been ordered.

Madam Speaker: Thank you so much for this question.

Next question, hon. Lesjongard!

MR J. K. E. – BRIBE ALLEGATIONS – INQUIRY

(No. B/1312) Mr G. Lesjongard (Fifth 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 inquiry initiated into the allegations of soliciting a bribe of Rs 350 million made against Mr J. K. E., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Crimes Commission, information as to where matters stand.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Financial Crimes Commission that on 11 September 2026, the Commission initiated an investigation following complaint from one Mr N. O. B, who handed over a certified copy of his affidavit dated 10 September 2026 and a pen drive containing a recording of alleged influence-peddling against Mr J.K.E.

On 14 September 2026, the Financial Crimes Commission recorded the statement of Mr N. O. B and Mr D. T. On 19 September 2026, two officers of the Commission proceeded to France to interview a witness who was in possession of the original recording dated 23 October 2025.

The case is still under investigation at the level of the Commission and I reassure the House that the Financial Crimes Commission will operate in complete independence and transparency.

Madam Speaker: Yes, thank you.

Mr Lesjongard: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether, the FCC has already completed its forensic examination?

The Prime Minister: I cannot say, Madam Speaker. It is for them to do the investigation. I did not ask them. They have to do the investigation.

Madam Speaker: Yes. That is okay. Next question, hon. Babajee!

NATIONAL CANNABIS POLICY REFORM – TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP – INTERNATIONAL EXPERTISE

(No. B/1313) 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 Technical Working Group on the National Cannabis Policy Reform, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Agency for Drug Control, information as to the –

(a) constitutive date and composition thereof, indicating the expertise held and institutional affiliation of the members thereof;
(b) number of meetings held;
(c) expertise sought from international organisations and stakeholders, and
(d) where matters stand regarding the finalisation of the report.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in my reply to Parliamentary Question B/903 on 28 October 2025, I informed the House that a Technical Committee would be set up to conduct a comprehensive, data-driven review of potential cannabis policy models specifically decriminalisation, depenalisation, and a regulated legalisation to advise Government on the most appropriate framework for Mauritius.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the National Agency for Drug Control (NADC) that a Technical Working Group on the National Cannabis Policy Reform was constituted in January 2026 to provide strategic and technical oversight throughout the policy review process.

It is chaired by Mr Kunal Naik, the Chief Executive Officer of NADC and it comprises representatives from the Ministry of Finance, the Attorney General's Office, the Ministry of Health and Wellness and NGOs, amongst others. I am tabling the list of members of the Working Group including their respective expertise and institutional affiliation.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the Technical Working Group had 18 meetings during the period January to July 2026.

As regards part (c) of the question, I am informed that online consultations were held with the International Drug Policy Consortium, based in London, to seek guidance and input, which were taken into consideration by the Technical Working Group as part of its assessment. Additionally, the representative of the World Health Organisation based in Mauritius, participated in the national consultations forums held in May 2026.

I am further informed that the services of the five Research Assistants qualified in various fields, namely law, medicine, pharmacy, psychology, and public health were enlisted by NADC for two months to assist in the stakeholder consultations on the Cannabis Policy Reform.

Also, the services of two local consultants were engaged over a period of six weeks as follows –

(i) ANNEAU Ltd, an Investment Adviser, to undertake an Economic and Fiscal Impact Assessment, and
(ii) a doctor specialising in Public Health to conduct a Health Impact Assessment.

Madam Speaker, I am informed also that from May to June 2026, the NADC embarked on a participatory and inclusive process of national consultations which included national and sectoral workshops, focus group discussions, individual deponing sessions and an online public consultation. A total of 1,842 persons comprising representatives of public institutions, private sector, civil society and non-governmental organisations, senior citizens, parent

teachers' associations, people with lived experience, small planters, trade unions, youth, artists, families, medicinal cannabis patients and cannabis users participated in the public consultation.

With regard to part (d) of the question, the report of the National Cannabis Reform Assessment has been finalised and was submitted to my office. The report will subsequently be discussed at the next meeting of the National Drug Control Commission for a decision to taken on the recommendations contained therein.

Madam Speaker: Yes. Okay. Next question, hon. First Member for Vacoas.

BANGLADESHI CARER – MISSING – INQUIRY

(No. B/1314) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the inquiry initiated into the reportedly missing Bangladeshi national, employed as a carer, since 03 April 2026, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand, indicating whether –

(a) she has left the country and, if not, whether she has been located, and
(b) she is safe and/or measures have been taken to ensure her safety.

The Prime Minister: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 04 April 2026, one Mrs Z.B.U., called at Beau Bassin Police Station to report that her carer, Mrs M.M.A.B., Bangladeshi national, had been missing since 03 April 2026 from her place of residence. In her statement, Mrs Z.B.U. averred that her neighbour had witnessed that carer leaving her place at around 8 o'clock at night and getting into a taxi.

Mrs M.M.A.B. was holder of a work permit from June 2023 to June 2025 and it was renewed for a period of two years until June 2027. As she was reported missing by her employer, the work permit of Mrs M.M.A.B. was cancelled on 07 April 2026 by the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations.

With regard to part (a) of the question, as per records at the Passport and Immigration Office, the Bangladeshi national has not left Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (b) of the question, I am also informed that following the filing of the missing person report concerning Mrs M.M.A.B., the Police have initiated an investigation. On 04 April 2026, the Police took a statement from the neighbour witness, who confirmed the averments of Mrs Z.B.U. On 06 April 2026, the statements of two taxi drivers operating in the region of Beau Bassin were recorded but no information of relevance to the case was obtained.

With a view to obtaining information on the whereabouts of Mrs M.M.A.B., the Police approached several companies which employ foreign workers as well as other Bangladeshi expatriates in the country. However, no indication of the whereabouts of Mrs M.M.A.B. has been obtained so far.

For the information of the House, from January to 15 October 2026, 197 crackdown operations were carried out by the Police, including the Divisional Crime Intelligence unit and the Passport and Immigration Office, to track down non-citizens staying illegally in the country. The crackdown operations have resulted into the repatriation of 329 non-citizens including 225 Bangladeshis. As at 15 October 2026, there were 2,926 missing non-citizens, including 2,225 Bangladeshis, who are still in Mauritius. The Police are pursuing the crackdown operations across the island.

On 29 September 2026, Mr R. V., Barrister-at-law, wrote to the Commissioner of Police informing him that he had an indication that Mrs M.M.A.B. was residing in Goodlands. This information was disseminated to all Divisional Crime Intelligence units as well as to all Police Stations and other units in the Mauritius Police Force. Mrs M.M.A.B. could not be located at that place.

The Police are pursuing their efforts to locate her.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, supplementary question.

Ms J. Bérenger: L'honorable Premier ministre, peut-il nous dire si les circonstances dans lesquelles la dame a quitté son lieu de travail ont été établies ? Est-ce que des personnes ont été interrogées dans ce contexte bien précis ?

The Prime Minister: Sorry, I missed the question.

Ms J. Bérenger: Est-ce que vous pouvez nous dire si les circonstances dans lesquelles la dame a quitté son lieu de travail ont été établies et est-ce que des personnes ont été interrogées dans ce contexte-là ?

The Prime Minister: Yes, the two taxi drivers were interrogated. The neighbour was interrogated to confirm what was said before, that is, she left in a taxi.

Ms J. Bérenger: Est-ce que l'honorable Premier ministre pourrait informer la Chambre, s'il a l'information, si le passeport de la dame est en sa possession ou serait toujours en la possession de son ancien employeur ?

The Prime Minister: The passport is no longer in the former employer's possession, as I know. They are looking for her. She had the passport with her, but she has not been found.

Ms J. Bérenger: Est-ce que la liaison a été faite avec les autorités bangladaises, y compris le haut-commissariat du Bangladesh, étant donné qu'ils avaient émis un avis de recherche précisément pour cette employée? Alors que, comme le Premier ministre l'a dit, il y a beaucoup de Bangladéshis qui sont à l'île Maurice et qui ont quitté leur travail. Mais un avis de recherche avait été émis expressément pour celle-là et une rançon de R 100 000 avait été offerte pour la retrouver. Est-ce que la liaison a été établie avec les autorités bangladaises, y compris le haut-commissariat du Bangladesh ?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware of this conversation, what happened between x and y, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Okay! Time is up now.

I have to inform the House that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/1317, B/1318, B/1319, B/1320, B/1321, B/1324, B/1326, B/1328, B/1332, B/1334, B/1335, B/1338 and B/1345 .

Hon. Members, I will take this opportunity to thank all those hon. Ministers who have sent – because when these are removed, they can come back – but those which are not removed deserve a written answer. I would like to thank those hon. Ministers who have sent

their written answers and make an appeal to those who have not yet sent their written answers. Next week, I am going to come with an announcement on this issue.

We are now going to go for a few minutes on questions addressed to hon. Ministers.

I call hon. Edouard!

NIC LTD – EARLY RETIREMENT SCHEME 2021

(No. B/1339) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning whether, in regard to the Early Retirement Scheme 2021 of the National Insurance Company Ltd. targeting employees aged 35+, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof who opted therefor and number thereof having been re-employed, indicating the –

(a) new terms and conditions thereof;
(b) total monthly staff costs in respect thereof;
(c) quantum of retirement benefits paid thereto, and
(d) number thereof having been promoted.

(Withdrawn)

WATER TANK & WATER PUMP GRANT SCHEME – RODRIGUANS' ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA & MECHANISM

(No. B/1340) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the recently approved Water Tank and Water Pump Grant Scheme for the provision of two water tanks and a domestic water pump free of charge to households not equipped therewith, he will state whether the inhabitants of Rodrigues Island are eligible thereunder and, if so, indicate the criteria and mechanism put in place therefor.

Mr Assirvaden: Madame la présidente, avec votre permission, je répondrai aux questions B/1340 et B/1377 de l'honorable Anquetil ensemble car elles concernent le même problème.

Madame la présidente, j'ai été informé par la Banque de développement qui gère pour le compte de mon ministère le programme de subvention pour les réservoirs et les pompes à

eau. Cette subvention d'un montant de R 15 000 couvre deux réservoirs, dont l'un doit avoir une capacité de 1000 litres pour un montant de R 10 000, une pompe d'une valeur de R 4 000 et les accessoires jusqu'à R 1 000.

La situation hydrique, Madame la présidente, actuelle, due à un déficit pluviométrique important ces deux dernières années, à une baisse marquée du niveau des réservoirs, exige une utilisation plus judicieuse et prudente de nos ressources en eau limitées, en prévision des pluies annoncées par les services météorologiques. La CWA a donc modifié les horaires de distribution sur l'ensemble de l'île depuis juin de cette année et a instauré des restrictions de consommation afin de privilégier l'eau potable.

Afin d'encourager les ménages à stocker l'eau, le gouvernement a décidé de revoir les critères d'éligibilité au programme de subvention sur les réservoirs et les pompes à eau, permettant ainsi à un plus grand nombre de ménages d'en bénéficier.

Le programme révisé permet donc aux ménages n'ayant pas bénéficié – je dis bien ‘n'ayant pas bénéficié' – du programme de subvention pour les réservoirs d'eau et ne possédant pas déjà de réservoir à leur domicile, de prétendre à la subvention pour l'acquisition d'un réservoir et d'une pompe. Tous les autres critères ont été supprimés. Le nouveau dispositif est entré en vigueur le lundi 12 octobre 2026. Les demandes peuvent être effectuées en ligne sur le site web de la CWA ou en se rendant dans l'un des bureaux de la CWA répartis sur l'île.

Pour s'inscrire, les demandeurs doivent uniquement présenter leur carte d'identité et une facture de la CWA pour confirmer leur adresse. Les candidatures ont été ouvertes par par groupe alphabétique.

Madame la présidente, en ce qui concerne les parties (a) et (b) de la question B/1377, je suis informé par la CWA qu'au 19 octobre 2026, 28 306 demandes ont été reçues dans les bureaux de la CWA sur l'île et aussi en ligne. Donc, au total 28 306.

Concernant la partie (c) de la question, Madame la présidente, dès réception des demandes, la CWA vérifie si le demandeur a déjà bénéficié du programme de subvention. D'abord, on vérifie si le demandeur a déjà, dans le passé, bénéficié de ce programme pour les réservoirs d'eau. Avant d'envoyer les *meter readers* de la CWA et aussi du CEB – on a un

coup de main du CEB – pour se rendre à leurs domiciles pour confirmer la présence d'un réservoir ou non. La liste des demandeurs éligibles est ensuite transmise à la DBM pour l'émission du coupon de subvention. Parallèlement, le CEB contacte – donc le CEB nous aide, le call center – les personnes éligibles retenues pour les inviter à se présenter dans un bureau de la DBM afin de prendre leurs coupons. Ce processus devrait prendre en moyenne 5 jours.

Je voudrais ajouter, Madame la présidente, avec votre permission, que le CEB a étendu sa collaboration à la CWA et aussi avec le soutien de son centre d'appel.

En ce qui concerne la question B/1340, les habitants de Rodrigues sont éligibles à bénéficier du programme révisé à condition qu'ils n'aient pas bénéficié du programme de subvention pour les réservoirs d'eau dans le passé et qu'ils ne possèdent pas déjà – ce qui est assez rare quand même à Rodrigues – un réservoir d'eau dans leurs locaux. Le dispositif sera géré par la DBM et les demandes pourront être déposées directement auprès de ces bureaux à Rodrigues. Les modalités seront précisées prochainement pour Rodrigues en concertation avec la DBM et l'Assemblée régionale de Rodrigues.

Ms Anquetil: Madame la présidente!

Madam Speaker : Oui!

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. Je remercie l'honorable ministre pour sa réponse claire et nette. L'honorable ministre peut-il indiquer à la Chambre quelles mesures ont été prises pour remédier à toute rupture de stock de réservoirs d'eau afin d'éviter les retards dans la mise en œuvre de ce programme ?

Mr Assirvaden: Je dois dire que quand on avait annoncé un vendredi soir qu'à partir de lundi la population pouvait faire des demandes au bureau de la CWA, la DBM a convoqué les *suppliers* des quincailleries, des *suppliers* de *tanks*, et il y a eu quatre ou cinq *suppliers* qui étaient déjà enregistrés parce que c'est un *scheme* qui est déjà là depuis très longtemps. Donc, ce que nous avons fait, nous avons dû enlever des critères. Donc, la DBM a rencontré les *suppliers* et a ouvert aussi son portefeuille à d'autres *suppliers* sur l'île. J'ai pu comprendre qu'il y a pas mal d'autres *suppliers* qui n'étaient pas enregistrés qui l'ont été jusqu'ici.

Madam Speaker: Oui, l'honorable Beechook et puis l'honorable Edouard.

Mr Beechook: Merci, Madame la présidente. L'honorable ministre a été clair. Néanmoins, puis-je lui demander un éclaircissement ? Admettons qu'une famille n'a jamais bénéficié de *grant* de la DBM, dispose d'un réservoir, mais pas de deuxième réservoir, ni de pompe. Peut-elle bénéficier de ce *scheme* de la DBM ?

Madam Speaker: Short, short!

Mr Assirvaden: Je dois préciser que pour ne pas retarder le *Scheme*, nous avons décidé de mettre comme critère que vous n'avez pas de réservoir chez vous. Pour ne pas retarder, parce que la DBM gère un portefeuille du ministère des Finances autour de R 175 ou 200 millions pour vous donner deux réservoirs, 1,000 litres et 500 litres et une pompe. Donc, comme on était en urgence, si on allait complètement changer le *Scheme*, cela allait prendre tout son temps. Ceci dit, dans un premier temps, nous allons donner la priorité à ceux qui n'ont pas de *tank*. Mais dans un deuxième temps, prochainement, nous allons réviser pour voir si ceux qui n'ont pas de deuxième *tank* ou de pompe peuvent être incorporés dans ce *Scheme*.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Edouard.

Mr Edouard: Merci, Madame la présidente. Je voudrais demander au ministre si son ministère a eu au préalable des consultations avec l'Assemblée régionale de Rodrigues, vu que les réalités sont différentes à Rodrigues et d'après ce que je comprends, il y a déjà un *Water Tank Scheme* à Rodrigues. Merci.

Madam Speaker: Confirmez.

Mr Assirvaden: Oui, c'est confirmé. Nous avons demandé à la DBM, parce que comme vous le savez, nous n'avons pas d'autorité sur l'eau à Rodrigues. L'électricité oui, mais l'autorité de l'eau est contrôlée par l'Assemblée à Rodrigues. Mais, nous avons demandé à la DBM de voir avec l'Assemblée à Rodrigues.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Chief Whip.

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. Le ministre pourrait-il indiquer à la Chambre quelles mesures ont été entreprises par son ministère pour s'assurer que les ménages les plus vulnérables aient priorité dans cette démarche? Merci.

Mr Assirvaden: Je dois préciser, Madame la présidente, que pour les ménages les plus vulnérables, la seule façon pour nous de voir c'est que vous n'avez pas de *tank* d'abord, parce que nous n'avons pas les moyens de voir quels sont les ménages qui sont plus vulnérables. D'abord, vous n'avez pas de *tank*, donc vous avez besoin de ce *tank*-là. Mais je dois préciser aussi dans cette démarche, qu'actuellement j'ai demandé à la CWA si on peut considérer de donner principalement priorité à ceux qui se trouvent dans la région des Hautes Plaines Wilhems, parce qu'on se retrouve dans une urgence dans cette région et nous avons demandé de donner priorité en ce qui concerne les démarches pour les *tanks*.

Ms Anquetil: Une dernière question!

Madam Speaker: Yes. Okay, one moment.

Ms Anquetil: Une dernière. Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. Je profite de l'occasion pour demander au Ministre, est-ce que dans un deuxième temps son ministère pourrait considérer d'étendre ce service aux ONG qui travaillent beaucoup pour les personnes vulnérables et aussi aux religieux ? Je vous remercie.

Mr Assirvaden: Oui, je pense que c'est une très bonne proposition, Madame la présidente, mais nous allons essayer de l'inclure dans nos démarches futures.

Madam Speaker: *Allez*, last.

Mr François: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Given the water crisis, may I ask the hon. Minister whether consideration is being given to amend the Building Control Act to include a mandatory water collection and storage system for domestic and industrial purposes, with necessary schemes if need be.

Madam Speaker: Collection? Collection?

Mr Assirvaden: Oui, la réponse est oui, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: *Il parle de* collection *là*.

Mr François: Yes, collection.

Madam Speaker: Rain harvesting, you mean?

(Interruptions)

Attends, il n'a pas répondu ! Minister?

Mr Assirvaden: La réponse est oui.

Madam Speaker: Including rain harvesting?

Mr Assirvaden: La réponse est oui, pour tout.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Ms Anquetil: Une petite dernière, je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. Le sujet est tellement passionnant. Est-ce que le Ministre pourrait indiquer à la Chambre à ce jour combien de familles ont déjà bénéficié de cette démarche? Je vous remercie.

Madam Speaker: That is the last question.

Mr Assirvaden: Oui, et ce n'est pas que passionnant, c'est aussi stressant ce domaine. Donc, je vois que l'honorable membre dit que c'est passionnant mais, c'est stressant.

Dans les 28,306 demandes que nous avons reçues, 14,517 sont dans les bureaux de la CWA et 13,789 *online*. Et la CWA jusqu'ici, au 18 octobre, a terminé 9,239 *surveys* qui vont être graduellement transmis à la DBM pour l'émission des coupons.

Ms Anquetil: Donc, c'est immédiat?

Mr Assirvaden: Oui.

Madam Speaker: Thank you very much everybody. I forgot to tell you that PQ B/1367 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports, but that will be with my good friend the Deputy Speaker because I am now suspending the Sitting for lunch for one and a half hour.

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

On resuming at 2.32 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Please be seated!

The hon. Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière!

POVERTY-RELATED STATISTICS - REGION-WISE - SUPPORT MEASURES

(No. B/1341) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the families living in pockets of poverty and extreme poverty, respectively, in Mauritius, he will –

(a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof region-wise, and

(b) state the measures and programmes being implemented to improve the living conditions and economic prospects thereof and provide social, psychological, educational and economic support thereto.

Mr Subron: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I must say, as such, there is no statistics specifically on families living in pockets of poverty and extreme poverty, respectively, in Mauritius. However, there are three sets of poverty-related statistics available in line with the evolution of the profile and nature of poverty in Mauritius.

First, we have the number of families who are registered on the Social Register of Mauritius and have signed a contract with the National Empowerment Foundation, which itself falls under my Ministry. I am informed that as at 30 September 2026, a total of 5,271 households, representing 19,431 persons are being provided with support by the National Empowerment Foundation.

In the island of Mauritius, there are 3,362 households, representing 12,880 persons, and in the island of Rodrigues, there are 1,909 households, representing 6,551 who are under NEF support programme. Thus, on a Republic wide, only 1.5% of the population in Mauritius and 15% in Rodrigues are officially registered as poor and benefit from the direct State intervention. We do have a geographical breakdown of these statistics, which I will table to the House. Given the pertinence of the issue of poverty, I am tabling this for the benefit of all Members of the House and the public.

Furthermore, I must inform the House that the number of NEF beneficiaries has seen a steady decline. From 8,600 households in 2016 and 2017, it rose to 10,274 in 2019 and 2020, before finally falling back to 5,197 households at the end of July 2026.

I must say to the House that there are no longer fixed statistics on absolute extreme poverty in Mauritius. The official approach endorsed by Statistics Mauritius during the publication of the latest Poverty Analysis Report, published in 2025, is henceforth based on relative poverty.

Statistics Mauritius, this report, indicates that the proportion of households living in relative poverty was 7.3% of the population in 2023. Based on data collected at the 2023 Household Budget Survey, the relative poverty line, set at half the median monthly household income per equivalent, was estimated at Rs12,378 per month. Thus, the number of households living in relative poverty falling below the relative poverty line works out to 29,800, 70.3%, comprising 101,900 persons, that is, 8.4% of the population.

Region-wise data is available in Poverty Analysis Report 2025. The full report is available on the website of Statistics Mauritius.

Third, I must inform the House that a new poverty measurement and policy tool has just been officially published by Statistics Mauritius, the National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), a project to which my Ministry has actively and proudly collaborated. The National MPI, as explained by Statistics Mauritius, complements existing monetary poverty measures by providing additional information on non-monetary deprivations, such as employment, living standard, education, health and housing.

According to the MPI data published by Statistics Mauritius as late as July 2026, multidimensional poverty affected about one in 10 people in the Republic. In 2022, nearly 130,000 Mauritians for an incidence of 10.8% were concerned.

These findings shed harsh light on the gulf separating the reality from the number of current NEF beneficiaries who represent only 20% of this vulnerable population.

The calculated intensity of poverty stands to 37.9%. This implies that affected people accumulate on average nearly 38% of the listed deprivation.

I must say that, concretely, if we dissect these non-monetary shortcomings, living standard will be 26.4%, deprivation of education would constitute 26.1%, and the remaining primary vectors of this precarity accounting for more than half of the overall 2022 Index. These are followed by employment, 18.7%, health, 18.8%, and housing 10.5%. Concretely, the main indicators of deprivation…

The Deputy Speaker: You have got long to go, hon. Minister?

Mr Subron: Because this is new, I just…

The Deputy Speaker: You are still on part (a)?

Mr Subron: Yes, I have one more paragraph, maybe for the…

The Deputy Speaker: But for (b), probably, you can file the answer.

Mr Subron: Yes, I must just add that it is a very important figure that has been released now. The profile of the deprivation indicates that there are large families with four or more children, constituting 35.5%; people living alone: 21.4%; single parent households with unmarried children:17.7%; female headed household: 16.8%. I am tabling the statistic inputs to this debate.

The Deputy Speaker: Table the measures you intend to implement.

Mr Subron: Yes.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me tackle part (b) of the question, that is…

The Deputy Speaker: Shortly! If it is long, you file it.

Mr Subron: Yes, I take note of this.

There are 17 programmes and schemes provided by the National Empowerment Foundation. Upon your advice, I am tabling the 17 schemes which already existed.

The Deputy Speaker: Very good!

Mr Subron: Here you are.

I would just like to mention the new ones. Last year, we added an important scheme to tackle specific deprivation, that is, *Internet Gratis*, which benefited more than 5,000 families registered under the NEF to the tune of Rs85,000 million annually. This year, in the last budget, the Government raised the absolute poverty threshold from Rs14,000 to Rs16,400, and it will be raised to Rs17,500 in 2027. The upgrading of the Rs16,400 is estimated to increase the number of eligible households under NEF by 43.8%, and the amount of monthly subsidy is also expected to double.

I will conclude to say that the evolution of poverty from absolute poverty to relative poverty, and the inclusion in the analysis of poverty of deprivation, we are actually in a moment of transition. The new poverty policy needs to integrate non-monetary deprivation in the calibration of poverty threshold.

Secondly, integrating relative poverty measurement in order to address social inclusion whereby 80% of people falling under relative poverty can be catered for.

There is a list of measures, and I will table the new measures that we are envisaging. I think we are in a specific and particular moment where we need to deepen the reflection and bring corrective structural adjustments and structural policies in terms of poverty. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister.

You got a supplementary? Yes.

Mr Quirin: Merci, M. le président. Alors que le pays vient de connaître des événements préoccupants, l'honorable ministre peut-il s'engager à mettre en place, en collaboration avec les autres ministères concernés, un plan d'intervention ciblé dans les poches de pauvreté avec un budget identifié, un calendrier d'exécution et des indicateurs permettant à cette Assemblée d'en évaluer les résultats ? Est-il disposé à le faire ?

Mr Subron: I am committed to do this, but what I am saying is that the focus has been on absolute poverty. This policy has made that only 20% of persons living in relative poverty, that is exclusion, and these 80% are not being addressed. Of course, when we re-engineer the poverty policy, we will take on board, and this is the right moment to do this.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, une deuxième question avec votre permission. Le ministre peut-il informer la Chambre si le gouvernement assure un suivi particulier des enfants de ces familles en matière d'éducation, d'échec scolaire, de soutien psychologique et d'accompagnement social, et de bien vouloir nous donner des détails à cet effet ?

Mr Subron: All families and households, together with members of the families and the children, are being catered to by the NEF on case management. There are dedicated officers who go to these places to follow and report whatever information and adjustment that need to be taken on board.

I must mention that households under the NEF are under a programme of two years plus one year. This is the period when they are under the NEF programme. I must say that the NEF just added a psychological service for members of the family and the children. So, the question is very timely because this is a new measure that has been added by the National Empowerment Foundation.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Second Member!

Ms Anquetil Je vous remercie, M. le président. Le ministre peut-il indiquer à la Chambre quelles mesures spécifiques son ministère prévoit pour les familles sans logement et sans emploi ayant des enfants à charge ? Merci.

Mr Subron: Thank you, hon. Member. The NEF used to provide various schemes for housing of the people. Let me just mention that the social housing support, which is provided through the construction of fully concrete housing units of 50 m² for eligible SRM beneficiaries who are owners of land as well as implementation of minor renovation work under the upgrading of houses scheme to those who already have a house.

Under the FCH, beneficiaries receive a high housing unit at a highly subsidised rate with government covering 80% of the total cost. Now, with the change in the housing policy, me and my colleague, the Minister of Housing, agreed on the provision of a percentage of the NLSD Rent-to-Own houses to NEF beneficiaries. We hope we receive the proper clearance from Finance very soon on this matter as there is a pressing social need in terms of housing for the lowest part of the most vulnerable part of the population. Thank you.

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

BREAST CANCER – MAMMOGRAPHY SCREENING & AWARENESS

(No. B/1342) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to breast cancer, he will state –

(a) the number of women having undergone mammography screening in public health institutions on a yearly basis over the past five years;

(b) the measures being implemented to promote breast cancer awareness and encourage early detection, and

(c) whether consideration will be given to expanding access to mammography screening and specialised breast cancer services island-wide and, if so, give details thereof.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, breast cancer remains an important public health concern. Early detection can contribute to timely diagnosis and improved treatment outcomes. Mammography is an imaging technique used to detect abnormalities in the breast, including cancer that may not yet cause noticeable symptoms.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that a total of 7,674 mammography examinations were performed in public health institutions over the past five years as follows –

- 1,124 in 2021;
- 1,537 in 2022;
- 1,674 in 2023;
- 1,820 in 2024, and
- 1,519 in 2025.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am tabling the detailed annual figures for mammography examinations performed in each of the public health institutions for the period 2021 to 2025.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the House may wish to note that my Ministry conducts sensitisation activities throughout the year to raise awareness for breast cancer and promote early detection. These activities are undertaken in communities, workplaces and

schools through health talks and counselling sessions focusing on breast cancer, its associated risk factors and the importance of early detection. Information leaflets are also distributed during these activities. Public awareness is further promoted through media sensitisation, including radio programmes. In addition, breast examinations were conducted among adult women through mobile Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) screening activities in communities and workplaces.

From 2022 to October to 08 October 2026, a total of 44,292 women underwent breast examinations, of whom, 1,126 were referred for further medical assessment following the detection of abnormalities. I am further informed that women undergoing screening are taught breast self-examination techniques and encouraged to seek medical advice should they subsequently detect any abnormality. My Ministry also collaborates with women's associations and the National Women's Council to encourage greater participation in breast cancer awareness and screening activities.

Furthermore, cancer awareness is promoted through national commemorative events. In 2026, a walk was organised to mark World Cancer Day, attracting approximately 600 participants from my Ministry, tertiary educational institutions, non-governmental organisations, Mauritius Police Force and the Mauritius Prison Service.

Moreover, the Pink October Breast Cancer Awareness campaign was launched on 29 September 2026 in conjunction with World Heart Day through a health week organised at Mauritius Telecom. These initiatives contribute to raising public awareness of cancer prevention and early detection and encourage women to seek timely medical advice.

With regard to part (c) of the question, the NCD and Health Promotion Unit of my Ministry is responsible for overseeing and coordinating screening programmes, including initiatives aimed at the early detection of breast cancer in line with the Ministry's policies and priorities. Furthermore, the National Cancer Centre, which has been operational since September 2024, contributes to the provision of specialised breast cancer services, including mammography examinations, treatment and follow-up care for patients diagnosed with cancer.

Mammography services for diagnostic purposes are also available at four regional hospitals, except Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital, where necessary steps are being taken to acquire

high-end mammography equipment. The Breast Health Unit at both Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital and Dr. AG Jeetoo Hospital are fully operational.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as an additional measure, the House may wish to note that my Ministry is preparing a white paper to introduce mobile mammography clinics as a strategy to improve access to breast cancer screening services in Mauritius. Mobile mammography clinics will bring screening services closer to communities and facilitate access for women who experience difficulties attending fixed healthcare facilities due to transport constraints, geographical barriers and other practical limitations. They will also provide an opportunity to promote awareness of breast cancer and the importance of early detection.

The introduction of such services will complement the existing breast health services, facilitate the identification of suspicion suspicious breast abnormalities and strengthen referral pathways to regional hospitals and specialised cancer services for further assessment and appropriate care. This initiative would support my Ministry's ongoing efforts to improve access to screening, promote early detection and strengthen the prevention and management of breast cancer in Mauritius.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Ms Anquetil.

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, M. le président. L'initiative de déployer une unité mobile de mammographie à travers l'île est louable. Je remercie le ministre pour cela.

L'honorable ministre peut-il indiquer à la Chambre si son ministère envisage de rendre ce service d'unité mobile de mammographie accessible au plus grand nombre de femmes qui travaillent dans *karo*, dans les usines, notamment en proposant des dépistages le weekend et à des horaires adaptés afin qu'aucune femme ne soit privée d'un dépistage pour des raisons professionnelles.

Je vous remercie, M. le président.

Mr Bachoo: Well, I do not have anything to add except that we are moving ahead with that project.

Ms Anquetil: D'accord.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Beechook!

Mr Beechook: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I please request the hon. Minister of Health, just like we have the vaccination card and the blood donor's card, to introduce a card for women of this country so that we have compulsory screening, not only for breast cancer, but also for cervical cancer to be carried out from a very young age in order to detect the possible cases of cervical cancer and breast cancer? Make it compulsory.

Mr Bachoo: This system is available in England, for example. Be patient a little bit. We are moving towards that direction.

Ms Anquetil: Please!

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

DEGRADED FOREST AREAS – NATIONAL REFORESTATION PROGRAMME

(No. B/1343) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the degraded forest areas, he will state whether a comprehensive national reforestation programme is in place and, if so, indicate the –

(a) priority sites identified, further indicating whether the vicinity of Mare aux Vacoas is included therein;
(b) annual targeted reforestation extent, and
(c) budget allocation and implementation timeframe thereof.
(d) priority sites identified, further indicating whether the vicinity of Mare aux Vacoas is included therein.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much hon. Member. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the forest state of Mauritius is around 42,000 hectares, representing 22.5% of the island. Out of the 42,000 hectares, an extent of 22,000 hectares belongs to government and 20,000 hectares is under private ownership. The Forestry Service and the National Park and Conservation Service of my Ministry actively manage the 22,000 hectares of State forest land.

Now, in accordance with the National Forestry Policy of 2006, my Ministry has been implementing measures with the collaboration of private and public institutions as well as non-governmental organisation to manage efficiently forest areas.

Indeed, emphasis has been laid on the creation and development of urban forest and avenue plantation. For any new development involving the removal of trees, the Ministry ensures that they are replaced by thrice their number.

Furthermore, the Forestry Service issues plants free of charge or at a discounted price to encourage private entities to create green spaces and mini forests with a view to increasing the national tree cover. I am tabling the list, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, of initiatives and action being undertaken by the Forestry Service, and National Parks and Conservation Service.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regard part (a) of the question, three priority sites have been identified by the Forestry Service for reforestation as follows –

(i) Signal Mountain, with a degradation of almost 50% due to recurrent fires, dry climate, and rocky nature of the area. This exercise started in 2002 and an extent of 30 hectares have already been forested. The remaining 35,000 is expected to be completed before 2035;
(ii) Bambous, La Ferme region, which represents a high-rate degradation of 50% due to the same causes and this area has been restocked with the support of beekeepers;
(iii) Upper Plateau, the region of Grand Bassin, Petrin and Mare aux Vacoas, which represent a degradation of rate of around 30% overall mainly due to invasive species and aging trees having reached the end of their lifespan.

Moreover, with regard to Mare aux Vacoas, a pilot rehabilitation project is being implemented and started in year 2024 by the Forestry Service in partnership with NGO Natir in the water catchment area. Approximately 5,500 native trees have been planted over four hectares. The initiative supports watershed protection, biodiversity recovery and ecosystem resilience.

As regards part (b) of the question, around 35 hectares of a new forest plantation annually in replacement of all planted forests to increase forest vigour is ongoing. For the present financial year, 32.8 hectares of new plantations have been targeted.

In addition, some 320 hectares of forest state land is being actively maintained for forest ecosystem services. Furthermore, an area of almost 60 hectares at Île aux Bénitiers will be proclaimed as special reserves under the Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and National Parks Act 2015. Action is being initiated by the Forestry Service for declaration of Daruty forest and Les Marriannes of an extent of 108.22 hectares and 128.3 hectares respectively, as national forests for additional protection and safeguarding of forest land.

With regard to part (c) of the question, a sum of Rs5.7 billion has been allocated for this financial year to the Ministry for execution of ground activities for forestry development. In addition, the Ministry has also been benefiting funding to the tune of USD10.1 million from Global Environment Facility for implementation of projects to promote sustainable land management and nature-based solution.

Government recognises the importance, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, of forest and and its biodiversity and agreed to drafting instructions being conveyed to the Attorney General's Office to provide a more comprehensive legal framework for the protection, conservation and sustainable management of forests. The Forest and Reserves Bill is under consideration.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Minister whether consideration will be given for the creation of a buffer zone around Mare aux Vacoas and its catchment area to prevent cutting down of trees and also prevent conversion of lands, be it for agricultural purposes or for any other purposes?

Dr. Boolell: The suggestion is very valuable. Certainly will entertain it because you know, we do not have rainforest per say, but your suggestion will be taken on board.

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

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S INTERNATIONAL AWARD – 60th & 70th ANNIVERSARIES – PARTICIPATION & ESTIMATED COST

(**No. B/1344) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, he will state whether –

(a) funds have been earmarked for the celebration of the 60th anniversary thereof in Mauritius and, if so, list the activities envisaged and, if not, why not, and

(b) officials of his Ministry will be attending the 70th anniversary celebrations thereof in November 2026 at Windsor Castle, United Kingdom and, if so, indicate the estimated cost thereof.

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that Rs3 million has been provided under my Ministry's budget to cater for the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award programme. Out of this amount, Rs105,000 has been earmarked to organise activities in the context of 60th anniversary celebration of the award in Mauritius.

The following activities will be organised –

1. the production of a digital magazine showcasing the achievement and development of the award in Mauritius over the past 60 years;
2. a national gathering at the Brisée Verdière Award House including the unveiling of a commemorative plaque;
3. tree planting activities by award participants at award centres in Mauritius and Rodrigues;
4. the production of a short video featuring gold awardees of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award in Mauritius, and
5. the production of 60 visual stories highlighting the award journey.

It is also to be noted that in the context of the 60th anniversary of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, a cleanup day was organised across the island on 20 September 2026 with the participation of around 300 persons.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that an invitation has been received for the for the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry, who is the elected member, to attend the International Council meeting to be held in Windsor, United Kingdom from 18 to 20 November 2026.

However, in view of the cost implication, approval has not been obtained for the participation at the International Council meeting. Allow me to point out that the invitation for attending the International Council meeting and not attending the 60th anniversary.

Mr Quirin: M. le Président, l'honorable ministre peut-il indiquer à la Chambre quelles mesures sont envisagées pour renforcer la participation des jeunes Mauriciens au Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, notamment ceux issus de milieux défavorisés, et si des ressources supplémentaires seront mises à la disposition du programme à cette fin?

Mr Nagalingum: Hon. Member will concur with me that this programme is island-wise. We do not choose region-wise, it is island-wise. So, every corner of the country, every village, every town is concerned and they are participating.

Mr Quirin: L'honorable ministre peut-il nous dire comment est-ce qu'il y a une communication qui est effectuée de façon à ce que ces jeunes, qu'il vient de nous citer lui-même, qui sont répartis à travers le pays, comment est-ce qu'ils sont informés qu'ils peuvent participer à cet award?

Mr Nagalingum: It is being conducted together with the Ministry of Education especially and all information is being given and envisaged in that sense. This is a very good question and we are going to see to it that all people are concerned and we are going to make a follow-up.

PERMANENT SECRETARIES & SENIOR CHIEF EXECUTIVES ACTING AS ACCOUNTING OFFICERS – DISCIPLINARY FRAMEWORK

(**No. B/1345) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet)** asked the Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms whether, in regard to Permanent Secretaries and Senior Chief Executives acting as Accounting Officers, he will state the disciplinary framework applicable thereto, indicating –

(a) the authority responsible for initiating proceedings following adverse findings of the Director of Audit, and

(b) whether the absence of a scheme of service constitutes an impediment thereto.

(Withdrawn)

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

CONSTITUENCY NO. 11 – ROAD SAFETY AUDIT – SPEED HUMPS

(No. B/1346) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the requests received for the installation of speed humps in various localities of Constituency No. 11, Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether a complete audit has been carried out throughout the said constituency to determine the need therefor and whether consideration will be given for the installation thereof, where required.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of my Ministry that following road safety audit and inspections carried out in Constituency No. 11, requests obtained from either inhabitants or MPs of the constituency, including the hon. Ramdass and others, his two colleagues, and information gathered from Internet Micro Accident Analysis Package (iMAAP) software of the Police Department, the TMRSU has already implemented speed humps at the following locations in Constituency No. 11 since last year –

- In Banane Village along B82 road near the Social Welfare Centre.
- In Deux Bras Village along Deux Bras, Cent Gaulettes Road, B7, along the straight stretch from its junction with A10 road, two raised tables were implemented, and
- in Rivière des Créoles near the Social Welfare Centre.

Other locations where the need for raised tables have been identified and recommended in that constituency are as follows –

- In La Rosa near Government School, more so for the safety of children and pedestrians;
- Along Flacq-Mahebourg Road B28 at Bois des Amourettes near Government School and football ground, more so again, for the safety of children and pedestrians as well, and
- Along Flacq-Mahebourg Road B28 at Rivière des Créoles near the road leading to Rivière des Créoles Community Centre in the vicinity of Boom Snack.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I also wish to inform the House that the TMRSU has carried out a complete road safety audit along Junction Road B81 and Deux Bras Road B7 and the following road safety measures have been recommended –

(i) upgrading of traffic signs and faded road markings;
(ii) fixing of glass cat's eyes, and
(iii) implementation of raised table along B7 Deux Bras Road near the post office, and along B81 Junction Road near Royal Heritage De Beau Climat.

The above measures will be implemented subject to wayleave being obtained from the relevant highway authority, that is, the Road Development Authority and the Grand Port District Council and availability of funds.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as a matter of principle, the TMRSU prioritises the implementation of traffic calming measures at areas posing safety risks to vulnerable road users. Where raised tables cannot be implemented, alternative safety measures are considered such as the fixing of rubber road humps. To that effect, my Ministry is liaising with the Attorney General's office for amendments to be brought to the Road Traffic (Road Humps) Regulations 2002 to provide for the implementation of rubber road humps on urban and rural roads. Once these amendments are effective, the TMRSU will start placing rubber road humps which I am informed, besides being less costly than raised tables, are durable, pre-manufactured and allow for quick installation, removal and/or relocation within hours. Their flexibility makes them particularly suitable for adapting to changing traffic management needs.

Surveys have also been carried out in Constituency No. 11 and a few locations have already been identified for the installation of rubber humps as follows –

- Three rubber humps along Bois d'Oiseaux Road near Gros Billot, Rose Belle near Gebert Kali Mata Mandir and Arya Samaj Mandir and near the Muslim Association;
- One rubber hump near Hans Doyal shop at Ville Noire.

To end, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, requests for speed humps and other traffic calming measures are received from MPs and other members of the public from all over the island. My Ministry and the TMRSU are doing our level best to satisfy the requests diligently within our means and available resources. I wish to assure the House that road safety is of high concern to my Ministry and in spite of constraints, my Ministry will endeavour to consider these requests and attend to them at the earliest possible in the interest of the public. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, supplementary?

Mr Ramdass: As already intimated to the hon. Minister, a number of requests have been made for the placing of these speed humps throughout the Constituency No. 11, *puisqu'il y va de la sécurité des usagers de la route et des habitants de ces régions. Est-ce que le ministre pourrait nous donner un* clear time frame as to the completion of these works?

Mr Osman Mahomed: In many of them, work orders are being issued or have already been issued. So it is a question of within, I hope, before the end of the year.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes?

Mr Seeburn: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I? On the same issue, please.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr Seeburn: I thank the hon. Minister for his reply. Will the hon. Minister also consider a request from the inhabitants regarding non-classified roads for those measures for extra security for the inhabitants?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Hon. Member, all those locations which have been listed to be fitted with the rubber humps are non-classified roads.

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

CASHLESS BUS TICKETING SYSTEM – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/1347) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the implementation of the Cashless Bus Ticketing System, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to where matters stand.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the implementation of the nationwide Cashless Electronic Ticketing System (CETS) for public transport is an important project of Government aimed at modernising fare collection across the sector, improving ridership management and strengthening the administration and concessionary travel schemes.

The CETS will constitute an integrated and interoperable fare collection platform that will enable passengers to travel across buses through the use of a smart card and mobile application, and also complement the Fleet Management System, currently being pursued by my Ministry, thereby contributing towards a more efficient, accountable and financially sustainable public transport ecosystem. The architecture will be an open one such that the CETS can integrate with the card system of the light rail vehicles and eventually used even on-board taxis, thus opening the gateway for intermodal transit. By minimising cash handling and introducing secure electronic payments, the system will improve convenience and safety for commuters, enhance transparency in revenue collection and subsidy administration, provide reliable ridership data which is of paramount importance in transportation for policy formulation and planning purposes, reduce fraud and operational inefficiencies and strengthen governance across the public transport sector while providing a seamless and enhanced travel experience to our citizens.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards the present status of the project, I am informed that an invitation for bids for consultancy services for the implementation of the Cashless Electronic Ticketing System was launched on 31 July 2026 through an open advertised international bidding process. The bidding exercise was closed on 14 September 2026 and bids were opened on 17 September 2026. A total of three bids were received and are currently being evaluated. The evaluation exercise is expected to be completed by the end of

October, that is in two weeks' time. The consultancy assignment will be for a duration of six months.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House may wish to note that although the Cashless Electronic Ticketing System has wide-ranging benefits and is already being used in several countries across the world, it would appear that the project has not been considered a priority by previous governments, despite budgetary provisions for initiating its implementation were made in successive years since 2017, and I wonder why. I know of such systems since 37 years ago in 1989 when I landed in Singapore for my university studies.

To end, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must emphasise that my Ministry has had extensive consultations with key stakeholders and successively overcame a key challenge in terms of the identification of a clearing house which is a *sine qua non* requirement for this project to materialise. So, we have done quite a bit of hard work there and the CETS, I hope that we succeed in this quest for innovation and digitalisation. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Member.

Mr Caserne: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether measures are also being considered to ensure that elderly citizens, persons with disabilities and individuals who may not have access to digital payment facilities are not disadvantaged with this new system?

Mr Osman Mahomed: In fact, they will not be disadvantaged at all because it will enhance facilities towards them. Those who are not able to do it online will surely be able to go to the bus stations/bus terminals where counters will be available for them to replenish perhaps a prepaid card. So, the objective is actually to make life easier.

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

REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS – INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS – MEMBERSHIP – BENEFITS & PROJECTS

(No. B/1348) Ms M. R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to international organisations of which the Republic of Mauritius is a member, he will –

(a) table the list thereof, indicating the –

(i) number of designated desks/ national focal points therefor, and

(ii) technical/ financial/administrative challenges, encountered in meeting the international treaties and reporting commitments, and

(b) state/obtain information as to the benefits derived and projects implemented thereunder for the development of mainland Mauritius, Rodrigues and other Islands.

Mr Ramful: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since independence, Mauritius joined a number of international and regional organisations. These memberships to these international and regional organisations have helped Mauritius to strengthen its economy, improve living standards, protect its environment, maintain peaceful relations and increase its influence internationally.

With regard to part (a) of the question, concerning the number of designated desks and national focal points, given the wide range of international and regional organisations to which Mauritius is a member, my Ministry is compiling the required information which will be tabled shortly.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a)(ii) of the question, I wish to inform the House that Mauritius has been fulfilling its reporting obligations under the different international treaties. However, we do face several technical, financial and administrative challenges as well as coordination issues. We equally encounter difficulties in ensuring alignment between our laws and certain provisions of international treaties. Addressing these challenges pertaining to our reporting obligations requires sustained capacity building, adequate resource allocation, stronger inter-institutional coordination and effective monitoring mechanisms.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b), requesting to state and obtain information as to the specific benefits derived and projects implemented thereunder for the development of mainland Mauritius and the islands of the Republic, including Rodrigues

island, I wish to highlight that the world of today is a global village. No country can operate in isolation. By being a member of different international and regional organisations, Mauritius continues to benefit in terms of economic development, international trade, peace and security, financial assistance, education and training, health improvement, environmental protection and international representation.

Given the considerable number of international and regional organisations to which Mauritius belongs, allow me to highlight some specific projects and the benefits derived therefrom for Rodrigues. These include, *inter alia* –

(i) Sustainable Fisheries Management, that is, through a project supported by the Food and Agriculture Organisation to improve fisheries data collection and evidence-based decision-making;

(ii) Renewable Energy Access – Rodrigues benefited from the UNDP-led rooftop solar initiative, targeting more than 3,000 low-income households across Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agalega;

(iii) Migration Governance – the IMO conducted migration awareness activities concerning movement between Rodrigues and mainland Mauritius, reaching 198 participants comprising of 119 women and 79 men;

(iv) Youth Empowerment and Health – the United Nations Population Fund supported youth life skills, peer education and sexual and reproductive health initiatives.

(v) The Environmental Awareness – l'*Organisation des Nations unies pour l'éducation, pour la science et la culture* supported environmental journalism training, including a journalist from Rodrigues, helping strengthen climate communication and public awareness as well, and

(vi) Sustainable Livelihoods – broader UN programmes in sustainable agriculture, environmental protection and climate resilience, offer opportunities to support local livelihoods and strengthen environmental sustainability.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the benefit of the House, I shall table a comprehensive list of all the organisations to which Mauritius is a member, their designated focal points and a summary of the benefits derived from joining those organisations. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Before I proceed, the Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/1339, B/1345, B/1350, B/1354, B/1380 and B/1384.

The hon. First Member for Vacoas and Floréal!

M4 MOTORWAY PROJECT – EIA REPORT, PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS & REPAYMENT SCHEDULE

(No. B/1349) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the M4 Motorway project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

(a) findings and recommendations of the report established following the public consultations held in connection therewith, indicating whether copy thereof will be tabled, and

(b) terms of repayment therefor, indicating, inter alia, the applicable interest rate.

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the very outset, I would like to highlight the particular significance of the Motorway M4 project. For the first time in our country's history, Government will embark on the construction of a major 30 kilometres dual carriageway at one stretch, marking a significant milestone in the modernisation of our national road infrastructure. The new road will pass predominantly through rural areas. The project will provide a strategic road corridor between the northern and the eastern region of the island whilst improving connectivity with the rest of the island through the existing motorways and road networks once the M4 project is completed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Road Development Authority that in October 2022, the M4 Motorway project was declared an exempt undertaking by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, pursuant to Section 28(1) of the Environment Protection Act 2002. Nonetheless, an Environmental Impact Assessment report was prepared by Luxconsult (Mtius) Ltd and submitted by the RDA to the Ministry of

Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change on 24 April 2026 in connection with the application of an EIA licence.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following comments from the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, public consultations were requested as part of the EIA process. Accordingly, the RDA, in collaboration with my Ministry, organised three public consultation sessions along the proposed M4 motorway corridor, covering constituencies number 7, 9 and 10 as follows –

(i) on 02 September 2026 at Lady Sushil Ramgoolam Community Centre, Caroline, Bel Air;

(ii) on 03 September 2026 at Central Flacq Multipurpose Hall, and

(iii) on 10 September 2026 at Rivière du Rempart Youth Centre.

A total of 242 participants attended the three consultation sessions, including members of the public, representatives of taxi operators, religious bodies, elected representatives, district and village councillors of the region, and representatives of the private sector and other stakeholders from the regions concerned. The consultations provided an opportunity to present the proposed project, address concerns raised and obtain feedback from members of the public and relevant stakeholders.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the EIA report is currently being amended by Luxconsult (Mtius) Ltd to incorporate the outcomes of the public consultations and the relevant environmental considerations. Upon completion, the report will be submitted to the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change for consideration as part of the EIA process and will thereafter be made available to the public. As the amended EIA report has not yet been finalised, a copy cannot be tabled at this stage.

I am informed that the amended report will be submitted to the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change by November 2026.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards to part (b), I would like to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to Parliamentary Question B/1179 on 28 July 2026, wherein I indicated that an umbrella line of credit agreement equivalent to USD 432 million for several projects,

including the Motorway M4 project, was signed with the Exim Bank of India on 22 July 2026. A copy of the agreement has already been laid before the National Assembly.

I had also indicated that given that the projects under the special economic package 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. Accordingly, the actual repayment schedule in respect of the Motorway M4 project will be available once the relevant credit agreement has been signed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed by the Ministry of Finance that the terms of the umbrella line of credit are as follows –

(i) the duration of the loan is 15 years;

(ii) there is a grace period of five years on capital repayment, and

(iii) the applicable interest rate is a floating rate based on the Marginal Cost of Funds Based Lending Rate, MCLR, minus 2%.

The MCLR is the minimum lending rate below which a bank is not permitted to lend. The interest rate under the line of credit is, therefore, subsidised by the Government of India. At the time the loan agreement was signed, the applicable interest rate was around 5.87%.

I wish to seize this opportunity to thank our hon. Prime Minister for the effort he put in to secure the funds, and also, Shri Narendra Modi ji, Prime Minister of India, and the Government of India for the invaluable financial assistance towards the implementation of the Motorway M4 project. Without this financial support, the realisation of this transformative project would not be possible. This generous financial support reflects the strong bonds of friendship and cooperation that exist between our two countries and will undoubtedly contribute significantly to the socio-economic development of Mauritius.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: L'honorable ministre, peut-il confirmer que les consultations publiques qui ont eu lieu en 2026 ont été organisées par la RDA, donc par son ministère, et

non pas par le consultant qui a préparé le EIA en 2013 ? Et normalement, on le sait, c'est dans le cadre d'un EIA qu'ont lieu des consultations publiques. Donc, est-ce qu'il peut confirmer que ce n'est pas le consultant qui a organisé ces consultations et expliquer les raisons derrière cette décision et comment est-ce qu'il va assurer que la transparence et l'indépendance vont prévaloir dans l'analyse de ces observations-là ?

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister!

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the consultant was part and parcel of the consultation. In all the three consultations, they were here. So, I do not see a conflict whatever.

Ms J. Bérenger: Ils étaient présents, mais à ma connaissance, ce n'est pas eux qui ont organisé, c'est la RDA. Donc, je redemande au ministre, est-ce que c'est la RDA qui a organisé ces consultations?

Mr Gunness: The RDA, in consultation, together with the consultant, they organised it.

Ms J. Bérenger: Peut-on savoir pourquoi le EIA de 2013 n'a pas été actualisé?

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I said in my answer that this was an exempt project. It was an exempt project. When we came in Government, then we decided to have an EIA report. So there is no EIA in 2013. I cannot see it. I do not know where the hon. Member got that information. I said it was an exempt project.

Mr Seeburn: Yes, thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister also consider the possibility of providing opportunities to SMEs and local contractors, being given that this is a major project and the likelihood is that the contract may be awarded to an international firm or company?

Mr Gunness: I presume that the hon. Member is saying when the project will start to give possibility for the small contractors to get some work. Obviously, I said in my last answer, it has been agreed between Government of India and Mauritius that 25% will be kept for Mauritians. So local contractors, obviously, SMEs, local contractors, the material suppliers; we will insist that 25% are secured or supplied by Mauritian people.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Beechook, then last question for you, hon. Ms J. Bérenger.

Mr Beechook: Merci, M. le président. Je remercie l'honorable ministre d'avoir mené des consultations dans notre circonscription où il a été notamment question de reboisement.

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question!

Mr Beechook: Est-ce que le ministre pourrait considérer ma proposition en tant que député de la circonscription no.9 que cette espèce de tronçon entre le rond-point de Constance et celui de Bonne Mère soit embelli d'arbres et de plantes de bois d'ébène en hommage à la première route construite sous l'ère hollandaise justement pour le commerce d'ébène et cette route a été construite dans la circonscription no. 9, Flacq & Bon Accueil.

Mr Gunness: I must, first of all, thank the hon. Members of the constituencies No. 9, 7, and 10 who were present during the consultation. This proposal, I remember hon. Beechook having made it in the consultation, and obviously, RDA will ask the contractor to take on board and we said that we are going to make it green on both sides of the road. So, it will be taken on board.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question. Okay, last question.

Ms J. Bérenger: Une clarification. Le *feasibility study* n'est pas la même chose que le *Environmental Impact Assessment.* L'honorable ministre pourrait-il confirmer que c'est bien le *Environmental Impact Assessment* qui a été fait en 2026 et non pas le *feasibility study* qui a été réactualisé ?

Mr Gunness: I think I cannot be clearer than this. I think in my main answer, I talked about Environmental Impact Assessment and not feasibility study. So, I cannot be clearer than this.

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

MAURITIUS – INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL CENTRE – CREDIBILITY STRENGHTENING MEASURES

(No. B/1350) Mr M. Seeburn (**Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle**) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning whether, in regard to the consolidation of Mauritius as an International Financial Centre, she will state the –

(a) measures being implemented to strengthen the credibility and attractiveness thereof, and
(b) initiatives being undertaken to attract new international financial institutions to promote financial innovation and encourage the development of high-value financial services.

(Withdrawn)

CONSTRUCTION SITES – OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH INSPECTIONS – REPORTED ACCIDENTS

(No. B/1351) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to the Construction Unit of the Occupational Safety and Health Division, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to, since January 2024, the –

(a) number of construction sites inspected;
(b) procedures established to identify new construction sites regarding Building and Land Use Permits, and
(c) number of –
    (i) reported fatal and non-fatal accidents at construction sites, and
    (ii) officers posted thereto, indicating whether an increase thereof will be considered.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the construction section of the National Occupational Safety and Health Department of my Ministry was established in October 2016 to enforce occupational safety and health legislation in the construction sector through, *inter alia*, inspection, investigation into complaints, follow-up visits, the issuance of prohibition orders and the prosecution of employers for breaches of the legislation.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that for the period January 2024 to 15 October 2026, 1,655 construction sites were inspected. I am tabling the number of construction sites inspected since 2024 till date.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that officers of the Construction Section identify new construction sites through surveys conducted during planned site visit, complaints received from employees and trade unions, notification by contractors or clients concerning the removal of asbestos from buildings, inspection following complaints from the Central Electricity Board, application for factory building permits and central lodging accommodation building permits received by the OSH Department and notification of accident at construction site.

However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I agree that there should be a better mechanism for identifying new construction site and my Ministry is working with the Ministry of Local Government for a protocol for local authorities to notify the National Occupational Safety and Health Department of new construction project as soon as a Building and Land Use Permit is issued.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (c)(i) of the question, I am informed that from January 2024 to 15 October 2026, there were 13 fatal accidents and 124 non-fatal accident at construction sites which were recorded by the National Occupation Safety and Health Department.

With regard to part (c) (ii) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the Construction Section has currently seven officers including one acting Chief Occupational Safety and Health Officer, one acting Divisional Occupation Safety and Health Officer, one Principal Occupation Safety and Health Officer and four Occupational Safety and Health Officers.

Although we have only seven officers, there is supposed to be 12 officers posted in the Construction Section. However, additional officers, I am informed, cannot be posted in the Construction Section as there is an overall shortage of staff in all sections of the National Occupation Safety and Health Department. I am informed that out of 84 posts on establishment for NOSH, there are only 58 officers in post. One third of the posts has not yet been filled.

I am further informed that funds have been budgeted for the filling of only 14 out of the 26 vacancies for Financial Year 2026-2027. Filling of those vacancies has further been delayed as the schemes of service of the officers at all levels are being revised to be in line with the recent amendments brought to the OSH legislation.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac!

WATER SUPPLY (ISLAND-WIDE) & RIVIÈRE DES ANGUILLES DAM PROJECT

(No. B/1352) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to water security, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to –

(a) the measures taken and/or being envisaged to ensure adequate water supply island-wide, and
(b) where matters stand in regard to the Rivière des Anguilles Dam project.

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, avec votre permission, je répondrai aux deux *PQs* B/1352 et B/1386 de l'honorable Adrien Duval. En ce qui concerne la partie (b) du *PQ* B/1352, le projet de barrage de Rivière des Anguilles, je suis informé que l'exercice d'évaluation est toujours en cours au *Central Procurement Board*.

M. le président, le changement climatique a entraîné des modifications importantes du régime pluviométrique à Maurice, notamment en termes de date, de lieu et de quantité. Ces dernières années, le pays a connu des longues périodes de sécheresse et les pluviométries étant devenues moins prévisibles tant en termes de calendrier que d'intensité.

Habituellement les pluies sur l'île Maurice se répartissent en deux tiers en été et un tiers en hiver. Les données publiées par la météo ces dernières années ont mis en évidence des périodes de sécheresse prolongées, des épisodes de fortes précipitations et une modification de la répartition des pluies.

L'île Maurice est devenue plus vulnérable en matière d'approvisionnement en eau douce et de ce fait, la qualité et la quantité de l'eau disponible sont affectées.

M. le président, concernant le point (a) du PQ B/1387, je suis informé que le niveau global de remplissage de nos réservoirs au lundi 19 octobre 2026, donc hier, s'établissait à 53,6 % contre 82,6 % à la même date en 2025. Le niveau du réservoir de Mare aux Vacoas était de 34,2 % tandis que celui de la Nicolière dans le nord était de 39,4 %.

Concernant le point (b) de la question B/1387, il m'a été indiqué que le niveau minimal d'utilisation varie généralement d'un réservoir à l'autre en fonction de divers facteurs tels que le niveau de captage, la profondeur, le niveau de sédimentation, mais lorsque le niveau d'eau dans les réservoirs baisse significativement, la qualité de l'eau restante diffère de celle des réservoirs situés à des niveaux plus élevés. Par conséquent, le prélèvement d'eau à des niveaux très bas dans les réservoirs peut s'avérer techniquement complexe. Cela peut nécessiter des procédés de traitement plus intensifs et complexes. Ainsi, qu'un temps de traitement plus long avec les infrastructures existantes afin d'atteindre les normes de qualité d'eau potable requises et les volumes prévus à fournir. Compte tenu de ce qui précède, M. le président, et des incertitudes liées aux caractéristiques du réservoir, un seuil général de 20% peut donc être considéré comme un niveau de fonctionnement fiable.

Concernant le réservoir de Mare aux Vacoas, dont le remplissage actuel est critique, il est prévu, qu'il atteigne 20% vers la fin de novembre de cette année-ci. En absence de précipitation dans les bassins versants d'apport et de débit sortant actuel.

Concernant les points (c) du PQ B/1387 et du PQ B/1352, la CWA s'emploie à développer des sources d'eau souterraine et surface supplémentaire conformément au plan Marshall.

M. le président, pour Rivière des Anguilles, je vous ai dit un peu plus tôt. Donc nous avons un plan établi et jeudi, lors de la réunion avec le Premier ministre concernant le *High Powered Committee* présidé par l'honorable Premier ministre, nous allons mettre sur la table les plans que nous avons déjà commencé à faire depuis quelque temps et les plans futurs que la CWA a proposé pour les mois à venir.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon . Jhummun!

Mr Jhummun: Thank you hon. Minister. Can the hon. Minister inform the House what is being done about the non-revenue water and pipe replacement programme?

Mr Assirvaden: *The non-revenue water,* M. le président, a été un département qui a été démantelé les 10 dernières années. Quand je suis arrivé comme ministre, le non-revenue water n'existait plus. Cela a été démantelé par l'ancien régime. Nous avons reconstitué depuis un an et demi, le non-revenue water. Donc, le non-revenue water ne concerne pas que l'eau qui est perdue en termes de fuite, le non-revenue water est aussi l'eau qui est perdue de façon illégale avec des *meters* qui ne marchent pas.

Donc, le *non-revenue water* a été reconstitué, il travaille dans l'Est parce que nous avons un taux de perdition le plus élevé dans l'Est. Alors, le *non-revenue water* travaille en de façon autonome au sein de la CWA et nous avons aussi le *pipe replacement programme*. Donc, le *pipe replacement programme* de grande envergure et de moins grande envergure. Donc, de très grande envergure, c'est l'argent que nous avons eu de l'Inde, R 2.9 milliards pour changer 114 kilomètres de tuyaux en amiante et aussi en 14 régions du pays.

Mais nous avons aussi des pipe replacement programmes pendant ces 18 mois qui ont été entrepris dans différentes régions pour permettre à ce que nous avons la pression parce que comme je l'ai dit à plusieurs reprises ici, à chaque fois que nous mettons la pression dans les tuyaux, les tuyaux s'éclatent. Si nous baissons la pression, ceux qui sont en hauteur, n'arrivent pas à avoir l'eau équitablement.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Minister, since December 2024 as at date, how many mini-dam projects have been identified and approved?

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, d'abord, laissez-moi vous dire que nous avons un plan Marshall présenté depuis 2025. Le plan Marshall consistait en six points. Le plan Marshall consistait à prendre de l'eau dans les *boreholes*. D'abord, il n'y a pas que les *mini-dams*, il y a aussi les *boreholes* avant de venir au barrage. Nous avons foré 24 *boreholes* de 2025, donc janvier 2025 à ce jour. 24 *boreholes* qui nous ont emmené 43400 m³ d'eau supplémentaire sur le réseau.

Ceci dit, M. le président, nous avons aussi depuis 2025, je veux dire janvier 2025. Oublions 2024. On a été au pouvoir en presque novembre, décembre 2024. Donc, en janvier 2025 à ce jour, nous avons placé six CPF - à Constance, Argy, Ballisson, Calbasse, Rouillard,

Beaux songes, point total de 14000 m³ d'eau supplémentaire. En 2026, cette année-ci, nous avons commandé 15 CPF supplémentaires pour être placés à Plaine des Papayes, Rouillard, Argy, Unité, Cote d'Or, Bramstan. Donc, pour nous amener 33000 m³ supplémentaires.

Donc, le plan Marshall consistait aussi à faire des mini-barrages. Aussi, les mini-barrages ne peuvent pas être fait sans un consultant, sans un *study.* Nous avons aussi travaillé sur le dessalement. Nous avons aussi travaillé sur l'eau qui se perdait après que le Central Electricity Board ait produit l'électricité, que ce soit à Magenta, que ce soit à Tamarind Falls. Nous avons aussi pensé à récupérer cette eau. Cette eau est récupérée à ce jour aujourd'hui.

Donc, nous voulons aussi récupérer l'eau qui se perd. Donc, aussi ce que nous avons fait, c'est bien l'opportunité de le dire, c'est que nous avons négocié avec la MEXA pour que la MEXA puisse utiliser l'eau qui est traitée de façon primaire pour être utilisée dans les usines mais aussi dans les champs de canne. Donc, c'est un plan Marshall global qui consiste à à à retirer de l'eau, à puiser de l'eau là où on n'avait pas l'habitude d'aller prendre de l'eau.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay! Last question, hon. Rookny!

Mr Rookny: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether as regards to Mare aux Vacoas, any feeder canals have been diverted away from the reservoir to profit private planters and private farms?

Mr Assirvaden: Je dois dire que pas mal de personnes, même la presse en a fait état. J'ai demandé à la *Water Resources Commission* de vérifier tout autour. Vous savez, tout autour de Mare aux Vacoas, nous avons des forêts qui tombent sous la responsabilité du ministère de l'Agro.

Donc les techniciens du ministère ont été tout autour de Mare aux Vacoas, enfin, dans la mesure du possible. Mais rien ne dit à ce jour que nous avons la certitude, la garantie que l'eau est déviée du réservoir de Mare aux Vacoas. J'ai même demandé qu'une vue aérienne pour pouvoir détecter si éventuellement il y a des déviations quelque part autour de Mare aux Vacoas, mais à l'heure où je vous parle, je n’ai pas de certitude.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, honourable! Do you have a question? Yes.

Ms J. Bérenger: Par rapport au *borehole*, l'honorable ministre pourrait-il confirmer que dans la région de Beaux songes, Medine aurait mis à disposition de la CWA, six arpents et trois *boreholes* productifs à exploiter, mais que depuis 2023, il y a un *Memorandum of Agreement* qui n'a toujours pas été signé malgré plusieurs relances et que ça impacte énormément la population qui aurait pu bénéficier de cette eau à disposition ?

Mr Assirvaden: Je dois dire que l'affirmation de l'honorable membre est en partie vraie. C'est vrai qu'il y a eu un accord en 2023 entre la CWA et Médine concernant les *smart cities* de Médine – une chose – et le Morcellement Pierrefonds 1. Mais quand je me suis posé la question au sein de la CWA pour demander comment la *smart city* de Médine est alimentée en eau? À ce jour, la *smart city* de Médine est alimentée par l'eau de la CWA. Donc, de 2023 à ce jour, la CWA garantit les développements du *smart city* de Médine, parce que les développements du *smart city* de Médine se font en phase. Donc, l'eau est puisée dans les réservoirs de la CWA, dans les réservoirs de service tout autour de Médine pour être alimentée.

Quand j'ai vu que le *MoU* qui n'a pas été signé – j'ai une copie du *MOU* qui n'a pas été signée – mais Médine m'a contacté pour me dire qu'ils sont disposés à mettre effectivement quelques cinq arpents ou six arpents pour que la CWA puisse faire les travaux nécessaires. Et aussi, la responsabilité de Médine est de construire ces réservoirs de service. Mais je ne blâme pas que la CWA ; je blâme aussi Médine parce que depuis 2023 à ce jour, Médine aurait pu et aurait dû construire ces réservoirs de service pour ne pas puiser dans l'eau de la CWA.

Donc, je dirais que Médine aussi est resté sur ses lauriers, parce que Médine est alimenté en eau. La région de Médine alimente la région de Tamarin et Rivière Noire. Là, où se trouve Médine avec Cascavelle, alimente la région de Flic en Flac et la région de Bambous. C'est pour cette raison que toute l'eau que nous puisons autour de cette région, les *boreholes*, les CPF que nous mettons pour pouvoir alimenter cette région, malheureusement, une partie va vers Médine.

L'honorable membre a en partie raison. Depuis 2023, l'*agreement* est là. Médine a proposé des terrains. Mais, par exemple, je peux dire Pierrefonds 1, nous avons un *borehole* qui a été foré par Médine, qui nous a donné à un moment 1,700 $m^{3.}$ Avec une pompe un peu plus grosse, nous avons pu pomper 5,000 m^3. C'est le *borehole* de Médine que nous avons

pris avec l'accord de Médine pour pouvoir l'utiliser dans ces périodes difficiles que nous traversons.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, one last question on this issue because…

(Interruptions)

Ms J. Bérenger: …a signé…

Mr Assirvaden: Non, on n'a pas signé.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Come on, no cross-talking, please! Hon…

Mr Beechook: Concernant les mini barrages dont parle l'honorable ministre, est-ce qu'on a déjà identifié des lieux à travers l'île ? Est-ce qu'il y a une étude qui a été menée ou qui sera menée ? Et peut-on avoir une idée du nombre de mètres cubes en eau que l'on peut avoir pour alimenter l'île en cette période de sécheresse?

Mr Assirvaden: Les barrages, M. le président, ne vont pas pouvoir être utilisés là. C'est à court ou long terme. Les mini barrages que nous avons identifiés déjà dans le point 5 du *Marshall Plan* de 2025, nous parlons ici d'Eau Bleue pour être déviée vers le réservoir de Midlands. Nous espérons avoir 3 à 4 millions de mètres cubes par an dans ce projet. Nous avons aussi trois autres endroits dont la *Water Resources Commission* essaie de faire des *feasibility study* pour voir ce qu'on appelle dans le jargon *the yield*, le potentiel de ces barrages.

Nous parlons ici de centaines de millions de roupies d'investissement et il faudra aussi dévier ces barrages. Pas que ce barrage, il faudra dévier ces barrages dans nos réservoirs pour pouvoir alimenter nos réseaux, parce qu'on a un réseau qui n'est pas interconnecté. Nos réseaux, ce sont des réseaux qui sont isolés. Donc, pour cette raison, on aurait pu prendre là, actuellement, avec Mare aux Vacoas, si Bagatelle Dam était…

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, please answer the question! You have been very vague.

Mr Assirvaden: Dernière petite chose, M. le président. Si Bagatelle Dam était lié à Mare aux Vacoas, on aurait pu alimenter Mare aux Vacoas.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka!

DAGOTIÈRE, LAVANDE HOUSING COMPLEX – GREEN SPACES & LANDSCAPED AREAS – CLEANING & MAINTENANCE

(No. B/1353) Mr G. P. Venkatasami (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the cleaning and maintenance of the green spaces and landscaped areas at the Lavande Housing Complex, in Dagotière, he will state –

(a) where matters stand regarding the new scheme being envisaged by his Ministry and other stakeholders therefor, giving details thereof, and
(b) whether complaints have been received in respect thereof and, if so, indicate the actions taken in relation thereto.

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

I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made on 26 May 2026 to PQ B/826, whereby I informed the House that the NHDC has come up with a new syndic scheme to ensure proper maintenance of its housing estates.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that following agreement of the co-owners, the NHDC has taken over the cleaning and maintenance of common areas and amenities as well as green spaces at Residence Lavande, Dagotière since September 2026.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that no complaint has been received to date at the level of the NHDC regarding the cleaning and maintenance of the green spaces and common amenities thereat. I have to also give those details to the hon. Member, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

As part of the implementation of the syndic scheme, the NHDC conducted a referendum exercise through a letter of information among co-owners of Residence Lavande

at Dagotière on 03, 05 and 06 September 2026. This is the same exercise that is going on in other residential estates around Mauritius in order to implement the syndic scheme.

So, the co-owners or occupants were invited to choose one of the following options. The option one was that the duly elected syndic of co-owners continues to receive the government contribution of Rs200 per housing unit per month to ensure the maintenance of the housing estates. Option two was the cleaning and maintenance of the common areas of the housing estates be entrusted to the NHDC. Now, the outcome of the referendum for that particular residential estate, Residence Lavande, the co-owners and occupants have agreed to option two, which is the cleaning and maintenance of the common areas of the housing estates be entrusted to the NHDC.

Under the new syndic scheme, the NHDC maintenance team carried out cleaning of the green spaces and maintenance of amenities, the children's playground, jogging track at Residence Lavande, Dagotière on the following dates, even before the decision of the referendum, on 16 August 2026, 29 August 2026, 13 September 2026, 14, 16 and 17 September 2026. The District Council of Moka has taken over the community centre ever since 12 April 2023. The community centre is thus being operated and maintained by the council. The scavenging services are being provided by the District Council of Moka.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East!

RIVIÈRE DES ANGUILLES DAM PROJECT – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/1354) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the implementation of the Rivière des Anguilles Dam Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to where matters stand, indicating the stages completed and whether same is proceeding as per schedule and, if not, why not, further indicating the –

(a) reasons therefor;
(b) remedial measures being taken, and
(c) revised expected completion and commissioning dates thereof.

(Withdrawn)

OLYMPIA LTD – AWARDED CONTRACTS – DECEMBER 2024-OCTOBER 2026

(No. B/1355) Mr E. Juman (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to contracts awarded to Olympia Ltd. since December 2024 to date by his Ministry and bodies falling under the purview thereof, he will state/obtain information in each case as to the –

(a) nature, scope, date of award, value and duration thereof;
(b) procurement method used, indicating the justification thereof, where applicable, and
(c) amounts paid and outstanding, if any.

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, each year, my Ministry procures significant sporting goods such as equipment, clothing and materials among others. In order to fulfil its mandate of promoting and developing sport as well as youth empowerment, I have to point out that there are a limited number of suppliers in the field and some are not registered on the e-procurement portal.

The Procurement Policy Office provides several procurement methods to ensure that public funds are used efficiently, transparently and in a way that delivers the best value for money. Hence, my Ministry makes use of various methods allowed under the Public Procurement Act.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that from December 2024 to date, Olympia Ltd. has been awarded contracts by my Ministry and other bodies falling under its purview for a total amount of Rs10,455,999.50.

I wish to draw the attention of the House that all the necessary procurement procedures have been followed by my Ministry and bodies falling under its purview prior to award of contracts to Olympia Ltd.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as much as I would like to go through all the procurement made from December 2024 to date. Given the list is extensive, in the interest of the House's precious time, I am tabling the requested information.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, do you have a supplementary? No supplementary.

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

2014 MALABO PROTOCOL – SIGNATORY STATES & MAURITIUS' POSITION

(No. B/1356) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Protocol to the Constitutive Act of the African Union relating to the Pan-African Parliament adopted in Malabo in 2014, he will –

(a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of African Union Member States which have, to date, signed and ratified same, and

(b) state whether the Republic of Mauritius is included therein and, if not, why not and whether Government intends to initiate the necessary process therefor.

Mr Ramful: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to start my reply by recalling that the Pan-African Parliament is a consultative and advisory organ of the African Union established under Article 17 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union. In 2004, Mauritius ratified the 2001 Protocol to the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community relating to the Pan-African Parliament. This 2001 Protocol, which entered into force in 2004, is the one currently governing the Pan-African Parliament. However, the Pan-African Parliament does not have the authority yet to pass legislations and regulations which are to become binding on AU member states. Its powers, as I said, are essentially consultative and advisory.

However, in 2014, the AU adopted a protocol in Malabo, which actually seeks to strengthen and transform the Pan-African Parliament into a body with substantially enhanced powers by granting it with legislative powers. This includes the authority to participate in the development and adoption of model laws and to exercise legislative functions at the continental level in specified areas. Hence, the 2014 Malabo Protocol seeks to confer the PAP with the power to directly impact the laws, regulations, and policies of each AU member state.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the 2014 Malabo Protocol has not yet entered into force. Its entry into force requires ratification by 28 AU member states. Mauritius has not yet signed

the 2014 Malabo Protocol. Based on the latest information communicated to us by the African Union Commission, only 15 member states have ratified the protocol despite having 23 member states signing the said protocol. This means that the required threshold of 28 ratifications has not yet been reached and therefore the 2001 Protocol remains the applicable legal framework governing the Pan-African Parliament. All the AU member states continue to participate in the Pan-African Parliament under the 2001 Protocol which provides the legal basis for participation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the entry into force of the 2014 Malabo Protocol, in the eventuality that 28 member states ratify it, would constitute a significant development in the institutional architecture of the AU, particularly with regard to the PAP's expanded mandate and legislative powers. Any consideration by Mauritius to accede to and to ratify the 2014 Protocol would therefore need to take into account the legal, constitutional and institutional implications of conferring enhanced legislative powers to a continental parliamentary institution and the cascading effect this may trigger on our sovereignty.

Transfer of legislative powers in certain sectors means that the Pan-African Parliament will gain authority to pass model laws and regulations that may not necessarily align with our national laws and policies. There is also the question of sovereignty, which I referred to earlier. In other words, we will have to accept to a certain degree, and in certain sectors, that the Pan-African Parliament will govern our national policies.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: M. le président, l'honorable ministre peut-il préciser si un avis juridique a été sollicité concernant les implications de la signature et de la ratification du protocole de Malabo par la République de Maurice et, dans l'affirmative, quelles en sont les principales conclusions, et de bien vouloir dans la même foulée préciser les raisons exactes pour lesquelles Maurice à ce jour n'a ni signé ni ratifié ce protocole ?

Mr Ramful: We have not sought any legal advice on this. But then, we have to bear in mind that this is a step that has to be taken following consultations with different stakeholders because, as I have mentioned in my reply, this will have major implications, namely on our sovereignty. In fact, Article 2 of the Constitution provides that the Constitution is the supreme law of our country, and any law that is not aligned with the Constitution is deemed

void. So, therefore, there are numerous implications. The Constitution itself provides for that. A policy decision has to be taken before we proceed with any decision.

Mr Quirin: Une dernière question, M. le président. L'honorable ministre peut-il confirmer à la Chambre qu'aussi longtemps que le nombre de ratifications n'atteignent pas la majorité absolue, 50 % plus une ratification, le protocole de Malabo n'a aucune force de loi, et que c'est le protocole existant datant de 2001 qui a toujours force de loi ? Donc, la clause du protocole de Malabo qui fait référence par exemple au nombre de mandat d'un député siégeant au Parlement panafricain…

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question!

Mr Quirin: …ne devrait pas être plus de deux et ne peut en aucun cas être pris en considération. Est-ce que l'honorable ministre peut-il confirmer ce que je viens de dire ?

Mr Ramful: It is very clear from my reply, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we have not reached 28 member states yet. So, therefore, automatically the 2001 Protocol is the protocol that governs the framework of the Pan-African Parliament.

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

MRS E. T. – SHOOTING INCIDENT – PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

(No. B/1357) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the recent shooting incident in the course of which Mrs E. T. was injured, she will state the measures being taken by her Ministry for the provision of the necessary protection, support and assistance to the latter and her family.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following the incident involving Mrs E.T., my Ministry has taken steps to provide psychosocial support and assistance to her and her family. On 11 October 2026, officers of my Ministry, including a psychologist, visited her residence and met her husband, parents, sister, child and in-laws. Psychological support was offered to the family members and counselling was provided to help them cope with the situation.

Officers also enquired into the care arrangements for the couple's two-year-old daughter, who is being cared for by her father and paternal aunt. During a follow-up on 12 October 2026, her father reported that she was faring well and had attended her daycare centre. Moreover, social assessments were carried out by the Family Welfare and Protection Officers of my Ministry. Further visits were conducted on 14 and 15 October 2026 to provide continued psychological support and supportive counselling to the family.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 19 October 2026, a psychologist of my Ministry visited Dr. Jeetoo Hospital, with a view to providing psychological support to Mrs E.T. However, the Hospital Duty Manager advised that owing to the high risk of infection, visits were restricted to family members. The Duty Manager further informed that Mrs E.T. was already receiving support from a psychologist of the Ministry of Health and Wellness and that the involvement of an additional psychologist was not considered necessary at this stage.

My Ministry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, continues to follow-up with the family and provide psychosocial support according to their needs.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, M. le président, je remercie l'adjointe au Premier Ministre pour sa réponse. L'adjointe au Premier Ministre pourrait-elle informer la Chambre, si compte tenu des circonstances particulières de l'incident impliquant Madame Thomas, du traumatisme à long terme qu'elle et sa famille risque de subir, ainsi que du fait qu'elle a été privée de son salaire, si son ministère envisage la mise en place d'un mécanisme de soutien personnalisé à long terme? Je vous remercie, M. le président.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Je pense que j'ai déjà répondu à la question, M. le président.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, M. le président. Would the hon. Deputy Prime Minister inform the House, if her Ministry has also provided legal assistance to address the legal implication of the case? Thank you.

The Deputy Prime Minister: M. le président, je ne suis pas en présence de cette information.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil!

FLACQ MARKET – RENOVATION – FACILITIES UPGRADE

(No. B/1358) Mr R. Beechook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the renovation of the Flacq Market, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand, indicating the measures being envisaged to upgrade the facilities thereat, particularly in respect of health and safety standards, ventilation and protection against excessive heat for both stallholders and the public.

Mr Woochit: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am informed by the District Council of Flacq that the Central Flacq market became operational in October 2012 at a cost of approximately Rs150 million. It is one among the largest market in the country, covering some 9,000 square meters and accommodating more than 1,200 stalls. Because of the poor bearing capacity of the soil near the Rivière du Poste de Flacq, the market was built as a lightweight steel structure.

The market has not undergone any major renovation since its opening. The Council has identified the following main deficiencies –

- excessive heat and inadequate ventilation, particularly in the Haberdashery section, mainly because the steel roof structure is low.
- Corrosion of the roof and gutters, which is causing water leakage, and the need to upgrade the electrical system, the drainage system and the toilet facilities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the meantime, the Council has carried out maintenance and safety works from its recurrent budget for the benefit of the stallholders and the public. This includes –

- replacement of the fire cabinet and hose reel;
- waterproofing in the Haberdashery, vegetable and food court sections;
- upgrading of the food court drainage system;

- installation of bollards to keep vehicles out of the market, and
- an additional water tank and pump.

The Council will continue to carry out such works as required. To address the underlying problems comprehensively, the Council launched a tender for consultancy services on 09 July 2025. However, the bidding exercise was not successful. Tender was relaunched on 22 January 2026, and on 13 March 2026, the Council signed a contract with Pixel Creation Limited for Rs3,162,500 inclusive of VAT.

The consultant's mandate covers improving ventilation and reducing heat, redesigning the electrical and lighting system, remedial solution for roof leakage and rainwater disposal, upgrading the market's infrastructure, preparing the drawings and tender documents and supervising the works. The consultant first examined two structural options. The first was to replace the existing steel structure with a higher one and the second was to relocate the Haberdashery section to a new reinforced concrete building.

Both options involve substantial costs amounting to approximately Rs225 million. Hence, the Council requested the consultant to develop a more cost-effective solution based on upgrading the existing market. An additional month was granted for this purpose and the consultant submitted the draft documentation on 06 August 2026 and the submitted final design report on 10 September 2026.

It was then decided on 30 September 2026 to omit high-cost item from the report and replace them by construction of metal booths at the Haberdashery section. The proposed upgrading works are estimated at approximately Rs80 million. They respond directly to the concern raised by the hon. Members –

1. To reduce the heat, that is, to put solar reflective thermal insulation and waterproofing of the roof and replacement of the polycarbonate roofing.

2. To improve ventilation is by installing new industrial ventilation system.

3. To strengthen health and safety, a fully upgraded electrical installation, a fire alarm system, CCTV surveillance, improved plumbing, new gutters and repair of damaged slabs with anti-slip treatment.

The consultant has also been requested to include metal booths for stall holders in the final design for health and safety reason and for proper ventilation in the corridors. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to reassure the House the stall holders and the public that the upgrading of the Central Flacq market will go ahead. Once the design is finalised in around six weeks, the Council will then seek the necessary financial clearance from the Ministry of Finance. The work will then proceed in accordance with applicable procurement procedures as soon as clearance is obtained and funds are available.

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

CONSTITUENCY NO. 11 – WATER SHORTAGES & SUPPLY CUTS – LONG-TERM & INTERIM MEASURES

(No. B/1359) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to water shortages and supply cuts particularly in Constituency No. 11, Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

(a) long-term measures, if any, taken/being envisaged to ensure reliable and uninterrupted supply of potable water, indicating the major projects earmarked therefor, including the –
    (i) estimated cost, and
    (ii) expected implementation timeframe thereof, and
(b) interim measures being taken.

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, la CWA m'informe que la circonscription no. 11 est desservie par une combinaison de forage, de CPF et d'eau provenant de la Marie et de Piton du Milieu.

En ce qui concerne la circonscription no. 11, des projets relatifs au remplacement des tuyaux défectueux et l'installation des CPF au forage de puits et la construction de nouveaux réservoirs de service ont été récemment mis en œuvre afin d'améliorer l'approvisionnement. Nous avons 11.7 km de tuyaux défectueux qui ont été changés de Ferney à Petit-Sable. Nous avons aussi de l'eau additionnelle qui a été mobilisée grâce à l'installation d'un CPF de 2500 m^3 par jour à Ferney et pour renforcer Bambous-Virieux.

Nous avons aussi un forage qui a été mis en service près du rond-point de Nouvelle-France afin d'améliorer l'approvisionnement à Nouvelle-France et Union Park. Un nouveau service réservoir d'une capacité de 3000 m³ a été construit au sein du complexe de réservoir de Nouvelle-France. M. le président, un 5eme forage a été réalisé à Cluny pour fournir de l'eau à Deux Bras, Morcellement Mauriparc, Résidence Mont-Fertile.

Concernant la partie (a) de la question, j'ai été informé que la CWA a l'intention d'entreprendre trois grands projets de renouvellement de pipeline dans le projet indien de R 2.9 milliards, dont à 16eme mille, Midlands et Nouvelle-France, Deux Frères, Quatre Sœurs et Grand Sable pour 10,3 km et un remplacement de 10,9 km de tuyaux à Gébert, Gros Billot, Deux Bras et Mare d'Albert.

La mise en œuvre est provisoirement prévue pour juillet 2025 à octobre 2028. Donc, ce n’est pas pour demain. Et en ce qui concerne la mobilisation d'eau pour la circonscription no. 11, la CWA m'informe qu'elle étudie la possibilité de forer un nouveau puits en amont de réservoir de Nouvelle-France pour alimenter les puits de La Brasserie et aussi la CWA prévoit de construire une nouvelle station d'épuration à Ferney d'une capacité de 30 000 m³. Ce n'est pas pour demain mais pour les projets à venir.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Ramdass!

Mr Ramdass: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, l'attention du ministre a déjà été attirée sur une source potentielle d'eau dans la circonscription no. 11, notamment à Bassin Caraille dans la région de Nouvelle-France. L'honorable ministre, serait-il disposé de considérer la possibilité d'exploiter justement cette source d'eau, ce qui viendrait assouvir les besoins en eau des habitants de la région de Nouvelle-France et des alentours?

Mr Assirvaden: Oui. Je peux rassurer l'honorable membre et les autres députés de la circonscription. Bassin Caraille, c'est un projet qui est étudié sérieusement pour être en cours. Nous pensons puiser 2500 m³ d'eau par jour pour être envoyée sur Nouvelle-France. Donc c'est un projet très viable et nous avons fait les tests, le potentiel est là. Donc, c'est un projet qui va se matérialiser très prochainement.

Mr Ramdass: Est-ce que vous pouvez nous indiquer si la désalination de l'eau de mer serait une option envisagée par le gouvernement afin d'assouvir justement les besoins des citoyens de ce pays à long terme ?

Mr Assirvaden: C'est un grand débat, M. le président. Je ne sais pas si c'est lié à la question, mais si l'honorable membre a une question sur le dessalement la semaine prochaine, je serai heureux de répondre.

The Deputy Speaker: Keep it for next time. The hon. Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka!

L'ESPERANCE, L'AGREMENT, L'ASSURANCE & ALMA – TRANSPORT SERVICES – DIFFICULTIES

(No. B/1360) Mr G. P. Venkatasami (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to public transport services along L'Espérance, L'Agrément, L'Assurance and Alma, he will –

(a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to the number of buses operating thereat, indicating the frequency and daily operating hours thereof, and

(b) state whether he is in presence of representations regarding difficulties being encountered by commuters thereat and, if so, indicate the remedial measures being envisaged.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the NLTA that the localities of L'Espérance, L'Agrément, L'Assurance and Alma are presently served by eight bus routes with a total fleet of 68 individually owned buses as follows.

Route 15D serves the L'Espérance region with four buses operating on the route. Routes 15 and 93 also serve the L'Espérance region and provide a total of eight trips daily as supplementary transport services on a roster basis. Route 74 serves the L'Agrément region with three buses operating on the route. Route 105 serves the L'Assurance and Alma regions with 25 buses operating on the route. Route 135 serves the L'Assurance and Alma

regions with 36 buses operating on the route. And routes 17B and 17F provide supplementary services to L'Assurance and Alma regions during peak hours.

The frequency of services varies according to the route, the travel demand and the time of the day. Generally ranging from a minimum of 10 minutes to approximately two hours between successive departures. Additional services are provided on certain routes during peak periods to cater for commuter demand.

I am tabling the description of the above-mentioned routes with their respective detailed time tables, frequencies and operating hours.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards to part (b) of the question, I am informed that repeated complaints have been received mainly in relation to non-compliance with scheduled timetable on route 74 serving L'Agrément area. Following these representations, regular inspections and monitoring exercises, particularly during peak hours have been carried out by the NLTA to ensure that the operators provide a satisfactory service.

Route 74 is served by smaller 30-seater buses due to the narrowness and geometry of the route. These buses are very often in operation. The route is also not economic. These two factors prevent severe disciplinary action to be taken against the operators as the suspension of any license will result in one lesser bus in operation and increased hardship on commuters.

Representations have also been made regarding the extension of bus services through Cité Alma. In this respect, a road test was carried out by the NLTA jointly with the TMRSU to evaluate the possibility of buses operating on routes 105 and 135 transiting through the area. The test revealed that owing to the road width and inadequate manoeuverability conditions, the road infrastructure was not suitable for bus operation.

To end, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in spite of the constraint aforementioned, the NLTA will continue to monitor the situation and take necessary measures to ensure that commuters are provided with an adequate and reliable public transport service. Thank you.

Mr Venkatasami: Since the service of large buses are not appropriate for such size of these roads, will the NLTA consider to introduce a smaller size vehicle to cater for this problem?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Even the smaller buses have proven to be difficult to manoeuver in the narrow road. This is what I mentioned. This is the test carried out by the NLTA and TMRSU – I am referring to routes 105 and 135 – has revealed.

The Deputy Speaker : The Third Member for Pamplemousses and Triolet! Last question.

DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION - FOOTBALL PITCHES - FREE ACCESS

(**No. B/1361) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the proposition for the carrying out of drug abuse prevention through sports, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Sports Council, information as to whether consideration will be given for the football pitches under the management thereof to be made available free of charge to local football teams.

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank hon. Member for this important question. Drug abuse is definitely a major social public health concern that affect the physical health, mental well-being, education, family relationship and future opportunities of young people.

Sports plays an important role in drug abuse prevention by encouraging healthy lifestyle, discipline, teamwork, self-confidence, leadership and positive social interaction. Participation in organising sportive activities also provide young people with constructive ways to use their leisure time, develop their talents and build supportive relationship with peers and coaches.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry and the Mauritius Sport Council manage 12 football pitches, the list of which I am circulating. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is to be recalled that during the last budget of 2026, it was announced that access to selected regional sport facilities will be provided free of charge to encourage greater participation in sport and physical activity, promote healthier style and enhance community well-being.

Following the promulgation of the Finance Act in August 2026, my Ministry has worked out the modalities to implement this budget measure. I am pleased to inform the House that my Ministry will be providing, as from 01 November 2026, access free of charge

to regional sports activities, including the 12 sports facilities mentioned earlier as well as Daniel Imbert Sports Complex in Quatre Bornes.

So, it is also to be noted that the SSR Sport Complex in Triolet is already being provided free of charge. Following discussions I had with my colleague, the hon. Minister of Education, I am informed that his Ministry is also working on a policy for granting access to football ground under his purview free of charge.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to assure the House that my Ministry remains firmly committed to making sport facilities accessible to our citizens to combat substance abuse and social exclusion among our youth.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, supplementary!

Mr Rookny: Thank you, hon. Minister. Can your Ministry consider extending this to the MUGAs under your purview?

Mr Nagalingum: I am working on that issue as well. Thank you for that question.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over!

The Table has been advised that PQs B/1364, B/1371, B/1372, B/1373, B/1374, B/1375, B/1376, B/1379, B/1381, B/1382, and B/1385 have been withdrawn.

Time is over!

Hon. Deputy Prime Minister!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10 (2)

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

Mr Mohamed rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries, hon. Dr. Boolell!

(4.30 p.m.)

MOTION

THE WETLANDS BILL (No. XIV of 2026) – WITHDRAWAL

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, pursuant to Standing Order 63 of the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly, I move that "This Assembly resolves that the Wetlands Bill (No. XIV of 2026) be withdrawn."

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, shortly after I moved the Wetlands Bill be read a first time, I…

(Interruptions)

Ms J. Bérenger: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to seek your ruling on something.

The Deputy Speaker: Which order?

Ms J. Bérenger: I want to seek your ruling on something.

La liste des orateurs nous a été communiquée à 14 h 45. C'est connu que l'opposition n'a pas connaissance des orateurs du côté de la majorité. J'ai fait la requête tout de suite pour pouvoir intervenir. Il est connu que dans la pratique, jusqu'à la dernière minute, il y a souvent des changements dans la liste des orateurs et souvent des orateurs du côté de la majorité sont ajoutés à la liste. D'ailleurs, on se souviendra de la fois où l'honorable Dr. Sukon a été ajouté à la liste alors que les débats avaient déjà commencé.

Il m'a été communiqué que la liste a été fermée. Pourtant, depuis 14h45, dès que nous avons reçu la liste des orateurs, j'ai demandé à pouvoir intervenir. J'espérais pouvoir compter sur la *Speaker* et maintenant je demande votre *Ruling* dessus, et j'espère compter sur vous

pour que l'Opposition puisse bénéficier des mêmes privilèges que le gouvernement, c'est-à-dire de pouvoir ajouter ou retirer des orateurs sur la liste avant que les débats ne commencent. Donc, j'aimerais un *Ruling* sur cette situation, s'il vous plaît.

The Deputy Speaker: You want to say something in reply? Yes?

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, M. le président. D'abord, je voudrais savoir de quelle Opposition on parle. Parce que je tiens…

(Interruptions)

Je tiens à préciser…

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: The…

Mr Bérenger: On a point of order! I am taking a point of order with your permission, please!

Will you allow that?

The Deputy Speaker: There is a Government Whip and there is a Whip of the Opposition…

(Interruptions)

Okay, come on…

(Interruptions)

Come on, you…

(Interruptions)

Ms J. Bérenger: *Pena manier sa!*

Ms Anquetil: Alors, je n'ai pas de leçons à recevoir de qui que ce soit sur l'éducation et encore moins de vous! J'espère que c'est clair! Vous recevez le message!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

In this case, let us…

(Interruptions)

Ms J. Bérenger: *Ki, pou bate non?*

(Interruptions)

Batbate! Batbate em!

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Order! If you want to reply to what hon. Ms Joanna Bérenger has said, you reply according to the rules and standards of the Standing Orders.

Ms Anquetil: Oui, je vous remercie, M. le président. Alors, je tiens à informer la Chambre que la *Whip* de l'Opposition, alors m'a communiqué dans un premier temps qu'elle tenait elle-même à intervenir sur la motion du Dr. Boolell, le Leader de l'Opposition et elle-même. Par la suite, pour changer, pour dire que non, ce n'est plus le cas pour elle maintenant, c'est uniquement pour le Leader de l'Opposition. Et puis bon, on parle de la motion pour l'instant, pour l'autre *Bill*, ce sera pour après. Et puis pour maintenant, lorsque la liste des orateurs circule, Madame avec les membres de l'Assemblée nationale, alors voilà que la Whip de l'Opposition a fait une requête pour intervenir, tenez-vous bien, après le ministre Rajesh Bhagwan. Je vous remercie.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I have before me a list of orators composed of three, including the hon. mover of the Motion. We have a Government Whip, we have an Opposition Whip. It has always been the tradition that both should agree before – let me be clear – the list is circulated. The Chair goes according to the list. Unfortunately, I do not know what has happened behind this document. So, I am going to go according to that document which is before me.

Mr Bérenger: The point of order is taken with the Speaker, we will go public.

Ms J. Bérenger: Non, M. le président, laissez-moi clarifier...

The Deputy Speaker: No, let us be clear. There is a Government Whip, there is an Opposition Whip. Both of you have your duties. Your duty is to sit down and come with a list. The Chair does not intervene in the list of orators, has never and will never intervene in the list of orators. It has not been the tradition and it has always been the tradition that the Chair goes according to the list which has been circulated. So, we are going to go according to the list which has been circulated.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: Let me clear a point after what the Whip of Government has said. It was agreed that there would be two speakers, the Minister – because it is a Motion of withdrawal – the speaker and the Leader of the Opposition. I insisted that let us keep it at the two of them and then, the Minister of Environment was added to the list. That is why the hon…

Ms Anquetil: Non! Non!

Mr Bérenger: Yes! *Ki non, non, non?* Yes!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Order!

Ms J. Bérenger: *Can I seek your Ruling* sur comment est-ce que cela se fait-il que le gouvernement puisse modifier la liste des orateurs jusqu'à la dernière minute, ajouter des orateurs, mais pas l'Opposition? C'est une question de *fairness!*

The Deputy Speaker: Like I have said…

Ms J. Bérenger: C'est une question de *fairness!*

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair does not go behind the scene of this list. How it has been worked out is not the concern of the Chair. The Chair has a list and I am going to go according to the list. You should have agreed before or after over how many Members of Opposition are going to speak, how many Members of Government are going to speak and then prepare the list. So, now that the list has been circulated, this is the official list on which we are going to go. Thank you. Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Ms J. Bérenger: Mais le *Speaker* doit assurer le *fairness!*

THE WETLANDS BILL

(No. XIV of 2026)

The Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries (Dr. A. Boolell): Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The House bows to your Ruling.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, shortly after I moved that the Wetlands Bill be read a first time, I received representations from many stakeholders, namely, amongst others, of course, Business Mauritius and *Association des Hôteliers et des Restaurateurs de l'île Maurice* to give consideration for further amendments to be brought to the Bill. There was a call for wider public consultations as the Wetlands Bill is a matter that affects the public at large. I sought advice from the Attorney General's Office and I was told that I could move the Bill with appropriate amendments to be brought at Committee Stage. I choose to err on the side of caution and widen the circle of opportunities to listen to as many stakeholders. The letter of democracy should prevail.

Besides, an Environmentally Sensitive Areas Bill is being prepared by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change with the assistance of the UNDP. This Bill will cover areas including wetlands and accordingly, raise the need to examine the relationship between the two legislations as the object is to ensure that their respective provisions are complementary rather than overlapping. It is therefore necessary to review the Wetlands Bill carefully to identify and address provisions that may overlap with those contained in the proposed Environmentally Sensitive Areas Bill. This exercise will allow us to clarify the respective scope of the two legislative frameworks, ensure consistency in the definitions and requirements, and establish clear responsibilities for the authorities concerned.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, proceeding with the Bill without adequately addressing these concerns could undermine the effective implementation and give rise to avoidable difficulties in practice. A technical committee comprising officers of my Ministry, the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, will examine the proposed amendments and submit the recommendations to an Inter-ministerial Committee comprising the Minister of Housing and Lands, the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity, the Attorney General and myself.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are neither indifferent nor insensitive to the appeal made by the stakeholders regarding the withdrawal of the Bill, and this is not the first time that a Bill has been withdrawn, postponed or reconsidered after reaching this august House. And let me give a few examples, namely –

- the Declaration of Assets (Amendment) Bill (No. XI of 2019), and
- the Criminal Code (Amendment) Bill (No. VIII of 2020).

I know these questions have been raised regarding why these issues had not only been brought up after the introduction of the Wetlands Bill.

Allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to inform the House that the first draft of the Environmentally Sensitive Areas Bill was received by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change on 30 July 2026, the very same day that Government agreed to the introduction of the Wetlands Bill in the National Assembly. I wish to emphasise that the decision to withdraw the Wetlands Bill does not diminish or weaken our commitment to protecting wetlands. Rather, it reflects the importance of ensuring that our environmental laws complement one another and achieve their intended objectives in a coordinated and effective manner.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I therefore move that the Wetlands Bill be withdrawn to be reintroduced after the recommendations of the Inter-ministerial Committee. Thank you.

Mr Bhagwan rose and seconded.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(Interruptions)

Ms J. Bérenger: *Nou pa gagn drwa riye? Nou bizin to permision?*

(Interruptions)

(4.35 p.m.)

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr C. Baboolall): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Let us listen to the hon. Leader of the Opposition! Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition, you have the floor.

(4.35 p.m.)

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr C. Baboolall): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Let me start with the dates because they are the whole story. In July, the Cabinet approved the Wetlands Bill. The Government certified it urgent. It had its first reading in August. We were told that the wetlands needed protection and that it could not wait. Today, on the Order Paper, the same government asks to withdraw it. Not to amend it, not to improve it – to withdraw it.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister informed this House that the reason for withdrawal is representations. But so many Bills this House has come across in a matter of urgency, this is the first time that I know the Government is hearing representations. And why was it not communicated before?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Government is withdrawing protection today for a promise of protection tomorrow. When is that tomorrow? Which date? A Bill that was urgent in August cannot be unnecessary in October without a very valid reason. We are entitled to know precisely those reasons. Wetlands are not wastelands; they absorb rain, they feed the water tables, and they protect us from flooding.

Look at what this month looked like. On 06 October, Mare aux Vacoas stood at 35.9%. Now, it is about 34%. A year earlier, it stood at 88.6%. Families in many regions have lived with dry taps and rationing. This is the month in which the Government withdraws the law that was meant to protect the natural systems to hold our water. I do not say that the two facts are connected by design. I say that the Government has chosen a very bad moment and has not explained itself properly. When will they come back with this Bill? This is very important. We understand that the hon. Minister has stated that there is an inter-ministerial committee, but the House needs to know. We are in a water crisis and the wetlands is very important.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to be fair. Perhaps, the text needed to be redrafted. We do not know. But before the text comes to this House, like we have with the Police (Amendment) Bill, that too is a matter of urgency. There are so many representations people have made, but in that case, nothing has been done. The Bill will come for the first reading, second reading, third reading. What matters today is the water crisis, and we see that the Wetlands Bill is being withdrawn. A government that respects this House explains properly why it withdraws a Bill, not just stating that the Bill is going to be withdrawn because we have had representation and we are going to have an inter-ministerial committee.

There are press questions about large projects in wetlands areas in Mauritius. I make no allegation against anyone. I ask only that the Government answer in one sentence. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will not discuss any matter that is before the court, but I ask a question of principle: is it the practice of this Government to issue an Environmental Impact Assessment licence for a coastal project before the clearances of the National Ramsar Committee and the National Parks and Conservation Service have been obtained? Can the Minister confirm that no licence has been issued for a project in or next to a wetland without every required clearance?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first we have heard why the Bill was withdrawn. Was it a legal problem? We can have representations, but what kind of representations? We have the Attorney General; he is not here today. But is the representation legal? What kind of representation? Was it a policy decision? Was it a Cabinet decision to withdraw this Bill? The country needs to know. Now that the Bill has been withdrawn, will the Minister give a date? Will he come with consultation and without a Certificate of Urgency this time? Or is it just his representation that is concerned, only in his Ministry?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a government that has nothing to hide answers these few questions in some minutes. There is a pattern. This week the Government brings the Police (Amendment) Bill under urgency, nine Bills under the National Crime Agency under urgency, and withdraws a Wetlands Bill it had itself declared urgent. Urgency for new powers, silence for protection. Most of the Bills that have come to this House have been a matter of urgency, and this one is being removed urgently.

Our position is clear. We do not oppose the withdrawal of a flawed Bill, but at least the Minister should say; it is flawed, it needs to be amended or anything like that. Nothing has

seen a position like that: we have received representations. To do what? To give permit to who? I do not know. We oppose withdrawing it without clear and sufficient reasons, without a date for its return.

The hon. Minister has to be clear. In a situation of water crisis like we have, the hon. Minister has to come and say, 'We are withdrawing this Bill, representations have been made, and we are coming within a month or two months because it is very important for the country, for us, to have this Wetlands Bill.'

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will say that the hon. Minister should give this House, today, a date and a commitment that no wetland will be touched until a law is in force.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

(4.42 p.m.)

The Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change (Mr R. Bhagwan):Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will not come on what has happened, but I gave my name, through my Office, since yesterday. I am coming back because it is not now that I have given my name to intervene. It is since yesterday, through my Office.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, once again, let me reaffirm Government's full support to the protection and conservation of our wetlands and the objectives of the Wetlands Bill towards safeguarding wetlands against destruction and degradation while promoting responsible land use, prevent harmful activities, strengthening monitoring and enforcement, and while encouraging restoration.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the outset, I would like to extend my full support to the Motion made by my colleague, the hon. Minister Dr. Boolell, Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries to defer the Wetlands Bill to address concerns about its effective implementation. True it is, the Bill came to Cabinet and then on the Order Paper but Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to mention that it is our friends, the ecologists, and various NGOs, who came to see me and my friend, who in fact, forcefully opposed the introduction of the Wetlands Bill, but favours an integrated ESA Bill. This is why the Bill was removed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this withdrawal will provide the opportunity for additional consultations with all stakeholders and harmonisation of its provisions with respect to those of the Environment Protection Act 2024 and the ESA Bill under preparation. As my colleague has pointed out, representations also have been received, at a late hour, I can say, by Business Mauritius and l'AHRIM on the Wetlands Bill that was circulated. It is essential that the buy-in of all stakeholders be ensured to avoid practical difficulties in the eventual implementation further down the line.

I wish to point out more so that this buy-in is crucial, as according to an Environmentally Sensitive Areas report, submitted by the UNDP Country Office in 2026, 80% of the ESAs in Mauritius, which includes 194 upland wetlands and 351 coastal wetlands are located on private lands.

I wish also to seize this opportunity to inform the House that the development of an ESA Bill, which is a commitment under the Government Programme 2025-2029 is well underway.

Consultations were held all along the project duration with all stakeholders, even NGOs, which have made more representations from June 2024 to April 2026 to address technical issues.

I have said before: further representations have been made by Business Mauritius on 05 June 2026, and my Ministry is holding working sessions with the latter to clarify concerns that have been raised. In the light of this substantial progress, my Ministry is fully committed to bringing the finalised ESA Bill to Parliament early next year with a view to honour our solemn pledge in the Government Programme.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government alone will not be able to protect those environmental assets without the full support of the owners of these wetlands situated on private properties. *C'est en quelque sorte reculer pour mieux sauter. Ce n'est en aucune façon un retour de veste par rapport à notre détermination de préserver et de sauvegarder ce patrimoine environnemental.*

As mentioned by my colleague, technical and scientific officers of my Ministry and those of the Ministry of Agro-Industry will examine both the proposed wetland Bill and the ESA Bill and submit their recommendations to an inter-ministerial committee comprising the Minister of Housing and Lands, the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and

National Solidarity, the Attorney General, the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries, and myself.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to seize this opportunity to provide some clarifications on a number of points that have been voiced out very recently regarding the Wetland Bill, including claims in the press largely advertised that *il existe un ESA committee presidé par Rajesh Bhagwan*. Allow me to enlighten the House on this claim.

As per Section 22 of Environment Act 2024, the Environmentally Sensitive Areas or ESA committee is a statutory committee chaired by the Director or his representative and not by the Minister of Environment. The ESA committee is in fact a statutory committee whose objectives are clearly spelt out at Section 22(4) of Environment Act comprising among others powers to –

- ensure coordination between ministries and competent authorities for the purpose of ensuring sustainable management of ESAs;
- recommend the development of policies and other measures to protect and conserve ESAs';
- update and validate inventories and maps at least every five years, and
- share pertinent information amongst relevant stakeholders.

Since I assumed office, the ESA committee met eight times under the chairmanship of the Director of Environment. Actually, the 9th ESA committee had been held earlier today. These ESA committee benefits from an inclusive multi-stakeholder setting involving a host of relevant competent authorities as well as NGOs with expertise in ESA protection. Obviously, I cannot and do not officially chair any of those meetings.

Secondly, it has been also pointed out that consultants have been recruited to assist the ESA committee. Again, this claim is incorrect and misleading. The ESA committee does not have consultants working for it. However, to address specific issues of relevance to the ESA protection, recently two consultants have produced crucial reports and maps which would assist the country to better protect its ESAs. I wish to point out that these reports are essential elements that would enable my Ministry to better protect our ESAs.

Thirdly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, questions have been raised whether amendments to the Environment Act 2024 will be tabled to Parliament. I wish to point out that *que c'est pas un secret de polichinelle que* since early 2025, extensive consultations have been undertaken

to review the Environment Act 2024, including a call for public comments in January 2026. I am pleased also to inform the House that around 700 proposals have been received by May 2026 from a wide range of stakeholders.

Those are currently being analysed for a series of consultative meetings, including ongoing policy discussions with senior management of my Ministry with a view to finalise the new environmental policy orientations to be included in the reviewed legislation.

In short, the review of Environment Act 2024 is well on the progress and this is targeted for submission to Parliament in 2027.

Fourth, concerns have been raised; the hon. Leader of the Opposition has made mention regarding a property development scheme project at La Mivoie. He has mentioned that project. Specifically, it was alleged that *si l'amendement ne vient jamais ou trop tard, cela voudra-t-il dire que le ministère de l'Environnement voulait protéger un projet immobilier en pleine zone humide comme celui à La Mivoie*?

I wish to point out to the House that the said project at La Mivoie is not located on a wetland. The Environment Act 2024 already provides for the submission of a preliminary environmental report for development of vast scale on such location. Hence, it is misleading and factually incorrect to claim that my Ministry is encouraging developments on wetlands.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, …

Ms J. Bérenger: *Palmar*! *Koz Palmar*!

Mr Bhagwan: *Ki Palmar to pe koze*? *Mo krwar to reve twa*! *To dan rev. Al reve*! *Al reve*!

Ms J. Bérenger: *Koz Palmar*!

Mr Bhagwan: *To koz nimport*!

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Order!

Mr Bhagwan: *Mo pena fami ki ena terain mwa. Mo kone ki mo pe dir*!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, carry on with your speech!

Mr Bhagwan: *Mo pena fami ki ena terrain*!

Ms J. Bérenger: *Inn donn EIA…*

Mr Bhagwan:*Mo pena fami ki ena terrain*!

Ms J. Bérenger: *Inn donn EIA lor wetland*!

Mr Bhagwan: *Mo met twa au defi*!

Mr Bérenger: *Pa koz fami dimounn do, bourik*!

Hon. Members: Ey!

Mr Bhagwan: *Asse do*!

(Interruptions)

Tomem tonn dir mwa. Mo pan dir li, mwa. Monn dir ena fami.

Ms J. Bérenger: *Inn donn EIA lor wetland*!

Mr Bhagwan: *Ale do*! *Ki to pe koze*? *Mo krwar to dan to rev.*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bérenger!

(Interruptions)

Ms J. Bérenger: *Apre li koz…*

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

Carry on with your speech!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these unsubstantiated claims…

(Interruptions)

Sa, mo pa gagn so traka sa!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, make the hon. Mr Bérenger to withdraw the word '*bourik'*. It is uncalled for and unparliamentary.

Mr Bérenger: I withdraw. But he should not mention *fami dimounn*!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: You told me that! *Li ale…*

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: *Dir sa imbecile la…*

Mr Bhagwan: *Twa ki pe dir mwa*! *Twa ki pe dir mwa*!

Mr Jhummun: *Gramatin bachara. Aster imbecile*!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Hon. Bhagwan! Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: *Al bwar lysol do matlo*!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Order!

Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: *Pa vinn dir mwa, do*!

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Hon. P. Bérenger!

Hon. Bhagwan, please, carry on with your speech!

Mr Bhagwan: *Tonn bizin bourik la pou arriv kot tonn arrive*!

The Deputy Speaker: Carry on with your speech!

Mr Bhagwan: *Krwar mwa bourik mem twa*! *Krwar mwa bourik*!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, carry on with your speech!

Ms J. Bérenger: *Pann kompren nanye ki linn dir*!

Mr Bhagwan: *Ey, ferm ou labous do*!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *Ale do ta*!

(Interruptions)

Ale do ta!

Mr Bhagwan: *Monn trouve enn pake sa*! *Pa rode ar mwa*!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan! Conclude your speech, if you have to conclude!

Mr Bérenger: *Lysol bon pou twa*!

Mr Bhagwan: *Ale do ta*! *Taler mo fer avoy enn fiol pou twa.*

Mr Bérenger: *Ein*!

Mr Bhagwan: *Pren Valayden to donn li*!

Mr Bérenger: *Vini do kapon*!

Mr Bhagwan: *Ale do ta*! *Mo pa gagn to traka, mwa*!

Mr Bérenger: *Bulldozer san latet*!

Mr Bhagwan: *Mo pa gagn traka ni twa, ni li, ni personn*! *Pa gagn mo traka*!

Mr Bérenger: *Tonn fini*!

Mr Bhagwan: *Mwa monn fini*?

Mr Bérenger: *Tonn fini*!

Mr Bhagwan: *Vinn poz Beau Bassin*! *Mo met twa au defi*! *Vinn poz Beau Bassin*! *Si to enn zom, vini*!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: *Vinn poz Beau Bassin*!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mr Bérenger, please! Quiet!

Mr Bhagwan: *Mo pa ti pou poze. Mo poze aster*!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Bhagwan: *Vini*!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Bhagwan: *Dan Rose-Hill mo fer twa boure*!

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Bhagwan: *Dan Rose-Hill mo fer twa boure*!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, carry on with your speech!

(Interruptions)

Ms J. Bérenger: *Sak eleksion li dir mem zafer*! *Sak eleksion parey*!

The Deputy Speaker: Are you finished? Hon. Bhagwan, conclude your speech! You have finished?

Mr Bhagwan: One line.

The Deputy Speaker: *Allez,* finish your one line.

Ms J. Bérenger: *Sak eleksyion mem zafer*!

Mr Bhagwan: *Ale do ta*!

Ms J. Bérenger: *... selmen poze, pa pou poze.*

Mr Bhagwan: *Ale do ta*!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *Ale do ta*! *Pe prepar to lili pou Rose Hill.*

(Interruptions)

Pe prepar to lili pou Rose Hill!

Mr Bérenger: *Ala ki to ete*!

Mr Bhagwan: *Ale do ta*!

Ms J. Bérenger: *Ena zis minor kot zot.*

Mr Bhagwan: *Ale do ta*!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, move on.

Ms J. Bérenger: *Limem li envi riye*!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: *Li p riy limem*!

Mr Bhagwan: *Eta ale do ta*!

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr Bérenger: Bulldozer.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, …

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *Laisse mwa trankil*! *To pou gagn pli problem ar mwa sinon*!

Mr Bérenger: *Twa to pou fer mwa gagn problem*? *Ale do*!

Mr Bhagwan: *Sa fini sa lepok la*! S*a lepok longtemp sa*!

Mr Bérenger: *Inn trap to lamain inn amen twa*! *Sinon to ti pou dan canal*!

Mr Bhagwan: *Mwa monn amen twa eli dan eleksyion dan Rose Hill. Mwa kinn amen twa*!

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Finish your line!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *Kisanla kinn fer twa eli dan parsiel*? *Kisanla inn fer twa eli*?

The Deputy Speaker: Otherwise, I will call hon. Dr. Boolell.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *Mont lor lestrad*! *Kisanla kinn fer twa eli*? *Mwa*!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *Twa to ti enkor ti baba dan loto twa*! *Ki to pe koze*?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Okay! Order!

An hon. Member: Bravo, Rajesh! Bravo!

The Deputy Speaker: Order or I will suspend!

Ms J. Bérenger: *Enn la hont*!

The Deputy Speaker: Let us finish the phrase. Then, hon. Dr. Boolell.

Mr Bhagwan: Such deliberate and wrongful statements, especially when they come from auto-proclaimed *grand défenseur de l'environnement,* constitute a new form of pollutant and are meant to create distrust in government institutions and they in any circumstances does not serve the environmental cause.

With these words, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I support the motion of my hon. friend.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. Hon. Dr. Boolell!

(4.55 p.m.)

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I listened very intently to the speech of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, unfortunately, I must say, that was full of sound, no fury but signifying nothing. The arguments are hollow and, of course, the my hon. colleague, the Minister responsible for Environment, Solid Waste management and Climate Change, has been very forceful in his arguments. He has put the arguments across very forcefully to say that Government is Government, but Government in the name of democracy has acted in relation to lobbying made by those who care about climate change and ecology. I have here the findings submitted to us by Business Mauritius and AHRIM which I will lay on the Table of the Assembly.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when we say that we are withdrawing the Bill, it does not mean that we are not coming up with the Bill and I can say it loud and clear to the House that we are coming with the Bill early next year when Parliament resumes. There has been debate at the bar of public opinion, hence, the reason as to why I say this Bill will be the subject of discussion at the Inter-Ministerial Committee and we know the composition of the Inter-Ministerial Committee.

So, there will be wide consultations which will be ongoing. We will wait for the recommendation of the Inter-Ministerial Committee. And then, as I have said, let me restate what I stated. Yes, in the light of recommendations to be made, the Bill will be introduced by early next year. So, we have a good reason then to move the motion and the motion is amply justified – to justify the reason as to why the Wetlands Bill should be withdrawn.

The motion was, on question put, approved.

At this stage, Madam Speaker took the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Please, be seated.

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

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

(i) The Constitution (Amendment) Bill (No. XVI of 2026)

(ii) The National Crime Agency Bill (No. XVII of 2026)

(iii) The National Crime (Interim) Agency Bill (No. XVIII of 2026)

(iv) The Secretariat of the Independent Advisory Panel Bill (No. XIX of 2026)

(v) The Secretariat of the Independent Advisory (Interim) Panel Bill (No. XX of 2026)

(vi) The Financial Crime Bill (No. XXI of 2026)

(vii) The Asset Recovery and Unexplained Wealth Bill (No. XXII of 2026)

(viii) The National Crime Agency (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. XXIII of 2026)

(ix) The Criminal Justice (Offenders Assisting Investigations and Prosecutions) Bill (No. XXIV of 2026).

(b) On motion made and seconded, the Police (Amendment) Bill (No. XXV of 2026) was read a first time.

Second Reading

THE POLICE (AMENDMENT) BILL

(No. XXV of 2026)

Order for Second Reading read.

(5.04 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I move that the Police (Amendment) Bill 2026 be read a second time.

This Bill seeks to amend the Police Act with a view to strengthening the legal framework available to the Police Force to maintain public safety and public order, particularly in situations where disturbances and acts of violence spread across different parts of the country.

The Bill proposes two amendments –

(i) to Section 13C to empower the Commissioner of Police to issue a curfew order covering the whole of Mauritius or any part thereof.

(ii) to section 13D to increase the financial penalties applicable to persons found outdoors during the operating hours of a curfew, in possession of an offensive weapon without lawful authority or reasonable excuse.

Madam Speaker, the recent events which unfolded in our country have clearly demonstrated the importance of ensuring that our law enforcement agencies have the necessary legal tools to respond effectively to serious threats to public order.

The situation escalated rapidly in several parts of Mauritius, from Goodlands to Mahebourg and from Grand Gaube to Bel Ombre. What may initially have appeared to be disturbances in particular localities, quickly developed into a wider law and order challenge with incidents occurring simultaneously across different regions.

The House will appreciate, Madam Speaker, the considerable operational difficulties this created for the Police Force. Unlike an isolated incident where Police resources can be concentrated at a particular location, simultaneous outbreaks of violence require officers to respond to several hotspots at the same time. Police personnel have to be deployed across different regions, often at very short notice, to contain disturbances, to protect lives and property, to secure public buildings, and to prevent further escalation. This places enormous pressure on available manpower, operational units, vehicles, and logistical resources.

The Police must constantly assess the evolving situation, redeploy personnel, establish roadblocks and checkpoints, mobilise quick reaction teams and make use of aerial surveillance while ensuring that other policing responsibilities across the island are not compromised.

The challenge becomes even greater when rioters target Police Stations, public buildings and critical infrastructure, including Safe City Cameras and CCTV wands, facilities which are themselves essential to the work of law enforcement.

The scale of the damage speaks for itself. As at 19 October 2026, eight Police Stations –

(ix) Barkly;
(x) Abercrombie;
(xi) Pointe aux Sables;
(xii) Petite Rivière;
(xiii) Bambous;
(xiv) Camp Levieux;
(xv) Black River;
(xvi) Bel Ombre,

And 31 Police vehicles have been damaged.

A total of 163 Safe City Cameras at 75 different sites have also been damaged, together with 27 traffic lights. Some 17,000 tons of sugar cane have been burnt. 15 Police Officers were injured in the course of these disturbances.

195 persons have been arrested, including, Madam Speaker, 26 minors. Cases have already been lodged against 12 of them, and three others have already been sentenced by the District Courts.

An assessment of the economic and financial damage is underway. These figures are a stark reminder of the risks faced by our Police Officers and the difficulties involved in containing widespread and simultaneous outbreaks of violence.

Madam Speaker, it is precisely in this context that the proposed amendment to Section 13C must be considered. Under the existing provision, a Curfew Order issued by the Commissioner of Police, is limited to a specific locality or specific localities.

The recent events have demonstrated that disturbances do not necessarily remain confined to one locality. They can spread rapidly from one region to another, sometimes simultaneously, requiring a coordinated response across the country. In such circumstances, the Police cannot concentrate their resources in one locality while leaving other communities

exposed to violence and destruction, nor should the Commissioner of Police be constrained by geographical limitations when the nature and scale of a public order situation calls for a wider response.

Madam Speaker, before I turn to what the amendment does, I wish to explain to the House why the law was framed in this way in the first place, because the limitations, which we are removing now, was not an oversight. It was a deliberate choice and it is, in its time, a reasonable one.

Section 13C is not a provision inherited from colonial days. It was inserted in the Police Act in 1991, together with sections 13B, 13D, 13E and 13F by way of consequential amendment under the Public Gatherings Act when Parliament repealed the Public Order Act. The House will recall what that Act was. It had been passed in December 1971 in the midst of a state of emergency, which was to last until 1976 and which allowed, among other things, detention without charge or trial.

Following the review conducted by the Garrioch Committee in 1990, Parliament swept it away and replaced it with a graduated set of operational powers vested in the Commissioner of Police – the power to declare a protected area, the power to declare a restricted area, the power to make a Curfew Order, and the offense of being found outdoors with an offensive weapon while a curfew is in force.

When Parliament conferred the curfew power, it attached safeguards to it. The Police Commissioner must be satisfied that the order is necessary or expedient in the interest of public safety or public order. Those who need to be out during the curfew may be issued with permits on conditions, and subsection 4 of section 13C provides in term, that any Curfew Order made by the Commissioner under this section, shall be limited to a specific locality. Now, why that limitation?

There were, I believe, three reasons, Madam Speaker.

First, Parliament in 1991 was understandably reluctant to confer on a single public officer, acting on his own authority and without reference to this House, a power to confine the whole population to their homes. A restriction of movement across the entire territory was regarded as belonging to the Constitutional Emergency Framework. The locality limitation was the line which Parliament drew between these two frameworks.

Secondly, that limitation reflected the experience of time. The serious disturbances, which this country had known, had been geographically contained. The riots of May 1965 began at Trois Boutiques and spread to Mahebourg. Those of January 1968 were confined in the main to Port Louis, Plaine Verte, Cité Martial, Roche Bois and Sainte Croix, and on both occasions, the answer had been a state of emergency and British troops on our streets. Against that background, a curfew confined to the locality affected, with the rest of the country going about its business, was a proportionate instrument. Nobody in 1991 was legislating for violence breaking out across the island on a single night when such violence appeared to be coordinated.

Thirdly, the limitation gave expression to a principle which this Government continues to uphold; that any restriction on the freedom of movement, guaranteed by Section 15 of our Constitution must go no further than the situation reasonably requires. A curfew which stops at the boundary of the locality where the trouble is, and nowhere else, is the least restrictive measure.

That principle is not being abandoned today, Madam Speaker. What is changing is the assumption that the trouble will stay and be confined within one boundary. That assumption has not survived the test of experience. On the night of 22 to 23 April 2022, disturbances over the cost of living broke out simultaneously in a dozen of localities from Camp Levieux to Roche Bois. 13 Police Officers were injured at the time, and in a single night. No curfew was ordered on that occasion, but had one been needed, it would have had to be drawn locality by locality, leaving every street outside those boundaries uncovered. And when in March 2020, the country did require a curfew covering the whole of Mauritius, Government did not and could not turn to section 13C of the Police Act. The sanitary curfew of 23 March 2020 had to be made under the Public Health Act by way of the Prevention and Mitigation of Infectious Diseases, that is, the Coronavirus Regulations 2020, with the Commissioner of Police confined to the issue of permits. The Police Act, at this stance could not have supported it.

The proposed amendment will, therefore, provide that a Curfew Order made by the Commissioner of Police may cover the whole of Mauritius or any part thereof. This will give the Commissioner of Police the necessary operational flexibility to respond to exceptional circumstances, coordinate Police deployments more effectively, restrict movement where necessary and prevent disturbances from spreading further.

I wish to emphasise, Madam Speaker, that this amendment does not mean that a nationwide curfew will become a routine measure.

The existing statutory requirement will remain unchanged. The Commissioner of Police must still be satisfied that such an order is necessary or expedient in the interest of public safety or public order.

The decision will, therefore, continue to rest with the Commissioner of Police, who will have to assess the circumstances and determine the appropriate geographical scope of the curfew order.

To this must be added the fact as per Section 13C(1) any curfew order must be limited in time – both in terms of the period over which the curfew will operate and the times at which the curfew will be operational.

I also wish to clarify, Madam Speaker, an important constitutional distinction.

The proposed amendment concerns the operational powers of the Commissioner of Police under the Police Act. It does not in any way diminish, restrict or affect the constitutional powers of the President of the Republic in relation to a public emergency, or the powers provided under the Emergency Powers Act of 1968.

A curfew order issued under Section 13C is a policing measure intended to maintain public safety and public order. It is distinct from the proclamation of a state of public emergency, which is governed by the Constitution and the relevant legislation.

The amendment is, therefore, intended to strengthen the operational capacity of the Police Force within the existing legal framework while fully respecting the constitutional arrangements of our Republic.

Madam Speaker, the second amendment concerns Section 13D of the Police Act. At present, a person who, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, is found outdoors in possession of an offensive weapon, in an area where a curfew order is in force, is liable to a fine not exceeding Rs25,000 and to a penal servitude for a term not exceeding five years.

This Bill proposes to replace the existing maximum fine of Rs25,000 with a minimum fine of Rs50,000 and a maximum fine of Rs100,000. The maximum term of imprisonment of

five years remains unchanged. This amendment is necessary to ensure that the financial penalty reflects the seriousness of the offence.

Madam Speaker, the maximum fine of Rs25,000 was fixed as far back as 1991, when section 13D was enacted, and has never been revised since then. A sum which represented a severe penalty 35 years ago no longer does so today, and a fine expressed only as maximum leaves open the possibility of a derisory sentence for a grave offence. That is why the Bill introduces a minimum.

A person who chooses to be outdoors in possession of an offensive weapon during a curfew, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse poses a serious threat to public safety and may contribute to the escalation of violence and disorder.

The increased penalty is intended to serve as a stronger deterrent against such conduct and to reinforce the message that weapons have no place in situations where the authorities are seeking to restore calm and protect the public.

For the avoidance of doubt, the provision is directed at persons found outdoors in possession of an offensive weapon during the operative hours of a curfew without lawful authority or reasonable excuse. It does not, Madam Speaker, criminalise persons who have legitimate reasons to be outdoors and who comply with the applicable arrangements and permit requirements.

Madam Speaker, the events of recent weeks have reminded us that the maintenance of law and order is fundamental to the stability and well-being of not only our country, but any country.

Our Police Officers have worked tirelessly, day in, day out, often under extremely different, dangerous and difficult circumstances, to protect the public, contain the disturbances and restore peace. I wish to place on record my appreciation to every member of the Police Force who has discharged his or her duties with courage, commitment and professionalism.

I also acknowledge the important role played by the community and religious leaders, the forces vives and residents of the various localities who stood alongside the Police and

appealed for calm. Their cooperation has demonstrated that the protection of our communities is a collective responsibility.

The Government will not allow criminal elements to undermine the authority of the State, threaten the safety of our citizens or disrupt the normal functioning of our institutions. Those who engage in violence and destruction must be held accountable in accordance with the law.

At the same time, our response must remain guided by the rule of law, respect for constitutional rights and the proper application of our legal framework. The powers provided under this Bill must be exercised responsibly, proportionately and in accordance with the law.

Madam Speaker, this Bill is one element of a wider response, and I do not want the House to see it in isolation. 26 of the 195 persons arrested, as I said earlier, were minors.

At its meeting of Friday 16 October 2026, Cabinet decided that a motion will be moved in the House for the setting up of a Select Committee to look into the root causes of juvenile delinquency and violence, and to consider whether our laws need to be amended including on parental responsibility and on the incitement of minors to commit offences.

As early as next week, Government will have consultations with NGOs and specialists to gain a better understanding of the problems facing the country, especially our youth. No government has the monopoly of wisdom on these questions, and we intend to listen to those who work with our young people daily and act on it.

No curfew or fine will, on their own, answer the question as to why our children were among those on the streets. That question deserves the serious attention of each and every one of us and sustained action on behalf of the Government.

Madam Speaker, I have listened to what has been said outside this House since Cabinet took its decision on Friday. I have heard the words "*dérive sécuritaire*". I have heard it suggested that this Bill is a state of emergency by the back door, that it places too much power in the hands of one official, that it is being rushed through under cover of a crisis, and that this Government is looking for "*échappatoires*" rather than facing the causes of what

happened. The House and the country are entitled to answers rather than slogans, so let me respond to those points one by one.

Is it really, as some are saying, a state of emergency by the back door?

A curfew order under Section 13C suspends no constitutional right at all. It cannot be used to detain anyone without charge. It does not touch the derogation regime of Section 18 of the Constitution, which remains exactly where the Constitution puts it: in a Proclamation of the President, subject to the approval of this Assembly within seven days.

A curfew order remains what it has been since 1991, that is, a temporary measure, for specified hours, with permits for those who need to move, which the Commissioner may only make where he is satisfied that it is necessary or expedient in the interest of public safety or public order, and which, like every exercise of statutory power in this Republic, is open to review by the Supreme Court.

The orders made last week were made one night at a time, for the localities concerned, and their hours were narrowed as calm returned. This is not a "*dérive*". That is called restraint.

Is it really too much power in the hands of one official?

The Commissioner of Police has held the power to make a curfew order for 35 years. This Bill changes the geography of that power; it does not change its nature, its conditions or its limits. Nor is the power exercised in a vacuum. The Commissioner holds a constitutional office under the Section 71 of the Constitution; the Government remains responsible to this House for the maintenance of public order. And I, as the Minister responsible for the Police, will answer to this House for every order made.

Some are saying that these amendments are being rushed through. This Bill is two clauses long. It amends one subsection and one figure, and both date from 1991. The case for it was not made by this Government. It was made by four nights during which disturbances broke out in 15, and then 17 and more, localities at once. Where time is needed, on the root causes of juvenile delinquency and violence, Government is taking time, and is proposing a Select Committee of the House. Where the Police need a tool which works across the whole territory, waiting is not prudence. It is negligence.

On the Prevention of Terrorism Act, let me say two things. First, whether any person is prosecuted and under which enactment is a decision not for the Government but for the Director of Public Prosecutions under Section 72 of the Constitution.

Secondly, my own views on the Act are a matter of record. They have not changed; it is a law to be used with restraint where the facts warrant it and nowhere else. Those who have been charged were charged for what they are alleged to have done, not for what they think, and they will have their day in court with every protection that the law affords.

Lastly, let me deal with the use of the term "*échappatoires*". Nobody in this House is looking for one. The officer who fired the shot at Camp Levieux on 09 October was arrested and charged, and he has been, with three of his colleagues, interdicted. The investigation will go where the evidence leads, and I have insisted that it should proceed as quickly as possible.

The water situation, Madam Speaker, is in the hands of an Inter-ministerial Committee which I will now chair, set up by the Cabinet on Friday. This Committee will actually be meeting in two days' time, this coming Thursday, that is, 22 October.

Regarding the conditions in which too many of our young people grow up, I have told the House what the Government is doing. Those who were behind the violence will have to answer for their acts, and we will also look at the root causes. There is no contradiction between the two, and there is no *échappatoire* in either.

Madam Speaker, this Police (Amendment) Bill is the measured and necessary response to the operational realities demonstrated by the recent disturbances. It will provide the Commissioner of Police with greater flexibility to deal with widespread public disorder and strengthen the deterrent against the possession of offensive weapons during curfew hours.

Ultimately, Madam Speaker, our responsibility is to ensure that the Police Force is adequately empowered to protect the lives and property of our citizens, safeguard public institutions, and maintain peace and stability throughout the Republic.

With these words, I commend the Police (Amendment) Bill to the House.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition.

(5.28 p.m.)

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr C. Baboolall): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I begin with the people who have lived through this fortnight. The families who are afraid, the shopkeepers whose work was burnt down, the police officers who were hurt defending the streets, and the families of those who were injured, whose cases are before the competent authorities, and on which I will say nothing more today.

Violence and looting are not protest. They hurt the poorest first. We condemn them without reservation, and nothing I say today takes one word of that back. So, let me be clear about where this side of the House stands. We want a country that is safe. We will support any measure that makes it safe, but a law is not judged by the emergency that produces it. It is judged by what it allows on the day after and the year after.

Every power asked of this House must pass three tests –

- a clear purpose;
- firm limits, and
- someone who answers for it.

The Police (Amendment) Bill passes the first test. It failed the second and the third. Madam Speaker, it has two clauses. I have read them and I invite every hon. Member to do the same. Clause 3 replaces subsection 4 of Section 13C of the Police Act. Today, a curfew order of the Commissioner shall be limited to a specific locality. Tomorrow, it may cover the whole of Mauritius or any part thereof.

Clause 4 amends Section 13D. It raises the fine from maximum Rs25,000 to a minimum of Rs50,000 and a maximum of Rs100,000 – a minimum. The five years of penal servitude already in the law remains the same.

Now, look at what is not there. Section 13C has no maximum duration. The Bill adds none. Section 13C has no duty to publish the reasons, or to report to this House, or to review the order. The Bill adds none and for the fine, the court may no longer look at the person in front of it.

Madam Speaker, this is not a permanent curfew, and I will not say it is, but it is a permanent power with no clock, no reporting, and no review. A power with no limits does not need to be abused to be dangerous. It only needs to exist. Who will hold this power under this Bill, the Commissioner of Police. Here, Madam Speaker, I must speak of the

Constitution. Section 71 says that the Police Force is under the command of the Commissioner of Police. It says that the Commissioner is responsible for determining the use and controlling the operation of the Force, and that apart from general directions of policy which the hon. Prime Minister may give, he is not subject to the direction or control of any other person or authority.

That is the Constitution's shield for the Commissioner and for the public. I say this with respect to the holder of the Office, whose integrity I do not question. My concern is the system. The Commissioner took office in November 2024. His contract was renewed in November 2025. It was reported that the hon. Prime Minister decided on the renewal. It is said to be a one-year contract and that it is coming to an end. Because if the Commissioner's future depends on the goodwill of the hon. Prime Minister, then Section 71 is a sentence on paper. A Commissioner who must please can no longer be a Commissioner who may refuse. And the public will ask each time a curfew is imposed, whether it is the Commissioner who decided or the hon. Prime Minister who is behind him.

Madam Speaker, this Bill is certified urgent and all its stages are on the Order Paper for a single Sitting. The same Government brings nine Bills on the National Crime Agency; all certified urgent. The Prime Minister has said publicly that the authority to hear someone's communication is not for the Prime Minister, but for a judge. Why is this principle good for the telephone and not good for a home, for a nationwide curfew? Urgent for the curfew, for the agency, for the warrant. Never urgent for the water that is not coming out of the taps, for the pay of the officers, or the price of bread.

Madam Speaker, what produced these days, the Government says drug traffickers. Let us agree that it is water and the cost of living that created these recent unrests. Many ordinary citizens say both. They condemn the violence and they say everything has become too expensive.

On 06 November, the official figures at Mare aux Vacoas was 35.9% and now it is about 34%. Inflation, today, is about 5.7%. The damage is real. What has happened? More than 150 people have been arrested. Among them 16 or more children – 26 children. 31 police vehicles damaged. Police posts have been damaged as well; Safe City cameras. Sugarcane has been burnt as stated by the hon. Prime Minister. Behind each number there is a family and the Police.

The Police Fighters Union is saying that: we are short of staff. We are short of Police Officers. The Cabinet decided in January that Sunday work for shift staff would be paid at only one day's pay, whereas it was twice a daily rate. Even the training bond for a Temporary Constable has gone up from Rs260,000 to about Rs360,000.

This Bill gives the Commissioner a power over the whole country and not to one officer. No allowance, not equip the Police. A government who wants safe streets must first pay, equip and respect the Police. A curfew can calm a night. It cannot answer a question. Madam Speaker, I do not come here only to criticise. I come with a position. We do not oppose a curfew power that is lawful, limited, and accountable.

Here is what a good Bill would have contained.

A maximum duration for any order that covers more than one region with renewal only by new return order giving reasons. Publication of every order and its reason. A report to this House within days of the national order. We asked that the Certificate of Urgency be set aside so that the power over the whole country is not passed in one afternoon and this Bill is sent to the Law Reform Commission for proposal by all stakeholders. We have just debated the Wetlands Bill that has been moved out just because we have representation but this Bill, the whole country is making representation.

So, it is important if the Wetlands Bill could have been removed, but it is the same for this one because representations are important. We asked the hon. Prime Minister to commit that the Commissioner of Police be appointed for a fixed term with security of tenure so that section 71 means what it says. If the Government gives these safeguards, it will help to pass a good law. If it refuses, it will have shown that it wants the power without the limits.

Madam Speaker, a country is not governed by fear and is not governed by stopwatch. It is governed by trust and trust is built when the powerful accept limits on their power. Give this House a Bill with limits, a Commissioner with security, a police force that is paid and equipped, a plan for water and for the prices, peace with justice, order with fairness and power with limits.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you so much. Yes, hon. Minister of Labour!

(5.37 p.m.)

The Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations (Mr R. Uteem): Madam Speaker, the whole of Mauritius was shocked by the turn of events that has unfolded in our country over the past week. Because of the action of a minority, ordinary citizens have to suffer. The police officers they rely upon to keep them safe, were assaulted and several police station were attacked. The metro, they depended on to get to work or to school, were damaged and the transport system was disrupted. Traffic lights and CCTV cameras that ensure the safety of road users were damaged. Because of the action of a minority, business owners that have invested their savings and created employment, have seen their premises vandalized. Because of the action of a minority, students in the middle of their examination, have had to endure the uncertainty as to whether the examination would proceed as planned. Because the action of a minority, our young people have been misled into believing that violence, destruction and confrontation are acceptable in our society.

As the hon. Prime Minister mentioned in his answer this morning to the PNQ, inquiry is ongoing but already, there are reports that point to a coordinated, well-planned attack. Because of the action of a minority, the image of Mauritius has suffered. Tourists who chose our country for its hospitality and peace have been confronted with scenes that no Mauritian wishes to see associated with our home. Some friendly countries even issued travel warnings to the citizens traveling to Mauritius and because of the action of a minority, the whole population will have to foot the Bill to repair the damage caused to public infrastructure.

Madam Speaker, such incident has no place in a democratic society like ours where there is mutual respect and a peaceful coexistence. The population has the right to be angry. You have the right to be angry because you do not have adequate water supply, because we are going through one of the driest periods that we have experienced in decades and the former Government did nothing to replace pipes and build dams. You have the right to be angry because of the increase in the price of fuel freight and corresponding increases in electricity Bill and other products due to the war in Iran and Ukraine but you do not have the right to take the law in your own hands. You do not have the right to destroy property and loot shops. You do not have the right to spread terror and fear among the population.

I would like to commend the hon. Prime Minister who has given clear instruction to speed up the investigation and the Commissioner of Police and the Police Force for their remarkable mobilization. This Government, Madam Speaker, will leave no stone unturned in

establishing the causes of these events, in punishing those who are involved and ensuring that appropriate lessons are drawn.

Madam Speaker, this morning during the PNQ, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, as other politicians outside this House, have criticised the hon. Prime Minister when he stated that if required, the Prevention of Terrorism Act would be used against those who has been involved in those riots. Now, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, being a seasoned lawyer, should know that in the Prevention of Terrorism Act, in the definition of act of terrorism, it includes and I quote –

> "Extensive destruction to a Government or public facility, a transport system, an infrastructure facility, including an information system, a fixed platform located on the continental shelf, a public place or private property, likely to endanger human life or result in major economic loss."

Now, as the hon. Prime Minister said, the Government is not in a position to influence the Commissioner of Police or the DPP as to what charges to be brought. The DPP will exercise his constitutional right in the light of all evidence gathered to decide what charge. But coming and claiming that the acts that we have witnessed over the past week does not qualify as an act of terrorism is really being intellectually dishonest because it is squarely false within the act of terrorism.

Having said that, Madam Speaker, I would also like to commend the remarkable spirit of solidarity that has emerged from this difficult situation. We have witnessed neighbours coming together to protect their neighbourhoods. Residents standing together to safeguard local businesses and citizens cooperating with the police to prevent further incident. I will especially commend all the people living in my constituency and all the constituencies for maintaining order and peace. These acts of solidarity remind us that even in moments of uncertainty, the strength of Mauritius lies in its people. We must not allow fear, anger or frustration to undermine the principle that hold our society together. We must work together for Mauritius to progress. United, we shall stand.

Madam Speaker, the Police Amendment Bill (No. XXV of 2026) is both timely and necessary. As the hon. Prime Minister has mentioned, for the time being, subsection 4 of 13C of the Police Act only allows the Commissioner of Police to make a curfew order to specific localities. The recent incident has exposed the practical limitation of this provision. We have

witnessed how quickly a situation affecting public order can involve and spread from one area to another where certain localities were placed under curfews, areas not covered by the order remain exposed to risks of incident. So now, with this amendment, the Commissioner of Police will have the discretion to make a curfew order either in the whole of Mauritius or in any part of it.

Now, I have listened carefully to the hon. Leader of the Opposition. The hon. Leader of the Opposition is concerned that we are giving too much power to the Commissioner of Police and that his power has no limits. There is not sufficient check and balance but as rightly pointed out by the hon. Prime Minister, we are not changing the circumstances under which the Commissioner of Police can exercise his discretion under section 13C of the Police Act. This remains the same. He still has to be satisfied that it is necessary or expedient in the interest of public safety or right of public order to do so. This has remained the same since 1991 and the fact that the Commissioners of Police came and went and seldom used the curfew order, goes to show how responsible our Commissioners of Police are.

Having said that, the hon. Leader of Opposition, being a seasoned lawyer, knows very well that Section 119 of our Constitution confers on the Supreme Court the overriding power to review decisions made by any public authority, including the decisions made by the Commissioner of Police. There has been a number of precedents, be it by the Supreme Court or even in the Privy Council, where decisions of the Commissioner of Police have been subject of review on the ground of *ultra vires* or on the ground that he was in breach with fundamental principles guaranteed by the Constitution.

So, I will tell the hon. Leader of the Opposition to rest assured that these principles are not being touched. The Commissioner of Police will still be subject to scrutiny by the Supreme Court if ever he is abusing his power or he is acting outside the limited purview of the Police Act for imposing a curfew. He will still need to identify the time. He will still need to identify the locality. It can be some parts of Mauritius or it can be the whole part. He will still need to decide who will be subject to the curfew and who will be granted permits. So, this does not change. The only thing that has changed in the first amendment is that now he can impose curfew all over the island as opposed to different localities.

Now, with regard to the second amendment proposed in this Bill, I did not hear anything from the hon. Leader of Opposition, which goes to say that he does not have any particular qualm about it. Again, this second amendment is very limited in scope. We are

imposing a minimum fine of Rs25,000, not for all kinds of breach of a curfew order. Only for a specific case where a person during a curfew order is found outside with an offensive weapon. Why are you outside during curfew with an offensive weapon? So, the increase in the fines is commensurate with the gravity of the offence of possessing an offensive weapon in a curfew.

Again, even then, Madam Speaker, we are not changing the defence available to the accused party. He can still escape any liability if he shows that he was acting under lawful authority or he had reasonable excuse to be in possession of that offensive weapon.

Madam Speaker, going through the events of the past few days, and now that we are going to give the possibility to the Commissioner of Police to extend the curfew to the whole island, that has triggered some reflections at the level of my Ministry. My officers and myself are already working on probable proposed amendments that will come to Cabinet shortly. What happens during a curfew? Each of the curfew mentions that it is not applicable for employees in essential services, but it does not define what are essential services.

The curfew does not define whether provision of essential services also includes transport. If you have a contractor who is used to come and pick employees to and fro their workplace, will that be covered also by the curfew order? Now, what happens, if for reasons of safety, one employee of an essential service decides not to go to work? Is that a local leave? Can the employer sanction that worker for refusing to turn up during the curfew, which is essential services?

During torrential rain, during heavy weather warnings, workers who work during class three are paid a special allowance. Should a special allowance be paid to workers who are required to work during curfew orders? These are the types of issues now that we are going to have the curfew across the island. I am sure that this is only going to be an exceptional circumstance. I hope I will never live to see another curfew in Mauritius. But at the level of the Ministry, we are working on the protocol to ensure there is no ambiguity as to the working conditions of those who are called upon to work during curfew hours.

With these words, Madam Speaker, I support this Bill.

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

(5.50 p.m.)

Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Merci, Madame la présidente. Le *Police (Amendment) Bill* laisse un sentiment profond que nous devons trouver un équilibre entre deux obligations fondamentales: la protection de nos citoyens et la préservation de leur liberté fondamentale.

Personne dans cette Chambre ne peut accepter que nos rues soient livrées à la violence, que des biens publics ou privés soient détruits ou que des citoyens vivent dans la peur. Le maintien de l'ordre public est une responsabilité essentielle de l'État. Mais, Madame la présidente, la question que nous devons nous poser aujourd'hui est la suivante: Comment renforcer les moyens de la police sans donner à l'exécutif – aux autorités policières – des pouvoirs insuffisamment encadrés? Ce projet de loi mérite donc un examen sérieux au-delà des circonstances immédiates qui ont conduit le gouvernement à proposer ces amendements.

Madame la présidente, le premier changement proposé consiste à permettre au commissaire de police d'imposer un couvre-feu qui ne serait plus limité à une localité spécifique, mais pourrait couvrir l'ensemble du territoire mauricien. Jusqu'ici, la section 13C de la *Police Act* prévoyait que le couvre-feu devait être limité à une localité spécifique. Donc, le projet de loi entend supprimer cette limitation territoriale. Je comprends que certaines situations exceptionnelles puissent nécessiter une réponse rapide et coordonnée à l'échelle nationale. Toutefois, une mesure qui restreint la liberté de circulation de toute une population doit répondre à des critères précis et rigoureux.

Madame la présidente, le fait qu'un problème existe dans une région ne signifie pas automatiquement que l'ensemble du pays doit être soumis aux mêmes restrictions. Je souhaite donc demander au gouvernement: Quels critères/objectifs permettront de déterminer qu'un couvre-feu national est nécessaire? Quelles garanties empêcheront qu'un pouvoir exceptionnel soit utilisé lorsque des mesures localisées suffiraient? Quelle sera la durée maximale d'un tel couvre-feu? Une réévaluation périodique sera-t-elle obligatoire? Le Parlement sera-t-il informé rapidement et pourra-t-il examiner la justification du maintien de cette mesure? Il ne s'agit pas d'entraver l'action de la police. Il s'agit de garantir que l'exercice d'un pouvoir aussi important repose sur des motifs vérifiables, une nécessité démontrée et une durée proportionnée.

Madame la présidente, un couvre-feu peut avoir des conséquences considérables sur la vie quotidienne. Il peut affecter celles et ceux qui travaillent le soir, les professionnels de santé, les personnes qui doivent se rendre à l'hôpital, les chauffeurs de taxi, les agents de

sécurité, les employés de l'hôtellerie et de la restauration, ainsi que les citoyens confrontés à une urgence familiale. Il faut également penser aux personnes qui pourraient se retrouver dans l'impossibilité de rentrer chez elles à temps, non pas par volonté de défier la loi, mais en raison de circonstances indépendantes de leur volonté.

Le projet de loi doit donc être accompagné de garanties claires concernant les exemptions, les permis, les urgences médicales et les déplacements essentiels. Je demande donc au gouvernement de préciser comment ces situations seront prises en compte. Comment une personne pourra-t-elle obtenir rapidement une autorisation? Quels documents devra-t-elle présenter? Quelles dispositions seront prévues pour les urgences imprévues?

Madame la présidente, l'application de la loi ne doit pas dépendre de l'interprétation arbitraire d'un agent de police ou de la bonne volonté d'un responsable. Les citoyens doivent connaître leurs droits, leurs obligations et les recours qui leur sont accessibles.

Le deuxième volet du projet de loi concerne les sanctions applicables aux personnes trouvées à l'extérieur en possession d'une arme offensive dans une zone où un couvre-feu est en vigueur et pendant les heures de restriction. Madame la présidente, je reconnais pleinement la gravité de la possession d'une arme destinée à blesser ou à intimider autrui, particulièrement dans une situation de trouble à l'ordre public. Cependant, il convient de distinguer la personne qui transporte délibérément une arme pour commettre des violences, de celle qui se trouve en possession d'un objet dont la qualification juridique ou les circonstances de détention doivent être examinées. La loi doit être suffisamment précise pour éviter toute interprétation excessive. Je souhaite, donc, obtenir des éclaircissements sur trois points –

(i) Quelle définition juridique de l'arme offensive sera appliquée dans le cadre de cette disposition ?

(ii) Comment les notions d'autorisation légale et d'excuse raisonnable seront-elles appréciées ?

(iii) Quelle sanction exacte le gouvernement entend-il introduire et comment seront-elles proportionnées à la gravité de l'infraction ?

Je rappelle qu'une sanction sévère n'est pas à elle seule une garantie d'efficacité. Il faut également des enquêtes rigoureuses, des preuves fiables, des poursuites appropriées et une justice qui inspire confiance.

Madame la présidente, le commissaire de police doit disposer des moyens nécessaires pour remplir sa mission. Mais plus un pouvoir est étendu, plus les mécanismes de contrôle qui l'accompagnent doivent être clairs. L'ordre public ne peut pas être réduit à la seule question de la répression. Il repose également sur la confiance entre la population et les institutions. Cette confiance suppose que les décisions soient justifiées, que les pouvoirs soient exercés dans les limites de la loi et que toute personne qui estime avoir subi un traitement illégal puisse demander réparation.

Je souhaite aussi, donc, savoir si le gouvernement envisage la publication des motifs justifiant un couvre-feu national, sous réserve des impératifs légitimes de sécurité ; une information régulière du Parlement sur la mise en œuvre et la durée de ces mesures ; un mécanisme indépendant permettant d'examiner les plaintes relatives à leur application ; la publication de données sur les arrestations ; et les poursuites engagées dans le cadre de ces dispositions. Ces garanties ne constituent pas une faiblesse de l'État, elles renforcent la légitimité de son action.

Madame la présidente, lorsqu'un pays traverse une période de tension, la responsabilité des autorités est de rétablir le calme, de protéger les personnes et de prévenir de nouvelles violences. Mais, il est tout aussi important de comprendre les causes des tensions, de répondre aux préoccupations légitimes de la population et de veiller à ce que les citoyens puissent exprimer pacifiquement leurs inquiétudes. Une personne qui commet un acte de violence doit répondre de ses actes. En revanche, le simple fait d'habiter dans une région affectée par des troubles ne saurait justifier que l'on considère tous ses habitants comme des suspects. Les forces de l'ordre doivent pouvoir intervenir efficacement contre les auteurs d'infraction tout en protégeant les citoyens qui respectent la loi. C'est cette distinction qui doit guider notre réflexion.

Madame la présidente, je voudrais conclure en rappelant un principe simple : La sécurité et la liberté ne doivent pas être présentées comme deux objectifs incompatibles. Un État doit être suffisamment fort pour protéger sa population, mais également suffisamment responsable pour encadrer les pouvoirs qu'il exerce en son nom. Notre devoir en tant que

parlementaire n'est pas simplement d'adapter des lois en réaction aux événements. Notre devoir est de veiller à ce que ces lois soient nécessaires, précises, proportionnées et respectueuses de l'État de droit.

Je soutiens le principe selon lequel la police doit disposer de moyens nécessaires pour combattre la violence et préserver l'ordre public. Mais, Madame la présidente, je considère que l'élargissement d'un pouvoir aussi important que celui d'imposer un couvre-feu à l'échelle nationale exige des garanties solides, transparentes et vérifiables. La sécurité des citoyens ne doit jamais devenir un prétexte pour affaiblir leurs droits. Et la protection des libertés ne doit jamais servir de prétexte à l'inaction face à la violence. C'est dans cet équilibre que réside la responsabilité d'un État démocratique.

Je vous remercie.

Madam Speaker: Merci.

Yes, hon. Lesjongard!

(6.00 p.m.)

Mr G. Lesjongard (Fifth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): Merci, Madame la présidente, de me donner l'occasion, cet après-midi, d'intervenir sur ce projet de loi qui à première vue porte sur le couvre-feu dans le pays et la détention d'armes offensives. Mais ne nous y trompons pas, les enjeux de ce texte de loi sont bien plus importants.

Madame la présidente, pourquoi sommes-nous en ce moment à débattre de ces amendements ? La question qu'il faut qu'on se pose : Comment sommes-nous arrivés à une telle situation ? Est-ce la crise de l'eau ? La blessure par balle dont Madame Elodie Thomas a été victime ? Une jeunesse délaissée, la pauvreté, l'injustice, une défiance dans notre système de sécurité nationale ? *The wrong people in the wrong places* ? L'incapacité et l'incompétence de ce gouvernement à résoudre des problèmes sociaux ?

Madame la présidente, la jeunesse de ce pays souffre. Au fait, toute la nation est en train de souffrir depuis la prise de pouvoir de ce nouveau gouvernement, voilà bientôt deux ans. Ce projet de loi concerne l'étendue des pouvoirs que nous allons confier à la police, la liberté de circulation de chaque citoyen de notre pays et les limites de l'autorité. Et surtout,

Madame la présidente, il pose une question fondamentale : Dans un moment de crise nationale et d'inquiétude collective, le gouvernement entend-il rétablir la confiance du public ou simplement renforcer les mécanismes de coercition dont dispose l'État ?

Madame la présidente, je condamne la violence, les incendies criminels, les pillages, les destructions des biens publics et privés. Aucun grief, aussi légitime soit-il, ne peut donner à quiconque le droit de terroriser ses compatriotes. Je ne défendrai jamais l'anarchie, Madame la présidente, mais l'État a le devoir de protéger la population dans son ensemble. Mais le gouvernement a failli. Le gouvernement a failli depuis le début de son mandat.

Madame la présidente, il existe un principe tout aussi fondamental que ce gouvernement doit comprendre. Le devoir de l'État de maintenir l'ordre ne le dispense nullement de son obligation de respecter la loi. Le gouvernement ne peut invoquer l'ordre public pour se soustraire aux questions relatives à la responsabilité. Il ne peut exiger le respect de l'autorité sans reconnaître que cette autorité doit elle-même rendre des comptes. Les troubles de ces derniers jours sont survenus dans un contexte de frustration grandissante au sein de la population, notamment, je l'ai dit un peu plus haut, en raison de la pénurie d'eau, de l'augmentation du coût de la vie et aussi, il faut le dire, de la déception grandissante de la population envers ce gouvernement.

Madame la présidente, le peuple ne fait plus confiance aux autorités, particulièrement, je vais le dire, l'autorité politique que ce gouvernement représente. Une autorité politique élue par des fausses promesses, pour ne pas dire des mensonges. Une autorité qui n'a aucun contrôle, même parmi ses membres. Une autorité qui a trahi et qui veut aujourd'hui faire une première étape pour tout contrôler à travers des lois. Soyons clairs, Madame la présidente, la fusillade et les violences qui ont suivi sont deux questions distinctes. Rien ne justifie les deux actes.

Venons-en maintenant au fond de ce texte de loi.

Selon l'article 13C de la Police Act, le Commissaire de police peut imposer un couvre-feu lorsqu'il estime qu'une telle mesure est nécessaire ou opportune dans l'intérêt de la sécurité publique ou du maintien de l'ordre public. La législation actuelle comporte toutefois, ça a été dit avant, une limitation importante; c'est-à-dire à l'article 13C(4), on voit que le couvre-feu soit limité à une localité déterminée.

Le gouvernement, à travers de ce projet de loi, propose de supprimer cette restriction géographique, permettant ainsi qu'un couvre-feu soit imposé sur tout l'ensemble du territoire mauricien. Madame la présidente, pourquoi cette limitation existe-t-elle? La réponse, je pense, est simple. Un couvre-feu constitue une restriction exceptionnelle à la liberté de circulation des citoyens dans leur propre pays. Le législateur a donc prévu une limite géographique à l'exercice de ce pouvoir. Le gouvernement peut considérer cette restriction comme contraignante dans certaines circonstances. La question n'est pas de savoir si un couvre-feu national pourrait être nécessaire un jour. Dans des circonstances véritablement exceptionnelles, une menace pourrait effectivement concerner l'ensemble de l'île.

Mais, Madame la présidente, la vraie question est de savoir si ce projet de loi prévoit des garanties suffisantes pour qu'un tel pouvoir exceptionnel ne soit pas exercé que lorsque les circonstances l'exigent réellement et c'est précisément sur ce point que le gouvernement doit fournir des réponses convaincantes. Par exemple, quels critères précis devront être satisfaits avant que le Commissaire de police puisse imposer un couvre-feu national? Faudra-t-il démontrer l'existence d'une menace touchant l'ensemble du pays? Il appartient au gouvernement de justifier l'étendue des pouvoirs qu'il souhaite obtenir et non, Madame la présidente, à la population de démontrer pourquoi sa liberté devrait être préservée.

Notre démocratie, Madame la présidente, ne se mesure pas uniquement au pouvoir dont dispose l'État. Elle se mesure également aux limites que l'État est prêt à s'imposer à lui-même. Si un couvre-feu national doit être autorisé, il doit être assorti de garanties légales précises, l'obligation de consigner les motifs de la décision, la publication de la décision, une durée clairement définie et l'obligation de justifier à nouveau toute prolongation. Des exceptions claires doivent également être prévues pour les urgences et les activités essentielles, notamment, ça a été dit, l'accès aux soins médicaux, les services d'urgence, des déplacements véritablement indispensables. Les bonnes intentions ne remplacent pas les garanties prévues par la loi.

Permettez-moi d'aborder maintenant, Madame la présidente, la deuxième disposition de ce projet de loi, c'est-à-dire les sanctions plus sévères pour la détention d'armes offensives pendant un couvre-feu. Madame la présidente, le projet de loi prévoit également un durcissement des sanctions à l'encontre des personnes trouvées à l'extérieur en possession d'une arme offensive pendant qu'un couvre-feu est en vigueur dans la zone concernée et je le répète, Madame la présidente, je n'éprouve aucune sympathie pour ceux qui portent des

armes dans le but d'intimider, de blesser ou de terroriser des citoyens innocents. De tels comportements doivent être traités avec fermeté par la loi. La section 13D érige déjà en infraction le fait de se trouver à l'extérieur en possession d'une arme offensive pendant un couvre-feu en vigueur sans autorisation légale ni excuse raisonnable.

Le gouvernement propose maintenant de renforcer ces sanctions. Je pose une question donc, Madame la présidente. Sur quelle preuve s'appuie le gouvernement pour affirmer que les sanctions existantes sont insuffisantes ? Le gouvernement a-t-il évalué le nombre de poursuites engagées pour cette infraction, les peines prononcées par les tribunaux et l'efficacité du cadre légal actuel en matière de dissuasion? Ou bien parle-il du principe que chaque crise exige une nouvelle infraction, un pouvoir plus étendu ou une peine plus lourde ?

Madame la présidente, le droit pénal n'est pas un concours de sévérité. L'objectif de la justice pénale n'est pas d'annoncer la peine la plus sévère possible. Il est de dissuader les comportements répréhensibles, de protéger le public, d'établir les responsabilités et de garantir que les sanctions soient justes. Une autre difficulté se pose ici, Madame la présidente. L'infraction repose sur plusieurs éléments. Une personne se trouve à l'extérieur pendant les heures du couvre-feu, dans une zone concernée par l'arrêté, tout en étant en possession d'une arme offensive.

La notion d'arme offensive doit être appliquée avec discernement. Certains objets peuvent avoir des usages légitimes. Les circonstances sont importantes, la législation actuelle reconnaît d'ailleurs déjà la possibilité d'une autorisation légale ou d'une excuse raisonnable. Le gouvernement doit veiller à ce que le durcissement des sanctions ne conduise pas à des peines disproportionnées lorsque les éléments de preuve ne démontrent pas des circonstances justifiant la sanction la plus sévère. Cela ne signifie nullement, Madame la présidente, qu'il faille accorder l'impunité à qui que ce soit.

Cela signifie que la peine doit rester proportionnée à l'infraction et haute degré de responsabilité de son auteur. Madame la présidente, une peine plus sévère n'est pas automatiquement synonyme d'une loi plus efficace. Madame la présidente, je voudrais maintenant aborder le danger de légiférer sous le coup d'une crise. Toute démocratie mûre doit tirer une leçon des circonstances que nous sommes en train de traverser.

Lorsqu'un pays est secoué par des violences, la tentation politique consiste à démontrer sa fermeté par des nouvelles lois. Le gouvernement annonce des sanctions plus sévères, des pouvoirs élargis, des restrictions plus strictes. Il affirme à la population qu'il prend des mesures décisives. Mais une action décisive n'est pas nécessairement une législation bien conçue. Il ne s'agit pas de simples objections techniques. Ces questions touchent au cœur même d'un gouvernement responsable.

Monsieur l'honorable Premier ministre, ce qu'il faut faire, c'est qu'il faut rétablir la confiance du public et pas seulement obtenir son obéissance. Madame la présidente, le gouvernement ne peut ignorer un autre aspect fondamental de cette crise. Un couvre-feu peut restreindre les déplacements. Il peut disperser des rassemblements. Il peut donner aux autorités davantage de temps et d'espace pour gérer une menace immédiate à la sécurité publique.

Le couvre-feu ne peut pas résoudre les causes de la colère populaire. Ce gouvernement a déjà renoncé à sa responsabilité de protéger la population. Si c'était le cas, Madame la présidente, il n'y aurait pas eu d'émeutes. Madame la présidente, nous avons besoin d'une action ferme contre la violence, mais également des enquêtes transparentes sur les éventuels manquements des autorités.

Nous avons besoin des lois capables de répondre à des circonstances exceptionnelles, mais également des garanties empêchant que des pouvoirs exceptionnels deviennent des instruments ordinaires du gouvernement.

L'opposition, Madame la présidente, condamnera la violence partout où elle se manifeste. Mais elle contestera également toute tentative d'invoquer les violences pour éviter de rendre des comptes ou pour imposer à la population des restrictions excessivement larges.

Permettez-moi de conclure, Madame la présidente, en posant trois questions: Le gouvernement estime-t-il qu'une menace localisée doit automatiquement justifier une restriction de la liberté de circulation de toute la nation ? Estime-t-il que des sanctions plus sévères suffiront à rétablir la confiance du public ? Estime-t-il que la meilleure manière de protéger notre démocratie consiste à élargir les pouvoirs exceptionnels sans inscrire dans la loi des garanties tout aussi solides.

J'espère, Madame la présidente, que la réponse à ces trois questions est non. Car la population mauricienne mérite mieux qu'une réponse mesurée uniquement au nombre des pouvoirs conférés à l'État et à des peines plus sévères.

Mais Madame la présidente, la question qui se pose devant nous n'est pas de savoir si l'État doit disposer des moyens nécessaires pour protéger la population. Bien entendu, il doit en disposer. La véritable question est de savoir si le gouvernement accepte que le pouvoir de protéger la population soit lui-même encadré par des garanties destinées à protéger cette même population contre tout abus de pouvoir.

C'est le principe, Madame la présidente, que cette auguste Assemblée doit faire respecter. Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: Merci, je vous en prie. Hon. Minister Mohamed.

(6.18 p.m.)

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Mohamed): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have, as usual, listened with a lot of interest to all those who have spoken before me. I see that hon. Dr. Boolell acquiesces and I thank him for that. Thank you for your support.

It is a very passionate debate. Even though when one looks at the size of the Bill that is presented, one may say that it is a very minor amendment. But then one sees that however minor the amendment is, it has far-reaching consequences and opinions. You see, even a minor can raise passion. You see?

Mr Glover: You saw it coming.

Mr Mohamed: I saw it coming. That is unfortunate. Unpredictable!

Madam Speaker: Do not beat the mike.

Mr Mohamed: Yes, I will not. I will not.

So, when I look at the history that some have made reference to, when I listened to the former Leader of the Opposition, and I always have a lot of interest in listening to what he has to share. It is not true. I would respectfully disagree that it was only since 2024 and January 2025 that the people of this country started getting angry. That is a very feeble

attempt on the part of the Opposition, or at least that Opposition, to change the facts of history.

The fact is that when we came to power, we came to power on a certain scenario that was going on, a certain status that was going on in the country. What was that? It was a profound anger of people coming together at voting centres, ensuring that there would be no electoral fraud because there was a deep feeling of distrust in the government and the electoral process that they were responsible for. So, if there was any distrust, it emanated from prior to the elections. I can go even before then.

We were in the Opposition, Madam Speaker. We were in the Opposition. I do not refer to the Opposition behind the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I refer to the Opposition where the hon. Leader of the Opposition is sitting. This Opposition! We were in the opposition together. When we were in the Opposition, there were a lot of reasons for which people were angry. Let us not forget the transfer of power between father and son. People were angry about that.

Do we not remember the demonstration that took place in front of Government House? I remember walking these avenues in a dark t-shirt. Anger! Anger! Total dissent on the part of the people because they felt that they had been lied to. But at no time did you see the respectable people of Mauritius and those in the Opposition, you never saw them threaten to overthrow government by using surreptitious manner in order to do so.

At no time did you see any member of the Opposition encourage or incite violence by Mauritians. On the contrary, we did it smiling. We did it in a good mood. But we stood there firm and said we were not agreeable. This is what the Opposition was also in those days. Responsible Opposition.

Today, let us not forget the days when there was the Wakashio disaster. The peak of distrust and anger in the people! The peak! What did it not bring in the capital? What did it not bring in Mahebourg? What did it not bring in the waterfront of Mahebourg? What did it not bring? The people got together, stitching together booms in order to stop oil from getting onto the seashores; walking together, shoulder to shoulder, to say that we did not agree. But there was no *dérapage* whatsoever and everyone was respectful of law and order.

Those were the days when the Opposition was respectful of law and order. Let us not forget that in 1999 – I remember those days – when Sir Anerood Jugnauth, came to

television; when Cassam Uteem, the then President of the Republic, his Excellency, came down *sur le terrain* and said, in the middle of it, ‘Stop! Halt. Do not. Let us love our country.’

The flag that is behind you, Madam Speaker, *le rouge, bleu, jaune, vert*, it is not there for decoration. It means something. It is in our soul. It is in our DNA. This is how people acted in those days. It is unfortunate that it was only when the rain was over, when the rain stopped falling, when it was not an issue anymore, that it is only then, *en passant*, following a question from a member of the press, that you have the Opposition then coming to say 'I condemn such action.'

Would it not have been better for national unity to put politics aside? In the midst of the problem, in the midst of the storm, to stand up and stand firm and say we are Mauritians, save our country? When the people were doing it, when those people were burning the country down, it was then that you should have shown the responsibility that then our elders managed to show us back in 1999. But this is not the example the Opposition followed. It is unfortunate! They know better. Maybe there is reason that I know not. But at least I would have hoped that we would have followed the good example as set by our elders who are no longer here.

Hon. Uteem is here. I remember I was in London with hon. Uteem on a personal visit while this mess was going on in Mauritius. But during our personal visit, we were there, making a speech and telling investors, in our personal visit, come to Mauritius. What was the reason we were using? Hon. Uteem will remember. We said come to Mauritius. It is a country where there is peace and stability. Come to invest in our country and open banks. Bring the wealth here. Let it be managed from Mauritius because it is a country you can trust. I was waiting for the Opposition to come forward and say 'yes, we can trust. Yes, let us preserve.' They never came forward.

Today, when I listen to the Opposition – and that time, it was the whole Opposition –, what do I hear? Have we heard any words commending this Bill? No! We have heard criticisms.

So, my analysis is: why criticise? Whenever one says something, one has to have an objective. What is your objective when you say something? You do not say something just for the sake of saying it. What is your aim?

When people say things, when people complain, when people are frustrated, there is an aim, there is an objective. It would be wrong to say that people who were burning the country down, were burning it down because of the water problem. Wrong! I would not agree with this. It would be wrong to say that the people because of the pension problem were burning the country down, breaking down Police stations, putting fire, arson, damaging public property, damaging Safe City cameras. Wrong! I refuse to believe that.

When the former Leader of the Opposition tries to connect the two, I call this intellectual dishonesty, political dishonesty. Why? Because he is trying to aim at political mileage by saying that. That is all! Political mileage, cheap political scoring. Cheap! That very same Opposition *qui était aux abonnés absents pendant la tempête, aujourd'hui, ils viennent prétendre savoir mieux que nous et qui quiconque.*

Ms Anquetil: Donneurs de leçons!

Mr Mohamed: *Où étiez-vous au milieu de la tempête? Où étiez-vous? Est-ce que vous avez daigné au moins, même quand il n'y avait pas de* curfew*, avoir une conférence de presse et dire: "Arrêtez! Préservons ce pays qu'on aime." Non. C'était en passant,* as I have said.

So now, let us look at this minor amendment again – no pun intended. The minor amendment here, and I look at the law, and it is very important to go back to the law instead of going into trying to make speeches in order to tell people outside there that you know better and this Government, they do not like you. That is all their aim. So, in fact, my question is, as *feu* Hervé Duval used to say – "*À qui profite le crime*?"

Feu Hervé Duval once said – "*À qui profite le crime*?"

Some around me would remember those words. Here, what is interesting, and I read certain authors – let me say that as well – who basically explain what happens in a country when the money stops moving where it used to move. What do I mean by that, Madam Speaker? What happens when the money that was normally moving within *le giron* of certain Police officers, *certains malfrats* who wore a badge in those days, when this network of money movement between drug barons stops and when you have politicians in the vicinity, when you have planting exercises, when you have shutting one's eye to the obvious in order to protect others, when you have all this dirty scenario happening? There was a *semblance* of peace. Why? Because *les pattes* were greased as they should be. And what happens when there is a change of government? I do not say that. Those are papers written by experts who

are experts in the field of security, be it in Tijuana, in Mexico and other countries in the world, that it has been established by those experts, and I speak on the basis of those expert reports. I do not speak just for the sake of speaking.

They say that when there is a change of government, in the circulation of money there is a disruption, and when there is a disruption, the *semblance* of peace, that is a false peace, falls to pieces, it falls into smithereens. And then what happens? There are the drug barons that start getting uneasy, and this uneasiness leads to what we have seen recently. Let the Police carry out their inquiry, let them establish what has to be established. But to say, and I say it again, that this is because in country they are annoyed about the pension, they are annoyed about this. Mauritians are a people who love peace. Mauritians are people who hate arrogance. Mauritians are people who hate violence. Mauritians are people who would, when they do not agree with something, they would go *aux urnes,* they will vote against you, they will kick you out, but they will not burn the country down. If they are to burn the country down, it is because people paid them to burn the country down. This is the truth.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, sometimes as my late father used to say – "Whenever you want to talk about the law, read the law." This is what he used to tell me. It took me a lot of time to understand what he meant, even though I was a lawyer. – I must admit. It is true. But what does it say here? Section 13C, and what are the minor amendments? I say that again, very simple. You look at Section 13C of the Police Act, it tells you at subsection 1, 2, and 3, and 4, the very important parameters of that section that the former Leader of the Opposition and the actual Leader of the Opposition make a *hoo-ha,* make it such a big issue about: oh well, what are the guarantees of protection that the citizens will have because they cannot move around because there is going to be a curfew order potentially on the whole of Mauritius? Question: Was it possible under this law before the amendment to have a curfew order in the whole of Mauritius? Yes, legally speaking, it was possible because, let us look at the law. It is the Commissioner of Police, under certain circumstances, who could have decided to put a curfew order. He could have named every single district and every locality within that district. So, the whole of Mauritius would have been covered. I did not hear the Opposition – or this Opposition or that Opposition, whoever they may be – complain. I did not hear them say; "Oh, eureka, we have a problem. Let us raise this issue in any PQ or PNQ." I never heard

that. Why? Because everything was being done within the parameters of the law, and there is a stark distinction between what is an emergency order as opposed to a curfew order.

Here, it has been explained very clearly by both hon. Uteem, and the hon. Prime Minister. What has been explained? It has been explained that here your constitutional rights are preserved. You cannot keep someone in prison without any charges. You have all your rights that are here, there, nothing changes but under this actual law, before the amendment, whatever we are talking about here, your supposed apprehensions, they are neither here nor there because it could have been done, but the only reason why it was not done because the spirit of the law stated otherwise. What did the spirit of the law say? Section 13C (4) –

> "Any curfew order made by the Commissioner under this section shall be limited to a specific locality."

So, we could have gone – that locality, that locality, that locality, the whole of the localities of Mauritius. It could have been done. So, today what we are doing is simply facilitating the process by saying it can be Mauritius or any part thereof. When the former Leader of the Opposition was reading that part, he forgot to mention "or any part thereof". He stopped at the whole of Mauritius. As my late father used to say, when you have to read the law, read it until the end of the sentence. Not selectively because that is a proper reading of the law, and that is also the responsibility not just of a lawyer, but of any legislator, that to read it properly. And when you are to communicate to the people, you do not give selective information, you give all the information and let them be the judge. I respect the people of this country. The people of this country – I say it again before I go to the next phase of my intervention – love peace. And in my view, as I said, this minor amendment is only a question of being more serious in the approach.

You could cover Mauritius – imagine the practical scenario. Grand Baie, for instance, was not within the curfew area. For those who did not know, Grand Baie was not within the curfew area. Imagine someone starts making a mess in the locality of Vale and then, the Police go after him. Then he stands quietly in Grand Baie but he is not in a curfew zone. So therefore, he is free to move around and then, he moves from one area to the other. When this law was made law, Mauritius was a different Mauritius, there were localities. Nowadays, all those localities are almost becoming one huge locality. People, the number have increased, the habitations have increased. So, we have to move with our time. We have heard those

people who are angry. We have heard, and those are not the people who went down onto the street to burn the country down.

When I look at the Truth and Justice Commission report, since we are talking about facts, what did the former government do ever since 2015 with the Truth and Justice Commission report? Put yourself that simple question.

In 2011, a report came out. In 2011, it was a report that was under the Prime Ministership of Dr. Navin Ramgoolam at the time. I remember. I was then Minister in Government. That report came out. There were moves; and there is a process for implementation. In 2014, we lost power. What did the former government do? I would love the hon. former Leader of the Opposition to tell us. What did they do in order to implement the Truth and Justice Commission report? One of the elements they talk about is the asbestos problem.

Why is it that my good friends, all the Ministers, Minister Bhagwan, Minister Dr. Boolell, around here are sitting down together in order to find solutions for the asbestos matter? Why is it that we have met time and time again, ordered statistics, ordered final expert reports, ordered scientific reports? Why is it that we are meeting next week again, in order to find alternative homes for those living in such unacceptable conditions? Why? Because we believe it is our responsibility. We do not seek to be given a prize or a medal for that. It is our duty. It is our work; we are paid for it.

But that former government, they were paid for it. Why didn't they do it? They talk about angry people. What? Are they so blind to the obvious? That people were not angry then. *Ceux qui habitaient dans les maisons avec de l'amiante, ça n'existait pas à leur époque ? C'est d'un seul coup, à partir de 2024, on a inventé la roue* !

What about the issue of squatters in this country? I have been to Singamanie. I have been to Coteau Raffin. I have been there, walking amongst the people there. I do not seek a medal. I do not seek to be congratulated. I do it because it is my duty to do so. Some people are good at talking. Some people are good at working. There is a difference! Some people are good at pretending they work. Some people, they work, but they do not pretend and they do not expect anything in return – and that is me. This is who we are.

I went to Coteau Raffin. *People* qui ont été régularisés depuis plus de 15 ans, ne sont pas connectés à l'eau courante, ne sont pas connectés à l'électricité. Les enfants qui doivent étudier pour leurs examens, qui doivent aller à l'école, ne sont pas connectés à l'eau courante. La circonscription numéro 14 – où alors était l'ancien gouvernement ? Où étaient ses représentants de ces circonscriptions ? Où étaient ceux qui devaient régulariser tous ceux de Singamanie? Où étaient tout ce beau monde ?

En plein milieu, Madame la présidente, de cette débâcle, de ce désastre, de ce cyclone, provoqué par les trafiquants et les barons, je reçois un coup de fil. Permettez-moi de partager ça avec vous. Je reçois un coup de fil d'une femme que j'appelle femme courage. Elle fait une vidéo. Je ne suis pas à Maurice. Je regarde la vidéo. Et qu'est-ce qu'elle dit ? Elle est sur un terrain Crown land à Cité La Cure. *She is there and she makes this video*. Je regarde la vidéo et j'essaie de la contacter. Je l'appelle par Messenger. Finalement, on se parle et on se donne rendez-vous. L'honorable Savabaddy y était, et j'y suis allé ensemble.

Il y a des squatteurs là-bas. C'est la circonscription numéro 4. Est-ce qu'ils ont commencé à habiter là-bas hier ou en 2025 ou en 2024 ? Non. Qu'est-ce qui se passe avec tous ces habitants de *Ti Rodrig* ? Qu'est-ce qui se passe ? Tous ces squatteurs sur un terrain privé ? Est-ce que la circonscription de *Ti Rodrig* n'est pas de votre circonscription, cher monsieur l'ancien leader de l'opposition ?

Ms Anquetil: Et président du MSM !

Mr Mohamed: Ce n'est pas un terrain de l'État. Ce n'est pas sous mon contrôle ou *under the mandate of my Ministry*. Mais, pourquoi alors Ashok Subron, et vous-même, et tous les députés de la circonscription, Caserne, etc., m'ont parlé pour dire qu'il est nécessaire de trouver la solution pour eux ? Pourquoi alors on a rendez-vous avec la MCB qui est propriétaire du terrain ? Pourquoi alors j'ai parlé avec le Premier ministre qui m'a encouragé de trouver des solutions pour ceux qui vivent dans des situations inacceptables ? On aurait pu dire : « Mais, ce n'est pas dans notre circonscription. Ce n'est pas un terrain de l'État. » Mais, c'est des Mauriciens qui vivent dans des états pas possibles. On ne fait pas de la publicité avec ça, mais là, aujourd'hui, vous me forcez à sortir de mes gonds parce que vous faites de la politique sur le traumatisme qu'a vécu l'île Maurice.

Ms Anquetil: Bien dit !

Mr Mohamed: Alors, pourquoi est-ce qu'on m'a pris, moi, pour présider le comité sur l'élevage porcin – *pig breeders* ? On a ri de moi. On a dit : « Ben non, mais c'est un musulman. Non, c'est un musulman, pourquoi est-ce qu'il va présider un comité qui concerne les *pig breeders* ? » C'est une question de gestion, Madame la présidente. C'est une question de structurer. C'est une question de responsabilité nationale. C'est une question d'être un politicien et un dirigeant responsable vis-à-vis l'irresponsabilité de ceux qui ont laissé la situation pourrir pendant 10 ans avant. La colère de la population – on l'a senti pendant les élections générales ; on l'a senti quand ils sont allés devant les écoles ; on l'a senti quand ils sont sortis de leur maison pendant les émeutes pour aller empêcher les émeutiers de détruire le pays ; on a senti l'amour des Mauriciens pour leur patrie. Ne venez pas alors essayer de connecter A à Z parce que ça n'a pas de sens.

Soyons au moins honnêtes. La classe politicienne doit regarder attentivement à la discrimination qui existe dans le pays. Il faut pouvoir mettre en place des outils convenables pour mesurer la discrimination, et non pas simplement avoir une jolie phrase dans la Constitution sans l'outil pour mesurer la discrimination. Tout cela, je le dis comme étant le numéro 3 d'un gouvernement.

Mais vous, vous n'avez rien fait! 10 ans au pouvoir – accumulation de dégoût ; accumulation de manque de confiance. Tout ce qui intéresse ces gens devant moi, c'est simplement : « On veut être au gouvernement. » Ce n'est pas la solution qui les intéresse. C'est d'être populaire qui les intéresse. Être populaire, c'est facile. Être populaire, c'est la voix du faible. Être populaire, c'est si tu te concentres que sur ça, cela veut dire que tu n'as pas les qualités d'un dirigeant. Quand tu es dirigeant, tu dois prendre des décisions dans les moments les plus difficiles et accepter de te sacrifier pour le bien de ton pays. C'est ça ce gouvernement.

Ce pays ne va pas sombrer. Ce pays va réussir. On va se mettre debout. On va vers un succès, et j'espère que même ceux dans l'opposition vont prier ensemble avec moi que l'île Maurice doit sortir gagnant.

Merci.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Yes, hon. Prime Minister.

(6.43 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, after such a wonderful speech, I wonder what I will have to add further. First of all, let me thank the hon. Members who took part in the debate. I have listened to them carefully. Let me raise some of the points that were raised and answer to them.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition inferred that the powers conferred to the Commissioner of Police – I think the former Leader of the Opposition also said that – is not proportionate, especially as he is appointed on contract by the Prime Minister. You know, I am sure they do not know, maybe some people know but not many.

Professor de Smith was consulted, but he was the architect of the Constitution. He has said in a different book on constitutional law that when you look at Commonwealth countries, former colonies, when they became independent, if you look at their constitution, you will find Mauritius to be completely different. And he gives reasons for that. He speaks about the powers of the Commissioner of Police, the way he is appointed and the way he is independent. We all know Section 71 (3) – the Prime Minister can only give general directions of policy. The Commissioner of Police is completely independent.

In other Commonwealth countries, perhaps many of you do not know this, the Prime Minister or the President can sack the Commissioner of Police whenever he feels he needs to remove him. It is not so in Mauritius. It happened under my own primeministership, I had a divergence of view with the then Commissioner of Police, Mr Dayal. That was a whole procedure. A presidential commission, go through all this to remove a Commissioner of Police. And I am supposed to be responsible for law and order in the country. I have to answer questions. But I cannot remove the Commissioner of Police the way I would have wanted. So, that is something that people should bear in mind.

The Commissioner of Police is completely independent. Section 71(4) is clear. He does not take any direction from anybody. Now, the hon. Leader of the Opposition also criticised the lack of equipment and vehicles. This is a classic, as you say. You hear it every year. Since I have been in politics, I hear this. But perhaps, they do not know that last year we approved and we procured 148 vehicles for the police. 148!

Hon. Quirin asked what is the criteria for determining this curfew and its duration. It is a good, valid question. But I must remind the hon. Member that it is for the Commissioner of Police to decide whether the situation is grave and he has to take measures to ensure public safety and security. When he asked about the implications surrounding a curfew, that is, the provisions which every curfew order allowing the Commissioner of Police to allow certain activities, etc. We said, Madam Speaker, very clearly: for emergency cases, for healthcare and all this, for the airport. There will be exceptions. There were exceptions during the crisis of the coronavirus. People were given permits. It is not something new that we are inventing now.

The other thing – and hon. Mohamed touched on it – two simple amendments. Do you realise, Madam Speaker, that, as he said, we could have had covered the whole island, district by district. But it would have violated the spirit of the law. It is not provided in the law.

When the coronavirus was there, the then government did not use the curfew powers of the police because they found out – probably they were rightly advised – that they cannot use it. So, they went through a different law on health to control the movement of population. At the moment, you cannot. In a way, it is ridiculous. But because nobody, at that time, in 1991 or whatever, anticipated that this could happen simultaneously.

It is a simple amendment to allow if he wants to – or if one day, it is a she – a Commissioner of Police to be able to impose a curfew over the whole island without violating any law whatever. Perhaps people do not know the coronavirus law, even that – if I am not mistaken, Attorney General – is being challenged in front of the Supreme Court. We are waiting judgement for that. Some people think it was illegal! Not us. Some people thought it was illegal. So, to say that he will have to decide on the duration. We cannot say a curfew is going to start today and end tomorrow. It depends on the circumstances.

Views have been expressed also on the potential abuse with the new provisions. There is a saying in English: the proof of the pudding is in the eating. I think every Mauritian should feel reassured the way the Police acted during this curfew. It should comfort everyone. There was no abuse. Those who broke the curfew were arrested. But there was no abuse. Some people seemed to fear that there might be.

Let me also assure the House that the exercise of State's authority must remain within the framework of the law. You have to have a due process, as I mentioned earlier today. This is a balance that we have to maintain.

Some hon. Members have raised concerns about the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Again, it is an Act which is on the statute book. Since 2002, it is there. It has never been declared unconstitutional. We looked at it properly. I think – I cannot remember – it was hon. Uteem, who clearly explained the statute and what it refers to and why it cannot be applied. We have not invented anything. In any case, it is the DPP who will have the last word on whether to sue under the POTA or not.

Madam Speaker, let me also make a fundamental point about the independence of our institutions. The Police are responsible for investigating offences and gathering the relevant evidence. Decisions on prosecution and on the charges rest with the Director of Public Prosecutions. In fact, in the new National Crime Agency, we are strengthening the powers of the DPP. Precisely, because we want to make sure that we have an independent DPP who will do, in all quietness, he can decide whatever he wants to decide. It is not for the executive to dictate anything. This is what a real democracy is, Madam Speaker.

As highlighted by both the hon. Leader of the Opposition and hon. Quirin, we recognise the difficult and dangerous circumstances in which our Police have worked tirelessly. That is why I have asked that they should be given a special allowance for the way they work. Not the allowance that they are giving which is peanuts. We want to give them a proper allowance. They cannot expose themselves day in, day out, just like this without allowance. They will get a special allowance; those who worked during that time. And not just the Police, the SMF and the Firemen as well. Sometimes, we forget the Firemen.

We must recognise, Madam Speaker, that they shouldered great responsibilities and they deserve the support of every Mauritian.

Government, Madam Speaker, is obviously conscious of the social and economic impact of a curfew. We wanted to avoid; if we wanted to go legally and put a curfew over the whole island, we would have had to declare a state of emergency, which we did not, I did not, neither the Cabinet wanted to declare a state of emergency. We have to be very careful when we do.

The concern of the Opposition to the effect that the Government can extend the duration of a curfew for a longer period is not warranted. It is not warranted at all. It stands to logic that no government will like to close the country down for an unduly long period. It is not in our interest to do that. You do that unless it is a last resort that you have to do it. We wanted to avoid this. This is why we brought this amendment.

The other amendment concerns the Rs25,000. Who is going to bother with this? This is why we have increased it. But we have not changed the time. It stays five years as it is.

The other thing I want to say, Madam Speaker, before I finish is that – I think I mentioned the main points – but again, I say, look at the way the Police behaved during the curfew. You know, I always said during the campaign, we do not have a magic wand that we can change the island completely overnight. It is something that will take time. We will have to have patience.

Hon. Mohamed put his finger on it: Character under difficult situation! It is very easy to be popular. I am also the Minister of Finance. You want me to print money and give everybody? I will not. We have to look; we have to be patriots and make sure that this country does not go through the same hell that we went through the last 10 years.

That is why I say: have confidence in the people and have confidence also in the Police, that they will deliver. These are two minor amendments, as I said. One to ensure that we can put a curfew over the whole island without violating any law and the second one is to increase the fine for somebody who breaks the curfew.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, so you commend the Bill.

Hon. Prime Minister, you commend the Bill again to the House.

The Prime Minister: I commend the Bill to the House, Madam Speaker.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

THE POLICE (AMENDMENT) BILL

(No. XXV of 2026)

The Police (Amendment Bill (No. XXV of 2026) was considered and agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with Madam Speaker in the Chair, Madam Speaker reported accordingly.

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Police (Amendment Bill (No. XXV of 2026) was read a third time and passed.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister, adjournment!

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 27 October 2026 at 11.30 a.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned! Yes!

MATTERS RAISED

(6.58 p.m.)

CONSTITUENCY NO.16 – WATER DISTRIBUTION SCHEDULES – DISRUPTION

Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal): Ma requête s'adresse à l'honorable ministre des Utilités publiques. Elle concerne la fourniture d'eau. De nouveaux horaires de distribution d'eau ont été partagés par la CWA et ces nouveaux horaires ne sont malheureusement pas respectés dans plusieurs régions. Pour le numéro 16, des doléances m'ont été rapportées concernant la région de Gautrais, l'Améré, Camp Rouillard, Ramit Lane, Bageerutty, Grannum, Sadally et Allée Brillant.

Ils n'ont pas eu d'eau pendant plusieurs jours et je sais que l'honorable ministre a expliqué qu'il n'y a pas de pluie, mais s'il peut aussi tenir compte du fait que c'est difficile pour ces habitants de comprendre que des régions bénéficient de l'eau à ces horaires annoncés, mais que eux, non. Donc, je lui demanderai de bien vouloir s'assurer que ces régions bénéficient des mêmes horaires de distribution d'eau que les autres régions aux alentours. Merci.

Madam Speaker: Vous avez bien la liste, monsieur le ministre?

The Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr P. Assirvaden): J'ai bien noté le la demande de l'honorable membre. Je ne les ai pas malheureusement, mais je vais prendre la liste des endroits. Je dirais que les horaires prévus par la CWA sont des horaires respectés. Mais nous avons un souci. C'est que nous avions 110 000 m³ d'eau pour la région de Plaine Wilhems. Là, on a que 50 000 m³ par jour pour distribuer. Ceci dit, quand l'eau est distribué, les parties hautes reçoivent en dernier et les parties basses reçoivent l'eau en premier.

Parce que l'eau est lâché à 3h du matin jusqu'à 8h, donc 5h de temps. La quantité d'eau que nous avons, la pression à partir de 6h30 et 7h malheureusement est moindre. La pression est moindre, donc ceux qui sont en hauteur n'arrivent pas malheureusement à avoir l'eau, ils sont pénalisés à partir de 6h30-7h. Mais nous essayons.

La CWA a multiplié ses efforts et pour donner des camions citernes. Je sais que ce n'est pas facile, je sais que ce n'est pas suffisant, mais je dirais que nous avons aussi donné des instructions pour installer 10 réservoirs mobiles dans certaines régions de haute Plaine Wilhems parmi les régions citées par l'honorable membre. Je vais voir avec la CWA si on peut avoir un *valve operation* pour permettre à un moment donné à ceux qui sont au bas d'être servis et juste après donner la pression à certaines régions. Je conçois que ce n'est pas une situation idéale, mais nous faisons je note ce que l'honorable membre dit.

Madam Speaker: Merci. Yes, hon. Beechook!

(7.02 p.m.)

QUEEN VICTORIA & CAMP ITHIER – TAXI SERVICE UNAVAILABILITY & IRREGULARITY

Mr R. Beechook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil): Madame la présidente, ma requête s'adresse à l'honorable ministre des Transports terrestre. C'est plutôt un rappel que

les problèmes de taxi et de transport public perdurent à Queen Victoria, à Camp Ithier: manque de taxi, taxi qui ne travaille plus. Cela fait depuis 2 ans que l'honorable Ramkalawon et moi, sans cesse, nous faisons appel à NLTA pour résoudre ce problème. Il y a des enfants qui doivent aller aux examens, il y a des gens qui doivent aller travailler. Passer un certain heure, notamment en fin d'après-midi, il y a pas de taxi dans ces régions-là. Voilà, il faut trouver une solution. Merci, l'honorable ministre.

The Minister of Land Transport (Mr Osman Mahomed): Indeed, the hon. Member did raise this to me before and I had assured him that I would have a word with Mr Nabheebucus, officer in charge of the NLTA, to expedite for this particular region. But I realised that this has not been done yet. I will talk to him again to expedite on matters.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Yes, everybody is happy. Thank you very much.

At 7.03 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 27 October 2026 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

SHOOTING INCIDENT – MRS E. T – 09 OCTOBER 2026 AT CAMP LEVIEUX – INQUIRY

(No. B/1316) Mr G. Lesjongard (Fifth 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 inquiry initiated into the shooting incident which occurred on 09 October 2026 at Camp Levieux, in the course of which Mrs E. T was injured, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/1311)

NATIONAL ECONOMY – FISCAL DISCIPLINE – PUBLIC DEBT REDUCTION – ECONOMIC GROWTH

(No. B/1317) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the national economy, he will state the –

(a) progress achieved in strengthening fiscal discipline, reducing the public debt-to-GDP ratio and restoring the country's fiscal resilience to date, and

(b) measures being envisaged to ensure that the benefits of economic growth translate into tangible improvements in the purchasing power, real income and standard of living of the citizens.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS BROADCASTING CORPORATION – ALLEGED FRAUD CASES – FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES – INQUIRY

(No. B/1318) 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 –

(a) the nature of the alleged offence, and

(b) where matters stand as to the inquiries initiated thereinto.

(Withdrawn)

ROAD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT – MECHANISMS & PROCEDURES – TRAFFIC ALLEVIATION

(No. B/1319) 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 road traffic management, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the –

(a) mechanisms and procedures in place therefor, particularly, during peak hours, including policies, protocols and procedures applicable in the event of road traffic accidents, vehicle breakdowns or road blockages, and

(b) additional measures being envisaged to improve same and alleviate traffic congestion.

(Withdrawn)

AIR MAURITIUS LTD & AIRPORT HOLDINGS LTD – DISMANTLING – MAURITIUS STOCK EXCHANGE – RELISTING

(No. B/1320) 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 –

(a) dismantling of the said holding company and the reorganisation of the corporate structure thereof to address issues of corporate conflicts and duality of responsibility, and

(b) relisting of Air Mauritius Ltd. on the official market of the Stock Exchange of Mauritius.

(Withdrawn)

GASOIL & DIESEL – COLLECTED TAXES & LEVIES – SUBSIDIES QUANTUM

(No. B/1321) 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 taxes and levies collected on gasoil and diesel, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the total amount collected thereunder for period July to September 2026 and for the corresponding period in 2025, indicating the quantum of subsidies, including on Liquefied Petroleum Gas, disbursed by Government in relation thereto for the said periods.

(Withdrawn)

MRS E. T – GUNSHOT INCIDENT – 09 OCTOBER 2026 – MEASURES

(No. B/1323) 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 gunshot incident of 09 October 2026 in the course of which Mrs E. T was injured, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

(a) the measures taken to assist the said victim, and

(b) whether the said incident has been linked to the subsequent social unrest and, if so, to what extent.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/1311)

MAURITIUS – ECONOMIC & FINANCIAL UNCERTAINTIES – MONETARY EXPANSION

(No. B/1324) 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 uncertainties surrounding the country's economic and financial situation, he will state whether consideration is being given to resort to monetary expansion through public and private borrowing.

(Withdrawn)

EL NIÑO PHENOMENON – IMPACT ASSESSMENT – NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS

(No. B/1326) 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 El Niño phenomenon, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether an assessment of the likely impact thereof on the country has been carried out in respect of rainfall patterns, water availability, agricultural production, food security, public health and extreme weather risks and, if so, state where matters stand regarding the formulation of a national preparedness and response plan thereto.

(Withdrawn)

PUBLIC ORDER INCIDENTS – ARRESTS & CHARGES – INQUIRY

(No. B/1328) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the current public order incidents, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

(a) the number of –
    (i) persons arrested and charges preferred against them, if any, and
    (ii) independent witnesses identified and/or interviewed, and
(b) where matters stand as to the inquiries initiated thereinto and whether further arrests are being contemplated.

(Withdrawn)

UK MISSION (26 SEPT-08 OCT 2026) – OUTCOME & DELEGATION COMPOSITION

(No. B/1332) 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 mission he undertook to the United Kingdom from 26 September to 08 October 2026, he will state the –

(a) names and designations of the persons with whom he had meetings thereat and the outcome of the discussions held, and

(b) composition of the delegation and designation of the members thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MRS E. T – SHOOTING – 09 OCTOBER 2026 – INQUIRY

(No. B/1333) 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 inquiry into the shooting of Mrs E. T on 09 October 2026, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand, indicating the –

(a) starting date thereof, number of officers interdicted and grounds therefor;

(b) circumstances surrounding the shooting, and

(c) number of Police Officers present at the material time and assistance, if any, extended to Mrs E. T.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/1311)

CORPORATE SECTOR – FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2024-2025 & 2025-2026 – SOLIDARITY LEVY INTRODUCTION

(No. B/1334) 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, having regard to the financial performance of the corporate sector, particularly, the banking, insurance, oil distribution, tourism and retail sectors, during financial years 2024–2025 and 2025–2026, he

will state whether consideration will be given for the introduction of a temporary solidarity levy on companies operating therein with the proceeds thereof to be earmarked for specific urgent national priorities.

(Withdrawn)

BRIGADE DES JEUX – OFFICERS, VEHICLE FLEET & CASES

(No. B/1335) 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 Brigade des Jeux, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of –

(a) officers posted thereat to date gender-wise;
(b) vehicles put at the disposal thereof, and
(c) cases dealt with, indicating the number thereof referred to the Financial Crimes Commission.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS POLICE FORCE REFORM – LEGISLATIVE MEASURES – POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

(No. B/1338) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the proposed reform of the Mauritius Police Force, he will state where matters stand, indicating –

(a) the specific legislative measures being envisaged to strengthen police accountability, especially, following the recent incident in which Mrs E. T. was injured, and
(b) whether urgent consideration will be given thereto.

(Withdrawn)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM – PROPOSED REFORM

(No. B/1362) Mr E. Juman (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the proposed reform in the

local government system, he will state where matters stand, indicating whether the implementation thereof is being envisaged prior to or following the forthcoming Village Council elections.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that the reform has reached an advanced stage. The inter-ministerial committee, which I chair, has met on ten occasions. A document containing the proposed reform has been circulated to all members of the committee, including the Attorney General's Office, which is undertaking the necessary legal vetting and drafting work.

Once that exercise is completed, I will convene a final meeting of the inter-ministerial committee to consider the final draft. The proposals will thereafter be submitted to Cabinet for approval before the Bill is introduced in Parliament.

The mandate of the present village councillors will come to an end on 22 November 2026. The law thereafter provides a period of 150 days, up to 21 April 2027, within which the village council elections are to be held.

Parliament already has a heavy legislative programme for the current session with several important Bills scheduled for consideration before the Local Government Bill. The new Local Government Bill will, therefore, be introduced during the next parliamentary session with the objective of having it enacted within the applicable timeframe.

I wish to clarify that my Ministry is responsible for carrying the reform forward towards its legislation. The date of the elections, however, is not decided by my Ministry. It will be determined at the level of the Prime Minister's Office.

ARTIST BILL – PROPOSED INTRODUCTION

(No. B/1364) Mr S. Pierre (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of an Artist Bill in Parliament, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

LA BRASSERIE WASTE TRANSFER STATION – PROPOSED RELOCATION – EIA ASSESSMENT

(No. B/1366) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the Waste Transfer Station at La Brasserie, he will state whether decision for the relocation thereof to La Marie has been taken and, if so, indicate –

(a) the reasons therefor and location of the site identified;
(b) whether any prior environmental, social or technical assessments have been undertaken, and
(c) whether consultations were held with the residents of the locality, the relevant local authorities and other stakeholders in relation thereto and, if so, table the outcome thereof.

Reply: The La Brasserie Transfer Station was constructed in the early 90s on a former open dumpsite and serves the Councils of Vacoas/Phoenix and Curepipe and part of the District Council of Moka.

In 2021, the Ministry of Housing and Lands requested the Solid Waste Management Division of my Ministry to relocate the La Brasserie Transfer Station. It was thus decided to identify a suitable plot of land to construct a modern transfer station. This new station which would be a fully enclosed covered facility and thus no leachate or any odour would emanate from the facility.

I wish to inform the House that, since August 2022, more than eight potential sites were identified by the Ministry of Housing and Lands in the La Marie region and none were retained.

In January 2026, after the construction of the La Vigie-Beaux Songes Link Road, the Ministry of Housing and Lands proposed another plot of land along this stretch which was 400 metres from the nearest inhabited area. However, according to the National Development Strategy, a minimum of 500 metres is required as buffer distance and a new site which is about 620 metres away from the inhabited area has been proposed.

Site visits were carried out in June 2026 with relevant authorities, namely the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the Department of Environment, the Forestry Services, the Ministry of National Infrastructure, the Road Development Authority, the Traffic Management Road Safety Unit, the Land Drainage Authority and the Water Resources Unit and the Municipal Councils of Vacoas/Phoenix and Curepipe. The views of some of the stakeholders are still awaited, namely the Ministry of National Infrastructure and the Road Development

Authority. I wish to point out that my Ministry has received representations from the inhabitants of the regions for the identification of an alternative site.

I wish to highlight that the construction of the new transfer station project is still at the preliminary consultative stage with technical authorities and my Ministry is still in the process of identifying suitable alternative sites. No decision has yet been reached.

As regards parts (b) and (c) of the question, once a suitable site is finalised with the technical authorities, an Environmental Impact Assessment report will be prepared in accordance with Section 30 (1) (b) of the Environment Act and necessary consultations will be held accordingly.

NEW VACOAS URBAN TERMINAL – PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION – COMPREHENSIVE REASSESSMENT

(No. B/1369) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the proposed construction of the New Vacoas Urban Terminal, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand regarding the comprehensive reassessment thereof, indicating whether same is still being contemplated and, if so –

(a) where matters stand regarding site allocation, feasibility studies, designs and statutory approvals, and

(b) whether an Environmental Impact Assessment and a Traffic Impact Assessment have been carried out.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that the Vacoas Urban Terminal project is going ahead and now has reached an advanced stage of preparation.

As I informed the House in reply to PQ B/431 of 21 April 2026, the Request for Proposals launched in February 2024 did not result in the selection of any promoter. No letter of award was issued and no contract was signed.

Government subsequently reviewed the concept and implementation model of all urban terminals, taking into account the experience of the Victoria Urban Terminal, where three floors still remain unoccupied. We will not repeat that experience. Our objective is to ensure that the Vacoas project is properly planned, responsive to the actual needs of our traders and the local community and it must be financially sustainable from the outset.

The answer is yes. The project is on course. On 22 July 2026, I chaired a meeting with Members of the National Assembly of the region, the Deputy Mayor, Councillors and

representatives of the Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix. The Council was requested to consult the owners and lessees concerned and to submit its requirements.

A further meeting was subsequently held under the chairpersonship of His Worship the Mayor, in the presence of elected Members of the region, to consider those requirements. Following these consultations, my Ministry established a Technical Committee comprising the relevant Ministries, authorities and the Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix to finalise the project requirements and prepare the new Request for Proposals.

The Technical Committee has substantially advanced its work. The project requirements have been defined, the proposed site configuration is being finalised, and the new Request for Proposals is at the final stage of preparation. The next major step will be the launch of the international open bidding exercise.

With regard to part (a), I am placing in the Library of the National Assembly the relevant site locations for the information of the House.

The project will be implemented as a Public-Private Partnership under a Design, Build and Operate model. Under this arrangement, the successful bidder will be responsible to undertake all feasibility studies and prepare the detailed designs, construct and operate the terminal, and obtain all requisite statutory clearances and approvals.

Bidders will be required to demonstrate the necessary financial capacity, technical expertise and professional competence to undertake a project of this nature. Proposals will be evaluated strictly in accordance with the prescribed marking scheme and procurement requirements.

With regard to part (b) of the question, a Traffic Impact Assessment can only be carried out on the basis of a final design. It will therefore be undertaken by the successful bidder, who will also have to obtain the clearances of the Road Development Authority and the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit for access arrangements and road works.

As regards the Environmental Impact Assessment, my Ministry has consulted the Ministry of Environment and its determination is awaited. If an EIA licence is required, the successful bidder will have to obtain it before the relevant works proceed.

The project has, therefore, moved from the review and consultation stage to the final preparation of the procurement exercise. Government will deliver a terminal that is well planned, fully compliant and financially sustainable for the people of Vacoas-Phoenix.

MOLASSES - SALE - GENERATED REVENUE

(No. B/1371) Mr R. Beechook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the revenue generated from the sale of molasses over the past financial year, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain the detailed breakdown of the distribution thereof by category of stakeholder, indicating the methodology and formula used for the computation of the amount payable thereto.

(Withdrawn)

LA LOUISE, QUATRE BORNES – FLOOD ALLEVIATION WORKS – FUNDING & WORKS TIME FRAME

(No. B/1372) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the proposed implementation of flood alleviation works at La Louise in Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand, indicating –

(a) whether the necessary approvals and funding have been secured therefor, and
(b) the expected start and completion dates thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MARE AUX VACOAS RESERVOIR – BATHYMETRIC SURVEY & GEOLOGICAL, GEOTECHNICAL & SEEPAGE ASSESSMENTS

(No. B/1373) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Mare aux Vacoas reservoir, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information regarding –

(a) when the last bathymetric survey thereof was conducted, indicating the extent of sediment accumulation and reduction in the usable storage capacity thereof, and
(b) whether geological, geotechnical and seepage assessments of the bed and foundations thereof were undertaken and, if so, when, which company carried out same, costs incurred and findings and recommendations thereof.

(Withdrawn)

PLEASURE CRAFT LICENCES – ISSUANCE & RENEWAL

(No. B/1374) Mr S. Pierre (Third Member for Stanley & Rose-Hill) asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to Pleasure Craft Licences, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tourism Authority, information as to –

(a) whether applications therefor are still being entertained, and

(b) the current waiting time for the processing and issuance of new licences and renewals thereof.

(Withdrawn)

RICHE MARE, CENTRE DE FLACQ – RECURRENT FLOODING – REMEDIAL MEASURES

(No. B/1375) Mr R. Beechook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the recurrent flooding occurring along Hallooman and Tagore Roads, in Riche Mare, Centre de Flacq, during heavy rainfalls, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Land Drainage Authority, information as to the remedial measures being envisaged.

(Withdrawn)

NHDC – SYNDIC SYSTEM – PROPOSED REFORM

(No. B/1376) Mr S. Pierre (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the proposed reform of the Syndic system for National Housing Development Co. Ltd. housing estates, he will state where matters stand, indicating whether he is aware that following the letter of information issued to the residents concerned in June 2026 therefor, existing syndics in several such housing estates have reportedly ceased/reduced the provision of essential maintenance and management services and, if so, indicate the measures being envisaged.

(Withdrawn)

WATER TANK & DOMESTIC WATER PUMP GRANT SCHEME – APPLICATIONS & PROCESSING TIME

(No. B/1377) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the new Water Tank and Domestic Water Pump Grant Scheme, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to –

(a) the number of applications received thereunder to date;

(b) whether applications may be submitted online and, if so, indicate the platform therefor, and

(c) the average processing time thereof, from submission to approval and the issuance of the voucher.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/1340)

WORLD KNITS LTD – RECEIVERSHIP – EMPLOYEES SUPPORT

(No. B/1379) Mr G. P. Venkatasami (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to World Knits Ltd and associated companies under receivership, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

(a) the number of Mauritian and foreign employees affected, indicating the measures taken to –

(i) safeguard their rights and welfare, and

(ii) provide financial support, placement opportunities/ alternative employment thereto, and

(b) whether consultations have been held with the receiver and relevant authorities to ensure full compliance with applicable labour laws.

(Withdrawn)

ANSE LA RAIE & GRAND GAUBE – PUBLIC BEACHES – FACILITIES UPGRADE

(No. B/1380) 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 Anse la Raie and Grand Gaube public beaches, he will state whether consideration will be given for the upgrading of the facilities thereat, including the provision of additional amenities and recreational facilities thereat.

(Withdrawn)

SUGAR-SWEETENED PRODUCTS – EXCISE DUTY INCREASE – IMPLICATIONS

(No. B/1381) Mr S. Pierre (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the budgetary measure consisting of increasing excise duty on the sugar content of sugar-sweetened products, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether joint technical meetings have been held between relevant stakeholders and the Ministry to discuss the implications thereof and, if so, indicate where matters stand in addressing the concerns raised.

(Withdrawn)

OUTLINE PLANNING SCHEME – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT MAP – REVISION

(No. B/1382) Mr R. Beechook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Outline Planning Scheme, he will state whether consideration will be given for a comprehensive revision thereof, particularly, the Development Management Map, with a view to ensuring equitable and sustainable zoning policies that take into account the specific needs and realities of both urban and rural areas.

(Withdrawn)

BOREHOLES – DRILLING – PERMITS ISSUED

(No. B/1383) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the boreholes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of permits issued for the drilling thereof to date, indicating in each case, the –

(a) name of permit holder;
(b) date of issue;
(c) location where same is to be drilled, and
(d) purpose for which same was granted.

Reply: I am informed by the Water Resources Commission that as at date, 535 boreholes have been drilled.

I am placing in the Library of the National Assembly information regarding name of permit holder, date of issue, location, and purpose for which same was granted as follows –

(a) 393 private boreholes in operations by private owners;

(b) 113 private boreholes that are not in operation, and

(c) 29 boreholes that have been drilled by the CWA and WRC for period 2023 to 2026.

CONSTITUENCY NO. 6 – FLOODING ISSUES – DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE

(No. B/1384) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the drainage infrastructure at Fond du Sac, Grand Baie and Grand Gaube, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of new drains earmarked for construction during the current financial year, indicating –

(a) the locations thereof and the implementation timeframe therefor, and

(b) whether the proposed works are expected to adequately address the flooding problems in the high-risk areas thereof.

(Withdrawn)

FLIC EN FLAC TO LE MORNE – ELECTRICITY SUPPLY – HOUSEHOLDS & HOTELS CONSUMPTION

(No. B/1385) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to electricity supply in the coastal region extending from Flic en Flac to Le Morne, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to –

(a) the number of –

(i) households, and

(ii) hotels connected to the grid thereat, indicating the total consumption thereof in megawatts, and

(b) whether provision has been made to meet the anticipated increase in electricity demand for the forthcoming summer season on account of the El Niño phenomenon.

(Withdrawn)

WATER SHORTAGE – RESERVOIR CAPACITY – CONTINGENCY MEASURES

(No. B/1386) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to water supply,

he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, for each reservoir, the –

(a) current storage level expressed as a percentage of the capacity thereof;

(b) critical level thereof at which same will no longer be possible and the projected date on which the said level is expected to be reached, assuming no further rainfalls, and

(c) contingency measures, if any, being envisaged.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/1352)

BLUP – ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENT – REVIEW OF PROCEDURES

(No. A/81) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Building and Land Use Permit, he will state whether consideration will be given for a review of the procedures governing the granting thereof to include delegation of the responsibility for the accreditation thereof to accredited land and building surveyors and environmental specialists.

Reply: Questions A/81 and A/83 are being replied together as they relate to the same subject matter.

Local Authorities remain the principal statutory bodies responsible for validating development projects. In this regard, a Building and Land Use Permit (BLUP) Guide is in place, which was last reviewed in 2018. The Guide provides prospective developers with guidance on the preparation and submission of BLUP applications, as well as the procedures involved in their assessment and determination.

The hon. Member may wish to note that Land Surveyors and Environmental Specialists are already included in the process governing the assessment and granting of BLUPs, pursuant to Section 3(2) of the Cadastral Survey Act 2011 and the Environment Act 2024, respectively.

It is further to be noted that the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change has informed that, for any project not specified in the Sixth Schedule to the Environment Act 2024, Local Authorities may refer the matter to its Ministry for its views and comments.

Furthermore, for any project specified in the Sixth Schedule to the Environment Act 2024, the developer must apply for a Preliminary Environmental Report, an Environmental Impact Assessment or a Strategic Environmental Assessment, as applicable, before applying for a BLUP.

In view of the above, the introduction of an accreditation requirement for Land and Building Surveyors and Environmental Specialists would not be necessary, as such a requirement could further delay the BLUP approval process. This is particularly relevant given that Section 117(7) of the Local Government Act 2011 stipulates that a BLUP must be granted within 14 working days from the date of application. However, in practice, this prescribed timeframe is often not respected, as the relevant clearances from certain Ministries and Departments are not always obtained in time to enable Local Authorities to grant the BLUP.

The hon. Member may further wish to note that the Ministry of Local Government is currently working with the Economic Development Board on streamlining the existing procedures, which are already lengthy, with a view to ensuring that BLUPs are granted within a reasonable timeframe.

With regard to part (a) of Parliamentary Question A/83, I am informed by the Geotechnical Unit, which falls under the ambit of the Ministry of National Infrastructure, that for any development proposals on slopes exceeding 20%, a Geotechnical Report from a qualified professional is required. This enables the assessment of the slope stability, geological and hydrological conditions, ground water influences, as well as, constraints.

All developments on sloping terrain are assessed in accordance with the provisions of the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG 9) for Development on Sloping Sites.

With regard to water management and drainage plan, I am informed that in line with the Land Drainage Masterplan, applicants must submit a detailed stormwater management and drainage plan which needs to be cleared by the Land Drainage Authority.

Additionally, the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change has apprised that for any development exceeding 20% slope, an Environment Impact Assessment is required prior to a BLUP.

As regards architectural layouts, all BLUP applications must include detailed architectural plans, site layouts and contour intervals.

ALMA RESERVOIR – LIMITED STORAGE CAPACITY – POTABLE WATER SOURCES

(No. A/82) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to water supply, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to

whether consideration will be given to identifying and tapping other viable sources of potable water to supplement the Alma Reservoir, having regard to its limited storage capacity and dependence on the Mare aux Vacoas Reservoir, so as to ensure an adequate water supply to all villages served by its network.

Reply: I am informed by the Central Water Authority that measures have already been taken while others are under way to mobilise additional water resources and increase storage capacity for the Alma supply system.

The regions of Alma, L'Espérance, L'Avenir, Ripailles, Nouvelle Découverte, Quartier Militaire and surrounding localities are served primarily through the Alma and Alma Hill reservoirs. The Alma Reservoir, which has a capacity of 960 m^3, receives water from La Marie Water Treatment Plant, Alma borehole and two CPF at Valetta and Dagotière.

I am further informed that the following measures have been implemented or are in progress to reinforce supply to the Alma network and the localities concerned –

(i) a new reservoir with a storage capacity of 3,000 m^3 has been commissioned and is in service, and

(ii) the L'Avenir CPF has been commissioned and supplies the L'Avenir area with 1,000 m^3 of water per day from Riviére Profonde.

In parallel, the CWA is mobilising additional water resources for the Côte d'Or distribution system through CPF and drilling of boreholes which will reduce the volume of water drawn by that system from La Marie Water Treatment Plant, thus allowing the water made available to be redirected to the Alma Reservoir system.

BLUP – MOUNTAIN SLOPES PROJECTS – GEOTECHNICAL REPORT, DRAINAGE PLAN, EIA REPORT & ARCHITECTURAL LAYOUT

(No. A/83) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the issue of Building and Land Use Permit for construction projects on mountain slopes, he will state whether consideration will be given for applicants to be required to submit –

(a) a geotechnical report;

(b) a water management and drainage plan;

(c) an Environment Impact Assessment report, and

(d) an architectural layout, having regard to the risks of erosion, flooding and landslides associated therewith.

(Vide reply to PQ A/81)