No. 23 of 2026

REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD) (UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 14 JULY 2026

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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. 23 of 2026

Sitting of Tuesday 14 July 2026

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis, at 11.30 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

Ministry of Local Government

(a) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix 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 Grand Port for the year ended 30 June 2025. (In Original)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

BUDGET SPEECH 2026/2027 – CHANGES/POLICY REVERSALS – REVISED MACROECONOMIC & FISCAL FRAMEWORK

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr G. Lesjongard) *(by Private Notice)* asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in the light of the changes or policy reversals in relation to the measures announced in the 2026/2027 Budget Speech, he will state whether a revised macroeconomic and fiscal framework will be tabled and explain how such changes will be reconciled with the sum appropriated in the Appropriation (2026-2027) Act.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, as the House is aware, the Budget contains more than 500 measures and only one of these measures is being reversed, because in the question, it says 'policy reversals'. Only one of these measures is being reversed. It is quite normal that there may be budgetary measures every year that do not get to be implemented or are modified. This is sometimes due to conjunctural situations or deliberate policy actions. The impact on the budget of such occurrences is generally summed up in the budget outturn at the end of the fiscal year.

Madam Speaker, Government has decided not to go ahead with the means test in the pension reform announced in the Budget of 2026-2027. In the macroeconomic and fiscal framework, it was initially estimated that the budget deficit would be 3.7% and the public sector debt would be 85.6% of GDP.

With the removal of the means test, it is estimated that there will be an additional spending of Rs6.2 billion on State Age Pension which represents 0.7% of GDP for the period January 2027 to June 2027. The full year impact would have been more than 1.5% of GDP if there were no mitigation measures that are being implemented.

As I stated, Madam Speaker, in my reply to the Private Notice Question on 25 June 2026, Government has already initiated a number of measures to make up for the higher expenditure expected from the removal of the means testing for the State Age Pension and bring down the budget deficit and public sector debt. These include –

First, a Committee, chaired by the Secretary to the Cabinet, has been established to look into the reprioritisation of the implementation of the capital projects, while ensuring that economic growth is not adversely affected. The Committee has already started its work.

Second, another Committee has been set up at the level of the Ministry of Finance, chaired by a Deputy Financial Secretary, to examine the expenditure of each Ministry and to ensure that we act on the findings of the Director of Audit Report. A number of meetings have already been held with accounting officers of several Ministries, and areas where expenditure could be rationalised are being identified.

Third, I will myself chair a Steering Committee on Public Sector Efficiency to identify areas of duplication, inefficiency and wastage. Every Ministry and Department will have to submit to that Committee a concrete plan to improve efficiency without compromising delivery service.

Fourth, the Ministry of Finance has set up a High-Level Committee to fundamentally review our overall tax system with a view to enhancing its fairness, efficiency and international competitiveness. The Committee, comprising tax specialists supported by the IMF and other international experts, including Dr. Philip Baker, a renowned authority on taxation, who is also currently working with the MRA; they will start work next month. We expect to implement the measures shortly upon completion of the review exercise and we can expect a positive impact on revenues.

Fifth, the Ministry of Finance is exploring the disposal of selected non-strategic assets, as well as the potential listing of certain State-owned enterprises on the stock exchange, with a view to unlocking value and monetising its shareholdings.

Sixth, with regard to the CSG contributions, to facilitate a smooth transition, consideration will be given to continuing to credit part of the CSG contributions to the Consolidated Fund for a limited period, before this practice is phased out entirely.

Madam Speaker, as the House may be aware, the IMF carried out its annual Article IV Consultation mission to Mauritius in April and May of this year, that is, before the presentation of the Budget. The Ministry of Finance has been in continuous discussion with the IMF after the presentation of the Budget. In a spirit of transparency, which characterises

this Government, the IMF has been fully briefed on the fiscal impact and the measures being taken to mitigate the impact on the budget. The Executive Board of the IMF has already approved the Article IV Consultation Staff report and the report will be released, I believe, shortly.

Moody's has also been briefed on the budget and the fiscal policy stance of Government. In fact, I must state, Madam Speaker, that Moody's has released an Issuer Comment on 26 June 2026 whereby they noted, and I quote –

"fiscal consolidation progresses under 2027 Budget, risks of policy drift persist".

The full credit rating assessment is expected in 6 months' time.

Madam Speaker, with regard to whether a revised macroeconomic and fiscal framework will be tabled, let me reiterate that the budget process already provides for a budget outturn at the end of the fiscal year which accounts fully for such circumstances.

As the House is aware, the Appropriation Act 2027 has been approved wherein a total sum of Rs232.4 billion has been voted.

In the Performance Based Budget Estimates 2026-2027, an amount of –

(a) Rs30.1 billion has been provided for payment of the Basic Retirement Pension for the period July to December 2026, and

(b) Rs20.5 billion has been earmarked for payment of the State Age Pension for the period January to June 2027.

With the removal of the means test, the exact amount that will be required for payment of the State Age Pension is not known at this stage because we do not know the exact number of future pensioners who will elect to draw their pension at the age of 60.

The budget process also provides for the presentation of a Supplementary Appropriation Bill, if required, in line with the provisions of section 105 of the Constitution under any head of expenditure. As such, there is no need for a change in the total appropriation.

Madam Speaker: Your first supplementary, Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, before I start my supplementary questions, let me wish the hon. Prime Minister a happy birthday.

Now, with regard to the forthcoming Finance Bill, the hon. Prime Minister is aware that this House voted the Appropriation Act based on a specific set of fiscal assumptions. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether through the forthcoming Finance Bill, this House is being asked to legislate for a completely different budget, thereby rendering the original parliamentary scrutiny of the Appropriation Bill a mere rubber stamp exercise?

The Prime Minister: I answered that question last time, Madam Speaker. You give a ruling on this.

There are three ways when you have additional expenses. Again, I must stress that there is only one change in the budget, that is, the means test. There are three ways of doing this. One is from the contingency and reserves – I think you should know this – or else savings during the year. For example, capital budget is never 100% spent. It depends. It is roughly around 70%. Thirdly, there will be a Supplementary Appropriation Bill, if need be.

Madam Speaker: Second question!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, at paragraph 283 of the Appropriation Bill, Madam Speaker, Government has included the receipts of the Chagos deal. *Et il faut le reconnaître, cela a gonflé les revenus de l'État*. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House why this sum has again been included in this year's budget, when his Government has failed to finalise the deal with the UK Government?

The Prime Minister: We did not finalise. An agreement has been signed with the UK, to remind you.

(Interruptions)

An agreement has been signed.

Madam Speaker: Let him answer!

The Prime Minister: They have not gone through the process in the UK. We are very confident, Madam Speaker, that this will happen.

Madam Speaker: Third question!

Mr Lesjongard: I will put the question again. Will the hon. Prime Minister circulate another Appropriation Bill or will Government present a supplementary budget or revised Estimates to the House rather than attempting to bury these fiscal alterations within the forthcoming Finance Bill?

The Prime Minister: I just explained, Madam Speaker. There are three ways of doing this, and I just gave the three ways of how it can be done.

Madam Speaker: Okay, he chose one way.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, there are a lot of confusions concerning the pension reforms. Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm to this House, today, what will be the age of eligibility of the BRP as at 01 September 2029?

The Prime Minister: I have said many times that we have…

Madam Speaker: 2029?

Mr Lesjongard: 2029.

The Prime Minister: We have returned it to the age of 60. That was in the Budget. It is not a new measure. It was in the Budget.

Mr Lesjongard: Can he confirm it?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I just said it.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, there is a discrimination or injustice on the age of eligibility for the beneficiaries of the BRP. Will Government back pay those who did not benefit their pension due to the 2025-2026 Budget measure?

The Prime Minister: I am not quite sure what back pay you want me to implement. Which back pay?

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker…

Madam Speaker: Please explain.

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, because when they have brought forward those reforms, *ces gens-là n'ont pas pu avoir la pension qu'ils auraient dû avoir*.

The Prime Minister: Pas vrai.

Mr Lesjongard: So, *est-ce que l'État va les rembourser*?

The Prime Minister: Actually, what he is saying is not true, Madam Speaker. What we have done, we have given the option now. There is an option of you taking your pension at the age of 60.

Mr Lesjongard: Now. I am talking about the year 2025-2026 measure, Madam Speaker.

Now, I refer to the table that was presented during the press conference of hon. Subron. The sum of Rs13,107 has been announced for a 60-year-old person to benefit this amount in 2029, whereas a 60-year-old person will benefit an amount of Rs14,490 in September 2026. Do you find that normal, hon. Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: It is normal in the sense that you have a sliding scale. If you want to take that option, to take your pension at the age of 60, obviously, you will have a slightly reduced pension because you are taking it five years earlier. That is all.

Mr Lesjongard: It is not all! Somebody will have Rs13,107 in 2029 whereas somebody in September of this year, will have Rs14,419. Now, can the hon. Prime Minister…

The Prime Minister: Let me explain. That is exactly the transition period. You have opted to take the pension earlier, you get a sum which is Rs14,490 in September 2026 and there is a sliding scale.

Mr Lesjongard: So, you will get a lesser amount in three years' time.

Madam Speaker: Put your question!

Mr Lesjongard: Now, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether he has been apprised of the massive legitimate outcry of citizens against his pension reforms, as

demonstrated publicly this past Saturday? Will Government backpedal completely on the pension reforms altogether?

The Prime Minister: There is no question of doing that. Madam Speaker, we all know, and they know, that the Basic Retirement Pension is unsustainable in its actual form. Now, they are promising; if ever they come back, they will continue on the same path of unsustainability, which brought the country in the financial abyss we find ourselves today.

Now, I cannot understand. They know it is unsustainable, but they want no reform. They are against means testing. So, the question is: How will they pay? They will increase VAT on everyone? That is a possibility. They can do it. They will increase taxes and further penalise the middle class? They will make health not free anymore? They will start cutting?

You know, the budget for health is over Rs18 billion at the moment, and it will increase. That of education Rs23 billion. Where will you cut the cost?

Madam Speaker: Your next question, yes!

Mr Lesjongard: Let me put a direct question to the hon. Prime Minister then. The Alliance du Changement promised an old age pension of Rs21,500. If now the hon. Prime Minister maintains that the previous system was known to be unsustainable, then, on what grounds, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister, was this specific figure of Rs21,500 promised to the nation?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, unfortunately, in Mauritius, it is not like in the UK. In the UK, the Opposition is given all the figures of what is being done. Here, we do not do this. Okay.

Now, who knew at the time? I do not know whether you knew – you were in Cabinet – that the monthly interest payment on the debt is actually Rs2.5 billion? Now, it will be more. And that is without capital payment. Interest payment in total per year for the financial year 2026-2027 will be Rs30.1 billion. On that, you have the interest which you have to pay, plus the capital.

Madam Speaker: Next question!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, thank you.

Will the hon. Prime Minister confirm whether he intends to make the determination of SAP increases binding by law requiring a majority in Parliament, as recommended by the Committee of Experts?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, every measure comes to the House to be voted.

Madam Speaker: Next question!

Mr Lesjongard: He has not replied to my question, Madam Speaker.

The Prime Minister: I did!

Mr Lesjongard: Earlier, the hon. Prime Minister stated that he has set up a committee to explore the possibility of disposal of selected non-strategic assets. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House which assets have been identified and whether workers will be laid off when those assets will be disposed?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, if you listen to them, they want to do nothing, leave things as they are, and continue the mess that they put this country into. I explained that there is a committee which is looking at what assets we could possibly dispose of.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Your friend is asking? Okay, carry on!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: I am just looking at the time.

Mr Lesjongard: Now, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will confirm that by materially altering this year's budget after the Appropriation Act has been passed without providing the House with a revised fiscal framework, he has compromised the transparency of the budgetary process and the confidence of this House in the Government's fiscal management?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I explained at the very beginning that in every budget, it happens that you decide to change a policy sometimes because of the conjunctural situation, or you decide to deliberate policy action that you want to change. That happens.

So, I have explained such occurrences generally sum up in the budget outturn at the end of the fiscal year. I do not know why you have asked the question again.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Hon. A. Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

May I ask the hon. Prime Minister with regard to the budget, the sums appropriated for the payment of the pension for this financial year 2026-2027. You see from the appropriation, there was Rs30 billion for the BRP to phase out and as from January next year, Rs20 billion for the SAP under the means testing. May I know the Rs20 billion that was budgeted, how many persons, what percentage of those eligible were estimated to take their retirement pension at the age of 60?

The Prime Minister: As I explained, Madam Speaker, we cannot. We cannot. Maybe everybody will want to take their pension at 60. We do not know at this stage.

Mr A. Duval: It is. May I clarify?

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr A. Duval: That is the question. There was an estimate. It was based on Rs20 billion. So, what is the estimate now? That is the question. You have done it for this financial year. What is the estimate now that everybody is surely going to take it at 60? How much sums? What is the shortfall?

Madam Speaker: No, this is not what the hon. Prime Minister said. In any case, it is an estimate. Hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: I just explained to you. You keep asking the same question and you will get the same answer.

Mr A. Duval: There was an estimate of Rs20 billion for the SAP. If you use that same logic, what would be the estimate for now? This is a simple question.

The Prime Minister: We cannot say because we do not know how many people will actually opt for the 60 years budget. That is the problem.

Madam Speaker: Okay, you want a last question?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, a last question, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, all major trade unions have stated that the next move, hon. Prime Minister, will be a nationwide general strike in the country. Now, knowing well that this will paralyse our economy and disrupt essential services of this country, will the hon. Prime Minister consider suspending the Finance Bill, first, and engage in genuine tripartite social dialogue? Or is he prepared, Madam Speaker, to plunge the country into economic paralysis to protect his pride?

Madam Speaker: Do not impute motives!

Mr Lesjongard: And admitting his original budget was fundamentally flawed, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: No, no, no! Do not impute motives!

You are not allowed to impute motives!

An hon. Member: Withdraw!

Mr Lesjongard: Withdraw what?

Madam Speaker: 'His pride'. That is imputing motives.

The Prime Minister: First of all, I did not hear the union say that they want to suspend the Finance Bill. You are saying that. I did not hear the union say that. Secondly, there will be no change from what I have said. And that is it!

Mr Jhummun: MSM! Agent MSM!

Madam Speaker: Okay. Thank you very much, everyone. Now, we go to questions.

(Interruptions)

Questions! PMQT, please!

(Interruptions)

I do not understand this. You kept more or less quiet all this time. Try and not interrupt all the time, please, hon. Jhummun!

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhummun: *Kinn arive la*?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Now, I am trying to speak.

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

Hon. Babajee!

MR G.M. – FCC INQUIRY – ALLEGED MONEY LAUNDERING OFFENCE

(No. B/1017) 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 inquiry initiated by the Financial Crimes Commission in February 2026 against one Mr G.M. in connection with an alleged money laundering offence, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Financial Crimes Commission that the investigation into the case of alleged money laundering in dangerous drugs related cases involving Mr G.M, was, in fact, initiated in September of last year.

On 26 February 2026, the Commission carried out a search operation at the residence of Mr G.M. in Petite Rivière and seized a sum of Rs1,074,725 in cash and six vehicles, and therefore, proceeded to arrest him.

On 27 February 2026, a provisional charge of money laundering was lodged before the District Court of Bambous against Mr G.M., and he was remanded to police cell.

On 05 March 2026, Mr G.M. was released on bail upon furnishing two sureties amounting to Rs500,000 and entered into a recognizance of Rs3,000,000.

Madam Speaker, the Financial Crimes Commission is pursuing its investigation into the money laundering case, financing of drug dealing and asset recovery**.**

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Yes, supplementary!

Mr Babajee: Yes. Thank you. According to my information, Madam Speaker, there is a small team in Petite Rivière village, especially the family members of the said Mr G.M., they have a fleet of transport and they are supplying...

Madam Speaker: Come with your question, please.

Mr Babajee: ...supplying hard drugs in the west.

My question is: will the hon. Prime Minister assure the House that there is no cover-up in the same investigation, and whether there will be more presence of the ADSU in the west, in that particular area?

Madam Speaker: In that area?

Mr Babajee: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: We will take very harsh measures if there are interventions. There are no interventions. We are not living in the MSM period where intervention was happening all the time. With this Government, no intervention by whomever here!

Secondly, ADSU has already increased its patrol in that area.

Madam Speaker: Patrol in that area.

Yes, hon. Baboolall!

PLASTIC BOTTLED PRODUCTS – EXCISE DUTY – ESTIMATED REVENUE COLLECTION

(No. B/1018) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the extension of the Rs 2 excise duty on PET beverage bottles to all plastic bottled product as from October 2026, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the expected estimated revenue collection therefrom and estimated impact thereof on the cost of everyday plastic bottled household products and state whether –

(a) the said revenue will be remitted in an environment fund, and

(b) any scheme is being envisaged to support local manufacturers transitioning to biodegradable/recyclable bottling material.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, Mauritius, being a Small Island Developing State, we are vulnerable to environmental impacts and climate change. One major source of environmental pollution is plastic pollution, which is increasingly evident in public spaces, landfill sites and our coastal and marine ecosystems with the associated impact on biodiversity, fisheries, tourism and public health.

The flooding incidents which Mauritius has faced have clearly shown the significant amount of plastic waste that has accumulated in our environment and has been carried through drains and waterways. Our plastic waste is composed predominantly of plastic bottles and plastic food packaging.

There is growing concern, Madam Speaker, about the footprints of plastic pollution. Research has shown that plastic pollution –

i. affects human health through the ingestion of petroleum-based microplastics found in drinking water and food;

ii. harms ecosystems by reducing soil quality and contaminating the freshwater and marine habitats, and

iii. causes injury through ingestion and entanglement, reduced reproduction and death of marine and terrestrial animals.

According to the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, the total waste generation in Mauritius is estimated at 518,300 tonnes. Out of this, approximately 14%, that is, around 72,600 tonnes is plastic, and only some 2,900 tonnes are collected by registered recyclers and exporters.

Immediate action towards the elimination of plastic is required to minimise damage to human health, marine life and ecosystems.

Madam Speaker, in the Budget Speech, I announced the extension of the current excise duty of Rs2 levied per PET bottle containing water or soft drinks to plastic bottles containing other goods as from 01 October 2026. The objective of this measure is to primarily encourage more environment-friendly consumption and manufacturing.

However, Madam Speaker, we are conscious that the extension cannot be applied to all plastic bottles containing goods due to the potential impact of this measure on the cost of essential products and the non-availability of alternatives. Accordingly, the excise duty will not apply to 38 categories of products, including milk products, infant food, edible oils, margarine and butter, spices, honey, prepared vegetables, juices, baby products and pharmaceutical products.

The expected revenue collection from the extension of the Rs2 excise duty to plastic bottles is Rs135 million for the Financial Year 2026-27.

As regards part (a) of the question, the additional revenue from the extension of the excise duty will be remitted to the Consolidated Fund.

The House may wish to note that there is already a Climate and Sustainability Fund to support national initiatives to protect, manage and invest and as well as restore our natural ecosystems and combat the effects of climate change. For the Financial Year 2026-2027, Government will transfer Rs2.5 billion from the Consolidated Fund to the Climate and Sustainability Fund to finance various projects, schemes and programmes in connection with adaptation and mitigation measures to address climate change.

In addition, an amount of Rs3.5 billion has been earmarked in the Consolidated Fund to finance various projects and programmes under different ministries for environmental protection.

Concerning part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that there is presently a scheme operated by the Mauritius Revenue Authority which provides for a financial incentive to be granted to exporters and local recyclers of waste PET bottles to encourage the removal of waste plastic bottles from the waste stream. Under this scheme, exporters of waste PET bottles are refunded an amount of Rs15 per kg of waste PET bottles exported, and local recyclers an amount of Rs30 per kg of waste PET bottle which are recycled locally.

Given that the excise duty will be extended to cover plastic bottles, the refund scheme will also be extended to cover waste plastic bottles to be exported or recycled, whether they are subject to excise duty or not.

Madam Speaker, there are other initiatives to support local manufacturers and recyclers which are being implemented by the Ministry of Environment. This includes the implementation of recommendations of a 10-year Roadmap for a Plastic Pollution-Free Mauritius through –

i. the conduct of a baseline study on the types of plastic products that can be recycled;

ii. the establishment of technical specifications and national standards for recycled plastic to ensure safety, functionality and quality, and

iii. the provision of training to recyclers and local authorities on upgraded sorting, contamination, control and safety measures.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Alright. Hon. Beechook!

FAKE MAURITIAN PASSPORT – DETECTED/REPORTED CASES

(No. B/1019) Mr R. Beechook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Mauritian passport, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Passport and Immigration Office, information as to the number of detected or reported cases of fake passports in Mauritius and abroad, respectively, over the past five years, indicating in each case, the nationality of the holder thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that 81 cases of fake Mauritian passports were reported on 01 January 2021 to 09 July 2026, out of which two have been reported in Mauritius and 79 abroad.

Of the 79 cases reported by the foreign authorities, the nationalities of only 21 holders of the fake passports have been communicated to the Passport and Immigration Office. The two cases reported in Mauritius involve two Nigerians who have been arrested and the cases are under investigation.

I am tabling the details of the nationalities of the 23 holders of the fake Mauritian passports.

Madam Speaker, the existing format of the Mauritian passport is in existence since 2005. Government will be introducing the biometric passport, also known as e-passport, which will be equipped with advanced encryption and anti-tampering mechanism to facilitate the verification of the identity of the passport holder.

Funds have been provided for in the budget of this year for the biometric passports. My Office has already engaged with Singaporean Cooperation Enterprise under the existing Memorandum of Understanding for consultancy services on the e-passport project. The Consultant will provide quality assurance and technical advisory services.

To complement the introduction of biometric passports, my Office is also working on a digital Border Management System to strengthen border security as well as to expedite the immigration clearances of passengers which will contribute to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of our airport. I mentioned this last time. One component of the System will include the e-gates which complements the biometric passport in its reading to confirm that the person presenting the passport is actually the legitimate holder of that passport.

Madam Speaker: Yes. Do you have a question? No.

Okay, next question then, Dr. Ms Daureeawo.

I am sorry. Mr Apollon. B/1020, that is it.

GOVERNMENT GAZETTE – LEGAL SUPPLEMENT – ONLINE AVAILABILITY

(No. B/1020) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) 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 Government Gazette, including the Legal Supplement thereof, he will, for the benefit of the

House, obtain from the Government Printing Department, information as to whether consideration will be given for same to be made available online and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, this is a very good proposition and I am sure the hon. Member will be glad to know that on 29 April of this year, the contract for the e-Government Gazette Project has been awarded to nVisionIT Ltd for the total amount of Rs9,760,000 which includes maintenance charges for five years. The contract Agreement for the Project was signed on 25 May 2026.

The e-Government Gazette Project consists of a web-based e-Government Gazette, including its Legal Supplement and Online Library Information Service. Some of the components of the e-Government Gazette are as follows –

i. an online subscription to the Government Gazette including its Legal Supplement for both local and international subscribers;

ii. an online library comprising Government Gazettes including again Legal Supplements accessible to both local and international customers, but against payment where applicable, and

iii. an online processing and payment for publications in the Government Gazettes.

The contractual duration for the implementation of the Project is 15 months as from 25 May of this year. The e-Government Gazette is, therefore, expected to be functional by September 2027, when all the services will be available online.

Madam Speaker: Are you happy? Yes.

Now it is your turn, hon. Dr. Ms Daureeawo. I am avoiding Miss.

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: It is still fine.

NATIONAL UNITY & SOCIAL COHESION – RACIAL HATE SPEECH – MONITORING & PREVENTION

(No. B/1021) 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 strengthening of national unity and social cohesion, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the measures being taken across the law enforcement

agencies and regulatory bodies, collaboratively, if any, for the monitoring and prevention of racial hate speech, including online, while balancing effective content regulation with freedom of expression.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, national unity and social cohesion constitute the very foundation of our Republic. Mauritius has long been recognised as a plural, democratic and multicultural nation where diversity is, in fact, a source of our strength. Government remains firmly committed to preserving this legacy and to ensuring that every Mauritian, irrespective of race, religion, ethnicity, language or social background, feels equally respected, protected and included.

Madam Speaker, there are comprehensive laws criminalising incitement to racial hatred (Section 282 of the Criminal Code) using the media, electronic or online or social media, by words spoken –

- Sections 16 & 17 of the Constitution which provide for recourse to the Supreme Court if there is racial discrimination,
- The Equal Opportunities Commission and Tribunal dealing with complaints by victims for example, racial discrimination including discrimination in employment or discrimination by victimisation.

The laws are, therefore, to be executed by enforcement and regulatory authorities, and it is open, Madam Speaker, to anyone aggrieved by alleged propagation of acts inciting racial hatred, to complain to the police or other authorities if he or she feels aggrieved or at risk.

It is for the competent authorities – the law enforcement, police, DPP and the courts – to assess whether any act or course of conduct exceeds the exercise of a person's fundamental right to freedom of expression and, therefore, constitutes an incitement to racial hatred.

The object is not to police public opinion, but to protect social fabric of our rainbow nation while preserving the largest possible space for legitimate expression.

In a bid to oppress, the previous government closed access to social media and slowed internet debit. When we came to power, we vowed that never, never again, should we allow our shared peace to be corroded by totalitarian minds.

We condemn any attempt to muffle expression. This is an imperative in a multicultural and pluralistic democratic society.

For these noble ideals, Madam Speaker, we rely heavily on the responsibility of one and all. But we must acknowledge that we face numerous challenges, especially when radicalisation sets in the minds of a few and those who still do not realise that –

- The freedom of expression stops at the door of the freedom of others;
- That the baseline of a peaceful diverse society is absolutely necessary to respect the views of other people's religion and other people's lifestyle. We have to respect all of that.

Madam Speaker, I shall be ruthless against anyone – and I repeat, against anyone – who jeopardizes national unity and social cohesion.

Government remains resolute in its determination to preserve the unity of our nation and to ensure that Mauritius continues to be a peaceful, inclusive and harmonious society. Any new measure must remain proportionate and consistent with constitutional protection for freedom of expression.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. Ms Daureeawo!

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: Yes, thank you. Can Dr. the hon. Prime Minister confirm to the House whether the Government has conducted any assessment of the prevalence of racial hate speech in Mauritius, particularly on online platforms?

The Prime Minister: We actually have and we have been trying to. You know it is very difficult in Mauritius at the moment to be able to find out the source of this. That is why I am getting the help from the Indian Government. First of all, we were told to approach the Maharashtra Government to look at the cyber unit to reorganise.

We came here, but unfortunately, after a while, the price suddenly seems to have ballooned. I do not accept this because we had agreed on one price, we cannot now have the price ballooning. We do not know why. So, I asked them to stop the work. Last time, I met Prime Minister Modi, I explained that to him and he has suggested that we deal directly with Delhi.

Madam Speaker: Okay, next question.

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: Would Dr. the hon. Prime Minister consider implementing or developing a national strategy or action plan on combating racial hatred, racism, discrimination?

The Prime Minister: It is unbelievable, Madam Speaker, we are in 2026 and still people do not understand that we are all children of the same God and they still persist in doing what they are doing. They will be harshly dealt with very soon.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Hon. Babajee, I think.

DRUG-RELATED OFFENCES – REPORTED CASES & MEASURES

(No. B/1022) 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 drug-related offences, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the –

(a) number of reported cases thereof since January 2026 to date, indicating the types of drugs concerned, and

(b) additional measures being envisaged to tackle same.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that from January 2026 to 08 July 2026, 1,560 cases of drug-related offences have been reported by the Police. The total value of the drug seized during that period is estimated at around Rs1.3 billion. I am tabling the information regarding the types of drugs seized during that period. I can read it but it is a long list, Madam Speaker. It is probably better that I table it.

With regard to part (b) of the question, as I have already stated in the House, the fight against drug trafficking is one of the major priorities of this Government. Several organisations are working together and are taking different measures to address this drug scourge.

The Commissioner of Police has informed that the Police have increased patrols and crackdown operations conducted by different Units in drug-prone areas. For the month of June 2026, 90 patrols were carried out – just in one month.

ADSU has been given more manpower and equipment to increase its operational capabilities. ADSU is also working in close collaboration with the Financial Crimes Commission to disrupt the drug criminal network.

Madam Speaker, as an island State, Mauritius faces significant challenges in preventing the maritime trafficking of illicit drugs. To reinforce coastal surveillance and improve the detection of illegal maritime activities, a new Coastal Surveillance Radar System, financed by the Government of Japan, is being installed and is expected to be operational by December of this year.

At the international level, ADSU collaborates with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the US Drug Enforcement Administration, the UK National Crime Agency, Interpol, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and other agencies for intelligence sharing, capacity-building and cross-border investigations to combat transnational drug trafficking networks.

Mauritius, Madam Speaker, has also partnered with India, United Kingdom, France and the United States to enhance our capacity for maritime surveillance and security.

I am informed, Madam Speaker, by the Director-General of the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) that the MRA is undertaking the following additional measures to stop the smuggling of illicit drugs at the port and at the airport –

- First of all, they are purchasing one additional Fast Interceptor Boat. The House may recall, Madam Speaker, that in September 2024, Patrol Interceptor Boats of the MRA – I think seven of them, I cannot remember the exact figure – were deliberately rammed into during the MSM regime just to protect drug traffickers delivering drugs at the sea. That is the legacy of the MSM.

  Seven interceptors just rammed into and the person who did that was allowed to continue to work as if nothing happened. He was not taken to task because probably he was told to do that.
- Secondly, posting of MRA Officers on high-risk vessels to check all persons entering and leaving the vessels;
- Thirdly, procurement of a mobile Van Scanner which can be deployed all around the island;
- Fourth, increased use of technological tools to enhance the detection of drugs, and
- Fifth, the installation of one low bed palletised cargo x-ray scanner in the port which will be there by end of this year.

Madam Speaker, in April, the National Drug Control Commission launched the National Drug Control Masterplan 2026-2030, wherein it stated that Government institutions, civil society organisations and the community at large will be mobilised in a cohesive and holistic set of actions to combat this scourge. Activities under rehabilitation and prevention have already been initiated in collaboration with –

(i) the Ministry of Education and Human Resource to develop key school-based modules and policy measures on substance prevention;

(ii) the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations and Business Mauritius are coordinating for targeting workplace prevention, and

(iii) the Mauritius Prison Service to enhance the counselling skills of Prison Officers.

Madam Speaker, the Government remains fully committed to adopting a comprehensive approach in the fight against drugs, combining robust law enforcement and border security measures with prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration initiatives.

Madam Speaker: Yes, you are alright? Hon. Jhummun!

TERRE ROUGE – MONEY SEIZURE (SUITCASES) – INQUIRY

(No. B/1023) 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 inquiry initiated into the suitcases containing Rs114 million seized at Terre Rouge in February 2025, 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 14 February 2025, Police Officers effected a search at the house of Mr Chandradeo Oomah situated at Copain Lane, Terre Rouge and secured a suitcase containing the following –

(i) Rs5.5 million comprising 3.3 million in Mauritian Rupees and 2.2 million in Foreign Currencies, that is, the total is roughly Rs5.5 million;

(ii) 7 lady wrist watches, and

(iii) documents in the name of the former Prime Minister, Mr Pravind Jugnauth and his wife.

During the enquiry, two other suitcases and one bag which contained a total sum of approximately Rs109 million in local and foreign currencies were secured from the house and the office of one Mr Josian Laval Deelawon.

Madam Speaker, during both searches, Police secured a total sum of around Rs114 million, 7 lady wrist watches and documents, as I said, in the names of the former Prime Minister and his wife.

On 15 February 2025, Mr Chandradeo Oomah, Mr Josian Laval Deelawon, Mrs Devianee Nuckchady-Ramchurn and Mr Pravind Kumar Jugnauth were arrested for money laundering offences in breach of the Financial Crimes Commission Act.

Mr Chandradeo Oomah and Mr Josian Laval Deelawon appeared before the Court on 16 February 2025 and were remanded to Police cell. On 17 February 2025, they appeared before the District Court of Pamplemousses, where a provisional charge was lodged against them. They were released on bail on 20 February 2025 after having furnished two sureties of Rs300,000 each by way of bank cheque and entered into recognizance of debt amounting to Rs5,000,000 each.

Mrs Devianee Nuckchady-Ramchurn appeared before the Court on 16 February 2025 and was remanded to Police cell. On 17 February 2025, she appeared before the District Court of Pamplemousses, where a provisional charge was lodged against her. On 18 February 2025, she was released on bail after having furnished two sureties of Rs200,000 by way of bank cheque and entered into recognizance of debt amounting to Rs5,000,000.

Madam Speaker, Mr Pravind Kumar Jugnauth was also arrested on 15 February 2025 and he appeared before the Court on 16 February 2025, but was released on bail on the same day. On 17 February 2025, he appeared before the District Court of Pamplemousses, where a provisional charge was lodged against him. He furnished two sureties of Rs750,000 by way of bank cheque and entered into recognizance of debt amounting to Rs5,000,000.

I am informed, Madam Speaker, by the Financial Crimes Commission that due to the sensitivity of the case, further information on the ongoing investigation cannot be communicated.

Madam Speaker: Yes, one question!

Mr Jhummun: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether the FCC is enough equipped and has the required technical expertise and manpower to carry such cases as there is a long list of cases pending at the level of the FCC?

The Prime Minister: That is actually the case. I accept what the hon. Member is saying that we need experts to deal with all those things. They are not trained enough for that. That is why we have people, former Scotland Yard officers who are actually helping them, assisting them in the inquiry.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Next question, hon. Caserne!

AIR TRAFFIC RIGHTS – AIRLINE APPLICATIONS (2024-2026)

(No. B/1024) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to air traffic rights, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the airline companies which have applied therefor over the past two years, indicating in each case, the country of origin and outcome thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Director of Civil Aviation that, before an airline can operate international services to another country, Government must first negotiate an agreement, which is known as a Bilateral Air Services Agreement with the Government of the country of its desired destination. Bilateral Air Services Agreements set out the conditions under which the international air services operate, including traffic rights, capacity, the designation of airlines by both contracting parties, tariffs and other provisions relating to competition policy, safety and security.

To date, Madam Speaker, Mauritius has concluded Bilateral Air Services Agreements for scheduled air services with 60 countries, out of which, 35 agreements have been signed. Furthermore, Mauritius has signed a Memorandum of Understanding on air services with Dubai and three Codeshare Agreements with Canada, Chile and Japan.

In accordance with the provisions of the Bilateral Air Services Agreements concluded by Mauritius, foreign designated airlines are required to submit their applications for the operation of scheduled commercial flights for two seasons, namely the Northern Summer Season, which starts from end of March to end of October and the Northern Winter Season, which starts from the beginning of November to the end of March of the following year.

Madam Speaker, I am tabling the list of applications submitted by foreign airlines during the period ranging from March 2024 to October 2026.

The House may wish to note that, during the said period, applications have been received from six new foreign airlines to operate commercial flights to Mauritius, namely –

(i) World2Fly from Spain;

(ii) ITA Airways from Italy;

(iii) IndiGo from India;

(iv) Ethiopian Airlines from Ethiopia;

(v) Airlink from South Africa, and

(vi) Cobra Aviation from South Africa.

I wish to inform the House that Government is pursuing a policy of gradual liberalisation of air access through bilateral agreements. This approach aims to enhance air connectivity whilst ensuring fair and equal opportunities for the continued development and growth of our national carrier, that is, Air Mauritius Ltd.

Madam Speaker, air connectivity is extremely important for the development of our country. Any decision for opening up of our air space to any airline would be taken after a thorough assessment has been made as to the benefits that may accrue to Mauritius from such an agreement.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes!

Mr Caserne: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the assessment will also include a market competition assessment?

The Prime Minister: Yes. It will assess everything, including the market.

Madam Speaker: Okay, last question, hon. Chief Whip!

UNDERPASSES – ROAD USERS SECURITY - CCTV SURVEILLANCE INSTALLATION & RISK ASSESSMENT

(No. B/1025) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the security of road users in underpasses, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether –

(a) consideration will be given for the installation of CCTV surveillance cameras at the Trianon underpass, and

(b) any risk assessment thereof islandwide has been conducted and, if so, indicate the recommendations made in relation thereto.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 15 March 2023, a request was received from the then Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development for the provision of surveillance cameras in the underpasses which fall under the purview of the Road Development Authority, including Trianon Underpass which is included in that. Since the images captured in the cameras would require constant surveillance, a request was also made for the cameras to be integrated to the Safe City Network and for monitoring by Police.

I am further informed that the Intelligent Video Surveillance System Cameras under the Safe City Project have already been installed over strategic locations island-wide, and the project has been completed in this respect. And given that the current Safe City Cameras are not designed to operate in underpasses and footbridges, Mauritius Telecom, which is the service provider for the Safe City Surveillance network, is in the process of working on the new technical specifications.

Since the existing Safe City Network is a closed system, any extension thereof to cover the underpasses and footbridges would have to be undertaken as a new project with technical specifications for the surveillance cameras. Meetings have accordingly been held between the Police Department, the Road Development Authority, the Central Electricity Board and Mauritius Telecom to work out the technical specifications and cost estimate for its implications.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that there are seven underpasses across Mauritius. The two underpasses at Caudan are covered by private CCTV

cameras. Police undertake regular patrols in the vicinity of the remaining underpasses, which are covered by nearby Safe City Surveillance cameras, where available.

Madam Speaker: Yes, one question and that would be it.

Ms Anquetil: Just one. Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the hon. Prime Minister for his answer. In view of the recent security concerns and incidents, *il y a eu une tentative de viol sur une femme de 21 ans dans le tunnel de Trianon*, will the hon. Prime Minister indicate whether security measures will be implemented and will be considered as a matter of urgency? Thank you.

The Prime Minister: It is certainly the case, Madam Speaker. That is why we are working on the technical aspect of the project, because we want to put safety cameras there. But also increase patrols in those areas, especially for the case that you just mentioned.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Thank you very much!

The Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/1026, B/1028, B/1030, B/1033, B/1034, B/1035, B/1036, B/1037, B/1038, B/1041. Thank you.

Now, we go to questions to Ministers.

Yes, hon. Member for Beau Bassin!

NATIONAL ATHLETES – MEDICAL INSURANCE COVER – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/1044) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the implementation of the free insurance package, including medical insurance, for national level athletes, as proposed in the Electoral Manifesto of L'Alliance du Changement of 2024, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand, indicating the –

(a) number of expected beneficiaries thereof, and

(b) eligibility criteria therefor.

Mr Nagalingum: Madam Speaker, the electoral manifesto de *L'Alliance du Changement* of 2024, indeed contains a proposition to set up a free insurance package, including a medical insurance cover for national athletes. And even today, I can state, in the strongest possible terms, that the safety of our athletes remains one of our priorities. Thus,

any scheme, project or programme that can benefit our national athletes, including a medical insurance cover, has our consideration.

I would like to inform the House that this matter has already been discussed, and the High-Level Sports Unit of my Ministry has been tasked with the responsibility of looking into the setting up of a Medical Scheme for National Athletes, the improvement of the existing Athletes Welfare Scheme and other innovative measures that can improve the protection of the sporting community.

The House may wish to be informed that, in parallel, section 6 (1) (d) of the Sports Act 2016 requires National Sports Federations to make appropriate arrangement for accident insurance cover for their licensees and officials during competitions, as well as for athletes undergoing training with their national squad.

Madam Speaker, with a view to supporting National Sports Federations and sports organisations in fulfilling this important obligation, my Ministry provides financial assistance to them to meet the cost of insurance coverage. The responsibility is on the Federations regarding the quantum for the group personal accident insurance cover. In addition, my Ministry has put in place a group personal accident insurance policy for participants in sporting events, organised under its aegis for the period 01 January 2026 to 31 December 2026. Provision has been made by my Ministry to provide accident insurance coverage to up to 2000 participants in the event of accident injury or death arising from activities, again, by my Ministry.

Madam Speaker, my Ministry will continue to work closely with National Sports Federations and other stakeholders to ensure that the existing support mechanism are effectively implemented for the benefit of our athletes.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Quirin: Merci, Madame la présidente. Vu que là, nous parlons aussi de l'assurance médicale, et vu que le ministère a confié cette tâche au Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports, ce n'est que récemment, si je comprends bien la réponse du ministre, que son ministère a commencé à travailler sur ce projet. L'honorable ministre ne considère-t-il pas que ce retard – bientôt deux années que l'Alliance du Changement est au pouvoir – est préoccupant et qu'il

est désormais impératif de demander au Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports de mettre les bouchées doubles afin de respecter un engagement pris envers les sportifs mauriciens en 2024 ?

Mr Nagalingum: We are not talking about the Excellence in Sports. This is a different thing altogether. We are talking about the national athletes' medical scheme, the Athletes Welfare Scheme that already exists. So, what you are asking…

Mr Quirin: …confié à qui ?

Madam Speaker: Do not discuss with the Minister!

Mr Nagalingum: …is different from what the Ministry is doing. At the level of Côte d'Or, it is a different thing. The Trust Fund is a different thing. This one is different from the Ministry.

Mr Quirin: Je crois, Madame la présidente, que l'honorable ministre n'a peut-être pas bien saisi ce que je viens de dire. Si j'ai bien compris sa réponse, je lui repose la question : À qui la tâche a été confiée ? Il a dit lui-même que cette tâche de…

Madam Speaker: Aux fédérations, si j'ai bien compris. Moi, j'ai compris fédérations.

Mr Quirin: Si c'est son ministère en particulier ou bien un organisme tombant sous son ministère, qui a eu la tâche d'aller de l'avant et de faire aboutir ce projet. Est-ce qu'il peut confirmer ?

Mr Nagalingum: I, rightly, pointed out, Madam Speaker, that the Ministry is undertaking the responsibility to look into the scheme. We have a scheme that is being updated. Now, at the level of our Ministry, we are working on it.

Madam Speaker: Ok!

Mr Quirin: Une dernière question, Madame la présidente, avec votre permission.

Madam Speaker: J'ai beaucoup de questions, malheureusement, là-dessus.

Mr Quirin: Peut-on savoir si le ministère a consulté les différentes fédérations sportives sur les critères d'éligibilité et la nature des prestations offertes ?

Madam Speaker: Consultations.

Mr Nagalingum: We have looked into the matter.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Dr. Aumeer and then, Mr Apollon.

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Minister, in the light of the recent World Cup, where there have been senior athletes who have had sudden death immediately after their participation in the World Cup, will he not consider to have thorough cardiac assessments for our high-level athletes, at regular intervals, before embarking on such high-level competition?

Madam Speaker: Okay. Minister, a simple question.

Mr Nagalingum: This is a very good question. I am going to take this into consideration.

Madam Speaker: Okay, Mr Apollon!

Mr Apollon: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In this context, can the hon. Minister inform us as to whether Mr L., injured cyclist, has benefited from the financial assistance under the Athletes Welfare Scheme?

Madam Speaker: Mr L.?

Mr Apollon: Mr L, the injured cyclist.

Madam Speaker: *Cycliste*.

Mr Apollon: M. L.

Madam Speaker: *Cycliste*, M. L.

Mr Nagalingum: Madam Speaker, in my reply to Parliament Questions B/978 and B/980, last week, I informed that the case of Mr L. was being considered for any assistance

deemed appropriate under the Athletes Welfare Scheme. I am pleased to inform the House that the High-Level Sports Unit which manages this scheme, with the approval of Cabinet, has approved, last week itself, the payment of Rs250,000 in favour of Mr L.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Ms Collet! That will be the last supplementary.

Ms Collet: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Minister inform the House how many athletes have benefited from this scheme for the Financial Year 2025-2026?

Madam Speaker: Do you have these figures?

Mr Nagalingum: I would be pleased to answer, but it is a long list. I can table it.

Madam Speaker: Yes, please, table it.

Next question, Ms Savabaddy!

NATIONAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CO. LTD. – SYNDICS APPOINTMENT & OPERATION – NEW METHODOLOGY

(No. B/1045) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the proposed implementation of the new methodology for the appointment and operation of syndics under the National Housing Development Co. Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand, indicating –

(a) the key measures;

(b) the expected implementation date, and

(c) whether consultations were held with residents, syndics and other stakeholders and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

Madam Speaker: Minister of Housing!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am informed that out of the 163 NHDC housing estates, 34 are governed by *règlement de copropriété*, and in line with the provisions of the *Code Civil Mauricien*, the owners of these apartments have to set up a *syndicat de*

copropriétaires whose duties are to manage the common space of those housing estates. The *syndicat de copropriétaires*, through its general assembly, appoints a syndic who is responsible to manage the affairs of the *syndicat de copropriétaires*, that is, the good management of housing estates.

In this respect, each *copropriétaire* is called upon to make a monthly contribution as determined by the general assembly of the *syndicat de copropriétaires* to finance the expenses of the *syndicat*. Over the years, it was noted that many *syndicats de copropriétaires* were not functional due to low rate of contribution by the *copropriétaires*. To be more precise, there are certain *copropriétaires* who do contribute, whereas the great majority do not. With a view to addressing the issue, Government, in 2012, decided to contribute Rs200 per housing unit, per month, to the respective syndics. As matters stand, Madam Speaker, I am informed by the NHDC that contribution to the *syndicats de copropriétaires* comes mainly from Government.

I am also informed that around 40% of the amount contributed, goes towards and that is the problem, administrative costs of the *syndicat*, thus leaving barely adequate fund for the proper maintenance of common areas. In this context, I have requested the NHDC to come up with proposals to operate themselves as syndic on housing estates where the *syndicat* is not fully functional or not functional at all.

I underline those two words. Because if it is working properly, there is no need for us to intervene. It is understood that this proposal can only happen if the decision is taken by the *copropriétaire* at their General Assembly. Since there is already a housing estate management and community development unit and a maintenance unit at the NHDC, resorting to the latter company will result in reducing the amount being absorbed as administrative cost of existing syndics, thus providing for additional funds towards proper maintenance.

In regard to part (a), the key measures to be implemented by the NHDC will be as follows –

(i) assist the *syndicats* des *copropriétaires* in convening their respective general assembly to approve the appointment of the NHDC as syndic if they so desire.

(ii) seek the consent of the respective *syndicats* des *copropriétaires* for the monthly subsidy of Rs200 per housing unit by Government to be disbursed to the NHDC.

Since it is the NHDC that will do the work, the NHDC, with their consent, will hold on to that in order to do the work.

(iii) Reinforce its housing estate management and community development unit, as well as its maintenance unit.

(iv) Undertake *inter alia* the cleaning of common spaces, maintenance of children's playground and water pumps, tanks, minor rehabilitation and dislodging works and most importantly, payment of utility bills of common services.

Because as it stands, I will add that part, it has been brought to my attention and that is so very often that common utility bills for the common areas in syndic residences are very often not paid. There are certain, one of them, not far from where I stand, even has a bill of approximately Rs380,000 unpaid and it has also been reported to the Central Electricity Board, that there has been unlawful connection of electricity in order for them to continue getting electricity in common areas.

So, all this, Madam Speaker, has been going down the down the drain because the previous Government, the previous Minister responsible, the previous administration at NHDC, just let things happened and did not even bother to come and find solutions and solutions are not always easy. They demand courage.

In regards to part (b) and (c), I understand that officers of the NHDC are already working on the implementation schedule to carry out sensitization and information campaigns on NHDC estates where the *syndicats* des *copropriétaires* are not functional.

As it stands, Madam Speaker, let me conclude on that, a lot of those non-functional or dysfunctional syndics are represented by certain people, as I have explained. 40% minimum, sometimes more, of what Government gives, is absorbed by their administrative costs. They take on that money and very often, you find out that they were political agents of the former Government, surreptitiously placed there.

So, let me make it very clear. I know that they will find change complicated. It is understandable. All change is very difficult for certain people who have vested interest in there. So, they will be trying a lot of things in order to stop this regime, in order to bring solutions, in order to make sure that NHDC residences are clean, well maintained, and there is a proper living environment.

I will not deter. My officers will not run away. We will forge ahead with the help of every single hon. Member of Parliament, even on the hon. Member of Parliament on the other side. Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: Good! Yes, one.

Ms Savabaddy: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Minister give any indication on how financial matters will be handled by the syndic and whether, residents of NHDC complexes will be made to contribute any sum, if so, the amount please? Thank you.

Mr Mohamed: It is a very good question. The exercise that we have carried out already at the level of the Ministry, together with officers and management of the NHDC, also with the new housing estates of the NSLD, there will be 14. In actual fact, I have the figures, the NHDC housing estates, there are 34. Number of housing units, 7,635. Number of syndics, 79. Number of active syndics out of the 79, only 32. Amount disbursed for syndic grant 2025-2026 – Rs13,587,687 out of the almost Rs19 million. A recent assessment of *syndic's* expenditure revealed that, as I have said, only 40% goes to administrative costs.

So, as it stands for the NSLD, it is 14, number of housing units 2,730 as at now and it will keep on increasing.

So, what we are going to do is, yes, one size does not fit all, Madam Speaker. There are certain residences that require less common areas, less areas in order to upkeep, that do not require such contribution and where it does not require such contribution, whatever Government gives, since it started in 2012, will continue and if they desire to resort to our services of the NHDC, it will be managed. If there is a need *pour faire des appels de fonds* for other work, as and normally it is done, it will be done. But there are certain people who do not pay a penny. And there was a question. What happens if those who are now owners of those apartments, who can sell it and make a profit, who can benefit from subsidised Government property, but they do not pay a penny with regard to upkeep? What do we do?

There are people who have suggested that we consider other means and measures in order to take the money from an electricity bill for instance, or to be able to have certain people who refuse to pay consistently, in spite of being able to pay, just out of pure negligence, they do not want to pay, being antisocial. Do we have the syndic take them to Court, as it normally should be, as according to the Civil Code? There needs to be discipline because the majority wants a good living environment and it is not because a small number of people mess things up that we are going to keep quiet.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Maybe no more long answers, hon. Minister. In case, you may be able to make a statement. It is so important. Yes.

Ms Savabaddy: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Minister what services will the new syndic scheme propose?

Mr Mohamed: So, with regard to the new services, Madam Speaker, I have explained earlier on. I have the details. So, we have the cleaning of common areas. We have the green spaces, children's playground. Some of them have never been opened and I have to run. True it is we are having certain problems and I have to be very candid. I apologize; I need to say that the Ministry of Finance will have to be able to consult quicker with Local Government and Local Government has to be able to take on board their responsibilities for cleaning of playground areas, etc. because they need to be given finance and they need to take that responsibility.

Now, something else is repair of works and maintenance of amenities because a lot of them are broken down within the housing estates, cleaning of water tanks, maintenance of pumps, paying electricity bills, cleaning of drains, minor waterproofing and structural repairs of housing blocks, removal of bulk waste, dislodging works. So those are the works that normally a syndic does and we will be providing it.

But most importantly, we will have a number and a dedicated person responsible for each residence where they will be able to be reached at all times and they will be able to dispatch people in order to do the work.

Madam Speaker: Okay, thank you, hon. Minister.

Now, the next question has been withdrawn, B /1046, that of hon. Lobine.

Dr. Prayag, I do not know what has happened.

So, I shall call on hon. Ms S. Anquetil for the moment for the next question. We will keep Dr. Prayag.

Ms Anquetil: He is not coming today. He is not coming.

Madam Speaker: Okay. So, that question is also out.

Ms Anquetil: Il a présenté ses excuses.

PHOENIX – RAMPAT & IQBAL LANE – DRAINS UPGRADING & ASPHALTING WORKS

(**No. B/1046) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Rampat lane and Iqbal lane, in Phoenix, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix, information as to whether consideration will be given for the urgent reinstatement thereof, including upgrading of drains and asphalting works and, if so, indicate the expected start and completion dates thereof.

(Withdrawn)

TEMPLE ROAD, RIVIÈRE DU REMPART – IRREGULAR WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/1047) Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the irregular water supply at Temple Road, in Rivière du Rempart, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to –

(a) the causes thereof, and

(b) where matters stand as to the remedial measures being envisaged in relation thereto.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the CWA that water supply is intermittent in Rivière du Rempart, that is, water is released from l'Amitié Reservoir from 04.00 hrs to 08.30 hrs and 16.00 hrs to 20.30 hrs daily. Prior to February 2026, inhabitants living in the upper parts of Temple Road, Rivière du Rempart have been experiencing water supply issues due to a low inlet rate into l'Amitié Reservoir, which was limiting the volume of water reaching the elevated areas. This was caused by an under-rated capacity pump at Schoenfield Borehole supplying the reservoir.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that in March 2026, the volume of water supplied to l'Amitié Reservoir was increased following the replacement of the pump at Schoenfield Borehole with a higher-capacity rating one. In addition, water from Haute Rive Borehole was injected into the network to supplement the supply to the upper parts of Temple Road.

There was a temporary water supply disruption at Temple Road when Haute Rive Borehole experienced power outages on 01 and 05 July 2026. The supply was back to normal as soon as power was restored.

Following the notification of this Parliamentary Question from the hon. Member on 09 July 2026, I am informed by the CWA that a site visit was conducted at Temple Road, Rivière du Rempart and Haute Rive Borehole on Friday 10 July 2026.

It was noted that there was a generator at Haute Rive Borehole. However, following thefts, the generator is no more in operation as most of its electrical parts and cables had been stolen. A proposal has been made for the CWA to replace the generator and this process will take around 6 months.

QUATRE BORNES – SKATEPARK – PILOT PROJECT

(No. B/1048) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to skatepark, he will state whether consideration will be given for the implementation of a pilot project thereof at Quatre Bornes and, if so, indicate –

(a) the proposed timeline and location identified therefor, and

(b) whether consultations will be held with the local skateboard communities and other relevant stakeholders prior thereto.

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, my Ministry fully supports the development of a safe, modern and inclusive sporting facilities for young people, including skateboarding, which is now recognised as an Olympic discipline and a fast-growing sport among our youth.

Following a formal request received from WolfPack Mauritius on 13 March 2025, the proposal for a skatepark was referred to the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes for examination and follow-up action.

Since then, the council has engaged in consultation with representatives of the association and has actively facilitated the skateboarding activities within its premises, including the Go Skateboarding D ay event held on 21 June 2026, which is the internationally recognised day for the promotion of skateboarding worldwide. I am pleased to inform the House that the proposed skate park project has been included amongst the priority projects submitted.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: There is a murmur. I cannot hear the hon. Minister.

Carry on, hon. Minister!

Mr Woochit: I am pleased to inform the House that the proposed skate park project has been included among the priority projects submitted for financing under the Government of India Grant. The project is designed to cover an area of approximately 500 square meters and will cater for both skateboarding and roller skating, thereby maximising the use of the facility by a wider range of users.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, the municipal council has identified two potential locations, namely the Sir Satcam Boolell Sport Complex at Ebène and the parking area at Tulip Avenue, among others. The final site will be selected after the necessary technical and feasibility assessment with particular attention to accessibility, safety, environmental suitability, and the requirements of future users, including children and young adults.

The primary cost of the project is estimated at approximately Rs4.5 million. The funding request is presently awaiting the required approval from the Prime Minister's Office under the Government of India Grant Framework. Once approval is obtained, the municipal council will proceed without delay with the preparation of the project document, the procurement exercise, and the implementation construction works strictly in line with the applicable procedures and regulations.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, consultations with Wolf Pack Mauritius have already started and will continue throughout the design and implementation stage. Other relevant stakeholders, users, and technical experts will also be consulted to ensure that the facility complies with recognised safety standards and responds effectively to the needs and the expectation of the local skateboarding communities.

Madam Speaker: Okay. One question for the moment.

Ms Anquetil : Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

Au nom des jeunes de Belle Rose-Quatre Bornes, le Dr. Boolell, le *Deputy Speaker*, l'honorable Veda Baloomoody et moi-même, nous remercions l'honorable ministre pour sa réponse.

Le ministre peut-il préciser à la Chambre si Maurice dispose des compétences techniques requises pour la conception de ce projet ou si le recours à une expertise étrangère, notamment réunionnaise, est envisagé ? Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: Short and sweet, hon. Minister.

Mr Woochit: Yes. Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the hon. Members that the council does not have in-house specialists in skate park facilities. But the municipal council will, therefore, work in close collaboration with the experienced local skateboarding association. We do have an association.

Madam Speaker: They are experts?

Mr Woochit: They are experts. We will work in collaboration with them.

Ms Anquetil: Une dernière, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. Le skateboard étant une discipline olympique, le ministre peut-il indiquer si son ministère envisage une collaboration avec le ministère des Sports afin d'offrir aux jeunes des infrastructures adaptées leur permettant de s'entraîner et de développer leur potentiel ? Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: Very easy.

Mr Woochit: Yes. Madam Speaker, my Ministry is already working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports. I am sure that hon. Deven Nagalingum will give a helping hand for the promotion of skateboarding.

Madam Speaker: Very good. Thank you very much.

I will have a last question from hon. François.

RODRIGUES – EIA LICENCES APPLICATIONS (2021-2026)

(No. B/1049) Mr F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to Environmental Impact Assessment, Preliminary Environmental Report or Strategic Environment Assessment Licence/Approval in respect of public or private undertakings in Rodrigues over the past five years, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain the list of applications thereof approved, indicating in each case, the date of application, approval/rejection and issuance thereof, if any.

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that over the past five years, four applications for Environmental Impact Assessment Licences for private undertakings have been received at the level of the Ministry.

Out of these four applications, three Environmental Impact Assessment Licenses have been issued. One application, namely the proposed Balao Bay Small Hotel Development at Anse Ally, Rodrigues, by Society Civil Balao Bay, has been withdrawn as a request of the proponent on 05 October 2023.

It is to be noted that no application for Environmental Impact Assessment Licence for public undertakings has been received at the level of my Ministry over the past five years.

I am tabling a list of applications for Environmental Impact Assessment license applications for Rodrigues from 2021 to date, which have been processed by my Ministry.

Madam Speaker, furthermore, with regard to Preliminary Environmental Report and Strategic Environmental Assessment Report, no application has been received at the level of the Ministry for public or private undertakings in Rodrigues over the past five years. I have also been informed by the Chief Commissioner Office, Commission for Environment and Community Development, that one project, namely the construction of a jetty at Bay Lascar, is being implemented without an EIA licence, and a stop order has been issued on 09 July 2026.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes!

Mr François: Thank you, hon. Minister. With regard to the stop order, may I know who issued the stop order? Is it your Ministry or is it the local authority thereat?

Mr Bhagwan: Yes, it is the Chief Commissioner Office and the Environment Department of Rodrigues.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Thank you.

I think we can break now. We will break for one hour only today, exceptionally. Thank you.

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

On resuming at 2.02 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

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

PHYTOSANITARY PROTOCOLS – MAURITIUS-RODRIGUES AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE – REVIEW

(No. B/1050) Ms M. R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the

phytosanitary protocols in the Republic of Mauritius, he will state whether a comprehensive review thereof has recently been undertaken and, if not, why not, indicating the measures being envisaged, in consultation with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, for the updating and strengthening thereof in relation to the inter-island movement of agricultural produce to safeguard food security and biosecurity standards.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I thank the hon. Member, Ms Collet, for putting this relevant question and there is no compromise in relation to sanitary, phytosanitary norms, biosecurity and biosafety.

The hon. First Member can rest assured that there is good interactive meeting between the officers responsible for the Plant Protection Office under the provisions of the Plant Protection Act, and there is a scheduled meeting with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to discuss on the update of the list of items that should be moved to Rodrigues and also in relation to the valid importation permit.

Now, my Ministry will continue to work closely with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and all relevant stakeholders to ensure that phytosanitary system remains effective, science-based and responsive to evolving biosecurity challenges.

I have also a list of issues raised, measures taken to address the problem and the relevance and importance of capacity building of officers, the inter-island phytosanitary certificate and now, this certificate is also issued electronically. It means that things are going on very positively, but if there is room for improvement, certainly we will make sure that we narrow the gap and it goes without saying that the collaboration is of utmost importance and we look upon Rodrigues as a granary of our great little island.

Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. Hon. Second Member for Port Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle!

METRO EXPRESS NETWORK – LINE EXTENSION – SOUTHERN REGION

(No. B/1051) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the Metro Express service, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Metro Express Ltd., information as to whether

consideration is being given for the extension thereof to the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport and to the southern region of the island.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Metro System Network spans over 30 kilometres of track consisting of Line 1 from Port Louis to Curepipe, and Line 2 from Rose Hill to Reduit via Ebene Cyber City. The two lines are serviced by a fleet of 18 light rail vehicles and some 37,000 persons daily avail of the LRT services.

We have time and again heard that the system has benefits and I have on my side always believed that we will never know the real value of these benefits if we do not have a monetary value attached to them. This work has been done lately with the compliments of the British Government. We have a report dated 06 May 2026 from Crossrail International, a specialist advisory organisation from the UK Government for Transport, that suggests that the monetised benefits of the Metro System are estimated at some Rs1.7 billion per year and that this is not visible in the traditional financial accounts.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, during the last policy dialogue meeting my Ministry had with the Ministry of Finance ahead of the budget exercise, I had raised two points –

i. We have managed to reduce the operational expenses of the Metro Express Limited by 10.4% as at June 2025 as compared to June 2024, and

ii. unlike a bus company which uses public infrastructure like roads and bus stops built by Government, the Metro runs on railway track and uses train stations that itself has to build at very high cost, and on top of that they have to be maintained – the Metro has to maintain the track and not Government. So, the economics are not the same.

With regard to the second point, I was then advised that we need to relook at the way accounts are done. That would certainly give an opportunity to the extent possible. I believe the Ministry of Finance is the competent authority in the domain to also factor in the monetised wider benefits that Crossrail International has calculated for us.

I am hopeful, therefore, to reply to the substantive question of the hon. Member that this proposed way of looking at things, that is looking at the wider benefits, that one day should the financial situation of the country allow for it, the Government can, therefore, consider extending the Metro System all the way to the airport. I do believe that this is a logical trajectory to pursue as in most countries the light rail system connects with their airports and I rest my case as follows.

During the last courtesy call he paid to me last Wednesday, I asked the High Commissioner of Singapore to Mauritius the specific question on Metro System and airports. I took the opportunity to ask him this question because he is also the Chairman of the Changi Airport Group for which extension is currently being carried out for phase five. He confirmed that Singapore Metro System goes to the airport as well. In our country, it is sad that the previous government did not consider this as a priority. Instead, they went to Cote d'Or and Saint Pierre for obvious reasons.

Finally, this project was abandoned because the Exim Bank of India had pulled out of this project because of serious flaws in their procurement procedure.

Further, in the substantive question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, of the hon. Member, I understand from information obtained from the Ministry of Housing and Lands that there are two ex-railway tracks in the South Eastern and Southern regions spanning from Curepipe to Beau Vallon and Mahebourg and from Curepipe to Souillac. Although part of the required land may be available as preservation was well done, the extension of the services of the Metro Express Limited to these regions imply huge investments which cannot be envisaged as at present or in the short term due to the dire economic situation.

For a better understanding of the magnitude of the financial implications, MEL has indicated that the construction for phase four from Reduit to Cote d'Or stood at approximately Rs1.7 billion per kilometre in 2023, that is Rs1.7 million per meter, which is quite a huge figure, while the procurement of a single light rail vehicle, meaning the train, costs around Rs250 million.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to end, my Ministry has launched an international bidding exercise for consultancy services for the development of the 20-year Land Transport Master Plan with the support of the UNDP and this question will be taken on board, that is further extension including to the airport.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr Seeburn: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I thank the hon. Minister for his reply. Will the hon. Minister agree that extending the Metro line to the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport and the Southern region is a project of great national importance given that it will strengthen connectivity, it will promote balanced regional development, improve access to employment and essential services. It will further reduce

traffic congestions and carbon emissions and further enhance Mauritius's image as a modern…

The Deputy Speaker: What is your question?

Mr Seeburn: …sustainable and world-class destination.

The Deputy Speaker: You are making a speech! What is your question?

Mr Seeburn: Will the hon. Minister give due consideration to prioritising this project in its long-term infrastructure planning…

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question!

Mr Seeburn: …once the financial situation improves?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, like I mentioned, the master plan that we have launched consultancy for, will have as aim to put recommendations and action plans for an integrated multimodal transport system that would adequately respond to the economic development of the country and the travel demand across the island.

Any extension of the light rail, to reply to the additional question of the hon. Member, will be considered within the terms of reference of the consultancy, and reckoning also with the report of Crossrail International in the spirit of sustainable development of the Republic.

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

Mr Rookny: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, B/1052. The hon. Minister is not here.

The Deputy Speaker: Sit down. The hon. Minister is not here.

So, we will proceed with the next question and we will call the question back when he is here.

The hon. First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue!

PRIVATE VETERINARY SERVICES – EXCESSIVE FEES – REGULATION

(No. B/1053) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to private veterinary services, he will state whether he has taken cognisance of any practice of excessive fees being charged by some practitioners thereof and, if so, indicate whether consideration will be given for an assessment thereof to be carried out and for the regulation thereof.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue for putting this question.

The Ministry has taken cognisance of concerns regarding the fees charged by some private veterinary practitioners. Now, it should be noted that private vet services are provided on a commercial basis, and of course, I hope that they do not forego their professional ethics.

Fees are currently determined independently by individual vet practitioners, taking into account the nature and complexity of the services rendered. The Ministry acknowledges that there are instances where members of the public consider the fees charged to be excessive. However, it should be equally recognised that there is presently no statutory fee schedule or legislative provision empowering the Ministry or the Veterinary Council of Mauritius to regulate or prescribe fees for vet services offered by private practitioners. Now, vet fees are determined, therefore, within the framework of private contractual arrangements between the practitioner and the client.

In this respect, I wish to inform the House that a committee is being set up to work on amendments to be brought to the Veterinary Council Act of 2020 governing the veterinary profession. These amendments are intended to modernise the existing legislative framework and strengthen the regulation of the profession. Among the key issues under consideration are provisions relating to the registration of foreign veterinary practitioners who satisfy the prescribed professional standards and eligibility requirements. This initiative is expected to enhance the availability of veterinary professionals, strengthen service delivery, promote healthy competition within the sector, and ultimately improve access to veterinary services for the public. This should have a positive impact on the price being charged by private practitioners.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the hon. Member’s question regarding an assessment of veterinary fees and regulation thereof, no formal exercise is being undertaken to establish or regulate a scale of fees for private veterinary services. Nevertheless, the matter remains under consideration in the context of the broader review of the legislative and regulatory framework governing the veterinary profession.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes?

Ms Savabaddy: *Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir*. L'honorable Ministre peut-il dire à la Chambre le nombre de vétérinaires opérant dans le public et le privé qui sont toujours en

service, de même que le nombre de cliniques vétérinaires et sont-ils soumis à un code de déontologie ou un code d'éthique ? Merci.

Dr. Boolell: I do not have the information, but I certainly can gather the information and circulate accordingly but in relation to officers working in public services, there are 11 when there should have been 30. In fact, there is a shortage of veterinary services. Now, as to the number of vet clinics, as far as I know, there are five, officially.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. Aumeer.

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Minister whether, he could use his good office to arrange a meeting between private veterinary services and the Veterinary Council, since there have been ongoing conflicting issues arising between them, which are not conducive for the welfare of the animals. Thank you.

Dr. Boolell: You know, there is pride and greed, but in the light of the suggestion made by my hon. good friend, Dr. Aumeer, we will certainly entertain the proposal made.

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

WATER SECURITY – DESALINATION PROJECTS – PRIORITISATION

(No. B/1054) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to water security, he will state whether decision has been taken by Government to prioritise desalination projects over reducing non-revenue water and, if so, indicate the reasons therefor.

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, le dessalement et la réduction du *non-revenue water* constitue les piliers essentiels et complémentaires de notre stratégie nationale de sécurité hydrique. La réduction de l'eau non facturée demeure aussi d'ailleurs une priorité absolue.

M. le président, dans ce contexte, plusieurs projets sont actuellement mis en œuvre par mon ministère et la *Central Water Authority*. Je citerai notamment –

- le remplacement d'environ 114 kilomètres de tuyaux avec la ligne de crédit indienne ;
- la mise en œuvre d'une approche intégrée de la réduction d'eau non facturée dans la région de l'Est ;
- le remplacement des compteurs en vrac, défectueux, cela se fait actuellement ;

- ainsi que le déploiement des systèmes télémétrie et de télésurveillance concernant les fuites d'eau ;
- la réalisation des projets ciblés de remplacement de tuyaux dans différentes régions de l'île ;
- l'acquisition annuelle d'équipement spécialisé pour la détection des fuites d'eau.

Les ressources financières nécessaires à la mise en œuvre de l'ensemble de ces projets ont été prévues dans le budget 2026-2027. Donc, la ligne indienne 2.9 milliards et aussi 792 millions de roupies pour le *Non-Revenue Authority*.

Toujours sur la question de l'eau non facturée, M. le président, mon ministère collabore activement avec la *Singapore Corporation Enterprise* en vue de l'élaboration d'une stratégie nationale à long terme pour la réduction de l'eau non facturée ainsi que la mise en œuvre progressive d'un projet pilote dans la zone d'approvisionnement dans l'Est, parce que le pourcentage de perte dans l'Est est le plus élevé du pays. Parallèlement, compte tenu de la variabilité croissante des pluies et des effets des plus marqués du changement climatique sur la disponibilité de sources en eau, le gouvernement considère que le dessalement pourrait devenir un élément important de la stratégie nationale à long terme en matière de sécurité hydrique. Cette approche vient compléter les efforts déjà engagés pour réduire l'eau non facturée, renforcer la gestion durable des ressources hydriques et diversifier les sources d'approvisionnement en eau, surtout dans le nord.

Je tiens également à rappeler que les dernières prévisions de la météo de Maurice font état de la pluviométrie inférieure à la normale pour les mois de juillet de cette année-ci, d'août et septembre 2026 avec un déficit estimé à environ moins de 30 %. Dans cette optique, le gouvernement étudie la mise en place d'une unité de dessalement alimentée par l'énergie solaire dans la région du nord, compte tenu des difficultés persistantes d'approvisionnement en eau dans cette région, ainsi que l'augmentation de la demande liée aux développements résidentiels, agricoles, commerciaux et touristiques.

À cette fin, M. le président, une *Expression of Interest* a été lancée en septembre 2025, l'année dernière, pour la réalisation d'une étude de faisabilité portant sur la mise en place d'une usine de dessalement de grande capacité comprise entre 10 000 et 50 000 m³ par jour dans le nord du pays. M. le président, quatre candidats présélectionnés ont été invités à soumettre leurs offres dans le cadre d'un appel d'offres lancé en mai 2026, cette année-ci. Les propositions doivent être reçues au plus tard le 24 juillet de cette année-ci, donc dans

quelques jours. Donc, le contrat sera attribué et l'étude est prévue d'ici septembre 2026 et va durer autour de 8 à 10 mois.

M. le président, cette étude permettra notamment de déterminer –

(i) les sites les plus appropriés pour l'implantation de l'usine ou des usines de dessalement ;

(ii) les coûts d'investissement et d'exploitation associés au projet ;

(iii) le modèle financier le plus adapté pour assurer sa viabilité ;

(iv) les technologies les plus appropriées pour la gestion et l'élimination des rejets dans le respect des normes environnementales.

Par ailleurs, l'assistance technique des autorités marocaines et saoudiennes ont été sollicitées, compte tenu de leurs expertises reconnues dans le domaine du dessalement à grande échelle.

Je tiens, M. le président, à souligner ceci ; que tout projet qui sera développé dans ce domaine, le sera dans le strict respect des exigences environnementales, légales et réglementaires, sociales applicables, ainsi que conformément au principe de développement durable. Merci.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Ms J. Bérenger: Merci. Donc, je comprends que l'étude de faisabilité va inclure les coûts de production. Est-ce que l'honorable ministre pourrait nous dire si l'étude de faisabilité va aussi inclure une analyse pour comparer le coût de réduction du *non-revenue water* avec celui de la construction et de l'exploitation d'une usine de dessalement ?

Mr Assirvaden: Oui, certainement, dans l'étude que nous avons demandée, comme je l'ai dit un peu plus tôt, M. le président, les coûts d'investissement et d'exploitation associés au projet, bien sûr. Je dois dire que nous n'avons pas d'expérience en la matière. Donc, les Marocains et les Saoudiens nous aident.

Mais, ceci dit, *le non-revenue water* est un secteur de la CWA qui a été démantelé les cinq dernières années. Dans le *non-revenue water* que nous avons reconstitué actuellement, donc, pour changer les 1500 km de tuyaux, cela va nous coûter R 37.5 milliards. Donc, vous

réalisez, le *pipe replacement programme*, qui se trouve dans le *non-revenue water*, est un projet à long terme – à très long terme – pour changer tous ces tuyaux-là.

Le dessalement et le *non-revenue water* sont deux stratégies qui vont être complémentaires. C'est sûr que nous allons comparer le coût d'implémenter un projet de *non-revenue water* et, bien sûr, un dessalement.

Je dois dire que le *non-revenue water* dans l'est ou dans le nord va nous aider, oui, certainement, mais avec le changement climatique, comme je l'ai dit un peu plus tôt, la pluie ne tombe plus. Les réservoirs ne se remplissent plus. Les rivières sont à sec. Les *boreholes* sont à sec. Donc, nous sommes obligés – je suis obligé et je le crois fermement –, pour les années à venir, pour se mettre à l'abri du changement climatique, de suivre un peu le modèle Rodriguais, d'aller vers le dessalement, surtout pour le nord, entre 10 000 m³ et 50 000 m³ par jour, pour voir si, effectivement, nous pouvons comparer le coût pour le *non-revenue water* et le dessalement.

Ms J. Bérenger: Juste une dernière.

The Deputy Speaker: Une dernière question.

Ms J. Bérenger: Je rebondis sur ce que l'honorable ministre vient de dire, où il dit que les réservoirs sont vides parce qu'il n'y a plus de pluie. Il a visité, récemment, Mare aux Vacoas. Est-ce que, peut-être, il aurait des explications sur l'assèchement de Mare aux Vacoas ? Est-ce que c'est uniquement parce qu'il ne pleut plus ?

Mr Assirvaden: Mare aux Vacoas nous inquiète, effectivement. C'est pour cette raison que nous avons eu les restrictions que nous avons mises en place. Mare aux Vacoas alimente les régions des *upper* Plaines Wilhems. On parle là de Quatre Bornes, de Curepipe, d'une partie de Rose Hill, de Rivière Noire, de Floréal, et d'une partie de la circonscription numéro 8. Nous n'avons pas d'autre raison de dire que la pluie ne tombe pas dans cette région.

Le problème, c'est que les autres réservoirs du pays ont un niveau acceptable. Si vous voyez le taux, nous sommes à 66,5, je crois, de remplissage des réservoirs. Cela ne nous inquiète pas autant. Mais notre souci à nous, malheureusement pour le pays, c'est que nous n'avons pas le système rodriguais – la colonne vertébrale des réservoirs. Donc, nous ne pouvons pas prendre de l'eau d'un réservoir pour l'amener à Mare aux Vacoas.

Mare aux Vacoas nous inquiète parce que, drastiquement, il est descendu à moins de 50%, à 45%. La raison que nous avons, aujourd'hui, c'est qu'à Mare aux Vacoas, il pleut bien moins. Les services canaux, les services rivières qui emmènent de l'eau vers Mare aux Vacoas sont plus ou moins à sec.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister Uteem, you were not in the House when your question was called. So, I call it again.

Hon. Third Member for Pamplemousses and Triolet!

FROID DES MASCAREIGNES LTD – EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT TERMINATION

(No. B/1052) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to the termination of the contract of employment of several employees at Froids des Mascareignes Ltd., following a workforce reorganisation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Redundancy Board, information as to whether the matter has been referred thereto and, if so, indicate where matters stand.

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. First of all, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me, humbly, apologise for not being present at the time the question was originally asked.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that on 25 May 2026, an employee of Froid des Mascareignes Ltd filed a complaint with my Ministry, alleging that he was forced to resign under duress and made to sign a compromise agreement. An inquiry was conducted by my Ministry, whereby it was found that Froid des Mascareignes Ltd has embarked on a redeployment exercise due to restructuring and economic reason involving 16 employees. This redeployment exercise was conducted in consultation with the Private Sector Employees' Union to reach a settlement.

Out of the 16 employees concerned –

- three of the employees agreed to be redeployed in other departments within the company,
- two employees agreed to be redeployed in another company, and

- the remaining 11 employees, who were not agreeable to be redeployed, have agreed to take a compensation following negotiation with their union, and they have signed a compromise agreement accordingly.

So, these 11 employees who signed the compromise agreement included the employee who filed a complaint with my Ministry.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that despite signing a compromise agreement, the employee concerned was not agreeable with the termination of his employment and considered that he has been made redundant unjustifiably pursuant to section 72 of the Workers' Rights Act. Accordingly, he referred a case to the Redundancy Board.

I am informed by the Redundancy Board that as at date, it has received only one application from former employees of Froid des Mascareignes Ltd on 06 July 2026, for the payment of severance allowance. No other complaint has been received by the Redundancy Board. The case has been fixed for mention for the first time on July 15, tomorrow, and convocation letters have been sent to both parties.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes!

Mr Rookny: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Will the hon. Minister advise the Chamber if he will pay particular attention to this case, as people who are being redeployed or terminated are particularly vulnerable people who may not have enough voice to raise their concerns to authorities?

Mr Uteem: I will certainly do so, but the hon. Member should ask those employees to file a complaint. As at today, there is only one employee who has made a complaint. As I said, 11 of them have already signed the compromise agreement. If they feel that they have done so under duress, they can always come to my Ministry, and we will assist them.

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

ROSE BELLE SUGAR ESTATE – AGRICULTURAL LAND LEASE – REVISED RENTAL

(No. B/1055) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the plots of agricultural land leased by the Rose-Belle Sugar Estate to planters of the village of Bananes and the vicinity thereof, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the quantum of the recent increase in the rental thereof, indicating whether consideration will be given for a revision thereof.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, hon. Member. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following implementation of the revised rental, Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board received representations from a number of planters located at Bananes, requesting that the increase in the lease be reconsidered.

Consequently, a meeting was convened on 02 February 2026 at Bananes, which I personally attended along with representatives of the Ministry, Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board, and the three hon. Members representing the Grand Port region.

During the meeting, the planters expressed concerns that the revised rental was excessive and claimed that the agricultural potential of the land was comparatively low, bringing less revenue than expected.

In response, Rose Belle Sugar Estate called for a meeting with the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (FAREI) and MSIRI in April 2026, where both organisations were requested to make a survey of the area so as to establish the current status and agricultural potential of the land. The survey consisted of comprehensive field assessments, soil analysis, evaluation of the productive potential of the land, and identification of crops best suited for cultivation in the region. The reports of both institutions are currently in progress.

Pending receipt of these reports, Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board will adopt an interim arrangement, whereby the 14 lease holders concerned will be charged an annual rental of Rs15,000 per arpent, subject to review at a later stage.

Now, this interim measure reflects the Board's willingness to accommodate the concerns expressed by the lease holders while awaiting the outcome of independent technical assessment.

Furthermore, a request of Rose Belle Sugar Estate, FAREI will work closely with the planters by identifying and facilitating access to the various Government support schemes, grants and technical assistance programmes available to small planters. The objective is to improve farm productivity, enhance profitability and assist planters in offsetting part of the production cost, including lease rentals, thereby ensuring the long-term sustainability of their agricultural activities.

The Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board has, at its level, established a dedicated technical support team to work in close collaboration with FAREI and other relevant institutions in providing continuous guidance to beneficiaries of the scheme at large. This collaborative approach seeks not only to maximise agricultural productivity but also ensure that land is utilised efficiently and sustainably for the benefit of both planters leasing land with Rose Belle Sugar Estate, and the country as a whole. Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board remains fully committed to supporting small planters and contributing to the Government's food security objectives. At the same time, the Board has a fiduciary responsibility to ensure prudent management of the public assets entrusted to it while maintaining its financial sustainability.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is important to emphasise that the Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board is an autonomous statutory body that receives no financial assistance from the Ministry for either its recurrent expenditure or its capital investment programme. The Board is, therefore, entirely responsible for financing its operation and development activities with its own internally generated revenue, principally from sugarcane operation and the leasing of its land assets.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Ramdass!

Mr Ramdass: Yes, I thank the hon. Minister. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the meantime, those planters – about 25 of them – from the Bananes village have received letters imposing acceptance of the substantial increase of 266%. So, would the hon. Minister consider the possibility of having a word with the Rose Belle Sugar Estate so that the appropriate communication is sent to those 25 planters in order to avoid some sort of panic amongst those 25 planters?

Dr. Boolell: Only last week, I had a meeting with the General Manager of Rose Belle Sugar Estate, impressing upon him to be fair and, hence, the reason as to why the lease

agreement was revised, but we hope that it will be sustained beyond a year. But I thank all three hon. Members of the constituency for putting the case across very forcefully to me.

Thank you.

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

CONSTITUENCY NO. 11 - BALLISON ROSE BELLE SOCIAL HOUSING PROJECT DELAY – ALLOCATION TO BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/1056) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the social housing needs of the inhabitants of Constituency No. 11, Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle, he will state –

(a) the measures taken and/or being envisaged to meet same following delays in the completion of the Ballison Rose Belle Social Housing Project, and

(b) whether consideration will be given for the allocation of existing social housing units, already completed in neighbouring localities, to eligible beneficiaries of the said Constituency.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the NSLD that in regard to Constituency No. 11, 400 units are being constructed on two plots of land at Ballison, Rose Belle. According to the contract awarded to Kuros Construction Solutions Ltd back in 2023, the initial completion dates in respect of the two sites were September and November 2024. It is open for everyone to have seen that the projects are clearly far from completion, even though the completion dates should have been September and November 2024.

Following persistent non-performance of the contractor and breach of his contractual obligations, the NSLD in December 2025, following legal advice, terminated the contract of Kuros Construction Solutions Ltd.

In regard to part (a), I am further informed that the NSLD has completed the tedious, very tedious exercise of assessing the value of works completed at termination of contract

and will very shortly launch a tender exercise to identify contractors willing to complete the outstanding works.

As regards part (b) of the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that applicants of Constituency No. 11, and I am sure that the elected Members of that Constituency will be happy to hear that those who are considered as hardship cases, particularly those with urgent housing needs, will, in the meantime, be considered for housing units on a temporary basis in constituencies No. 12 and No.13 and I am sure that the elected Members there will certainly not mind.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Do you have a question?

Mr Seeburn: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Minister confirm that the housing units which have been completed at Mare d'Albert and Grand Bel Air would be allocated to residents/applicants of Constituency No.11?

Mr Mohamed: As I have said, I mean, only in emergency hardship cases, will they be considered in Constituency No. 12 and 13 on a temporary basis. Because we are quite confident that the new project – I call it new because basically they have left it in a mess and we have to relaunch tender, which will be done *incessamment.* So, once that is done, someone is chosen, then they complete it. So, obviously, the 400 that is reserved for No.11 will go to No.11.

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

CEB – SECURITY SERVICES – COMPANIES (PERIOD 2015- JULY 2026)

(No. B/1057) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether in regard to Security Services, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to

the company/companies to which the provision thereof have been awarded since 2015 to date.

Mr Assirvaden : M. le président, en décembre 2014, la société Brinks Mauritius Ltd s'est vu attribuer un contrat par le CEB pour assurer les services de sécurité sur des sites critiques pour un montant de R 68,3 millions. Le 19 novembre 2015, la société RSL Security Services a obtenu un contrat pour les services de sécurité pour R 7,67 millions. Les deux contrats ont été prolongés à plusieurs reprises à la suite d'une décision du Conseil d'administration de l'époque qui envisageait que le CEB (Facilities) Co. Ltd., filiale créé en 2017, assure à terme les services de sécurité. Donc, nous parlons de 10 ans de contrat renouvelé.

M. le président, j'ai également appris qu'un appel d'offre lancé en 2019 avait été annulé. Un nouvel appel d'offre a ensuite été lancé par le CEB en août 2020, l'année ensuite, pour les sites critiques, mais aucun contrat n'a pu être attribué. En 2021, donc 3 années de suite, un nouvel appel d'offre couvrant l'ensemble des sites du CEB a été lancé. À l'issue de cet exercice, RSL Security Services a été retenu. Cette décision a été contestée par Brink's Mauritius Ltd devant l'*Independent Review Panel* qui a rejeté la requête.

M. le président, les deux appels d'offre infructueux en mars et en juin 2023, la société *Security and Property Protection Agency* a obtenu le contrat en septembre 2023 et a soumis son rapport final en novembre 2024. Entre-temps, Brink's Mauritius Ltd et RSL ont continué à assurer respectivement la sécurité des sites critiques et non critiques du CEB. Les contrats conclus en 2014 et 2015 faisant l'objet d'un examen mensuel. Donc, 10 ans de contrat continuent.

En mai 2025, à la suite des préoccupations exprimées par le nouveau Conseil d'administration du CEB, un nouvel appel d'offre a été lancé sur les sites critiques. Celui-ci a toutefois été annulé sur recommandation du Comité d'évaluation en raison des incohérences relevées dans les documents d'appel d'offre.

M. le président, j'ai également été informé que Brink's Mauritius Ltd avait soumis plusieurs demandes de révision tarifaire au CEB et avait indiqué qu'elle mettrait fin à ses services avant la fin de 2025 si ses demandes n'étaient pas satisfaites.

M. le président, compte tenu de cette situation et des délais impartis, le CEB a lancé quatre appels d'offre. Donc, ils ont *split* le contrat. Distinct pour une période transitoire de 6 mois dans l'attente du lancement d'un appel d'offre global. En ce jour, je dois informer la Chambre que quatre contrats d'une durée de 6 mois ont été attribués comme suit –

- Les services de sécurité pour les bureaux à RSL Services Ltd, R 1.598 millions.
- À Proguard Ltd pour les services de sécurité à R14,9 millions.
- À Proguard encore pour la sécurité des centrales thermiques à R 14,448,000, et
- À Proguard encore à R 13,416,000.

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, M. le président. Le ministre peut-il indiquer à la Chambre s'il trouve normal que la *Central Electricity Board* ait eu recours au fractionnement, c'est-à-dire à split des contrats de service de sécurité avant leur attribution et s'il estime qu'une telle pratique est acceptable ? Je vous remercie, M. le président.

Mr Assirvaden : Non, cette pratique n'est pas acceptable. Je suis fermement opposé à cette pratique de split de contrat comme le CEB l'a fait. Je l'ai dit au management du CEB, je l'ai dit au General Manager du CEB, l'actuel General Manager et au Board que cette façon de procéder ne cadre ni avec les principes de bonne gouvernance, ni avec l'obligation de garantir une utilisation rigoureuse des fonds publics. Vous savez, dans le passé, nous avons vu. Ce n'est pas normal que nous faisons la même chose de ce qui a été fait dans le passé à la *Central Water Authority* où R 700 millions ont été split en 70 petit contrats de R 10 millions pour pouvoir donner ici à droite et à gauche. Parce que quand on a split le contrat de plus de R 100 millions en des petits contrats pour pouvoir donner, ce qui se passe c'est que ce n'est pas le Board qui a été mis au courant. C'est le management qui a fait des cotations. Je viens de donner la liste à qui on a donné.

Donc, à mon avis, ce n'est pas acceptable. C'est pour cette raison que j'ai clairement exprimé ma position et la position au management du CEB, au Board du CEB et je souhaite que les futurs appels d'offres se déroulent dans les respects des normes de transparence et de bonne gestion. Donc j'attends à ce qu'un nouvel appel d'offre couvrant l'ensemble des sites du CEB qui est actuellement examiné et soit envoyé à la *Central Procurement Board* avant son lancement.

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

BEAU PLATEAU BYPASS – COTTAGE TO GOODLANDS

(No. B/1058) Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the Beau Plateau bypass linking Cottage to Goodlands, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to where matters stand regarding the –

(a) request for the classification thereof as "Classified Road", and

(b) implementation of proposed works thereat.

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to the Supplementary Question to Parliamentary Question B/257 on 07 April 2026, wherein I indicated that the Beau Plateau link road would be considered for classification as a main road under the Roads Act.

The Beau Plateau link road extends from the junction with Forbach Road B42 to the Mapou-Goodlands Road A5 over a length of approximately 3.80 kilometres. Following representations from the Citizens Advice Bureau, members of the public, the District Council of Rivière du Rempart and members of the National Assembly, as well as the Road Development Authority's technical assessment, the road has been identified as an important link between the Mapou-Goodlands Road A5 and the Forbach Road B42. The road also serves as a designated bus route, further reinforcing its strategic importance.

Accordingly, the RDA intends to classify the Beau Plateau link road from its junction with Forbach Road B42 to its junction with the Mapou-Goodlands Road A5 as a main road under the Roads Act.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to highlight that the Government is coming up with the construction of the Motorway M4, which will provide a direct, fast, safe and reliable route linking communities in the eastern region of Mauritius and improving regional connectivity while supporting economic development. The project consists of a dual carriageway of approximately 30 km, extending from Forbach on the M2 Motorway in the north to Belle Air in the east. It will join the Beau Plateau Road B43 at Mapou, near Verger de Labourdonnais and will pass through the villages of Poudre d'Or Hamlett and L'Espérance Trebuchet, intersecting with the Forbach Road B42 through a roundabout.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the RDA has already initiated action through its Board for the classification of the road. Thereafter, regulations will be made under section 32 and 74 of the Roads Act to change its status into a classified road and following its publication in the Government Gazette, the road will form part of the classified road network.

In the meantime, the RDA will carry out a detailed survey to determine the scope of works, the extent of land to be acquired and prepare the corresponding cost estimates.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, the RDA has carried out preliminary investigation to access to the road condition. The investigations revealed the following –

(i) major and deep settlement throughout the whole stretch;
(ii) longitudinal and lateral cracks;
(iii) various potholes formed due to the deterioration of asphalt;
(iv) no drainage system and road marking;
(v) accident prone zones due to its narrowness of the road;
(vi) width of existing road varying from 4.5 metre to 5.2 metre, and
(vii) approximately 40% of the road is found in build-up areas.

Once the road is classified, the RDA will undertake its upgrading.

Dr. Prayag: Thank you, hon. Minister, for your reply. Will the hon. Minister, in his position, be able to speed up procedures at the RDA so that this road is classified at the earliest possible because we had several accidents in that area and the road quality is degrading day by day?

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we already have a first batch of roads which the Board has already approved for classification. This road will form a second batch. We are not going to get only one road in the Board. So, we are taking batch by batch. So, it is coming in the next batch to be classified.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, you have one question.

Ms J. Bérenger: L'honorable ministre a reparlé de l'autoroute M4. Peut-il nous dire si un *EIA*, mis à jour, sera fait avec des consultations avec les habitants ?

Mr Gunness: We are taking all necessary steps to do what needs to be done before the road is constructed.

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

SAMU – AMBULANCES – MAINTENANCE & REPAIR COSTS

(No. /1059) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the SAMU, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

(a) number of ambulances at the disposal thereof, indicating the –
  (i) number thereof, region-wise;
  (ii) respective acquisition date, and
  (iii) number thereof currently operational and under repair, if any, respectively
(b) total maintenance and repair costs incurred therefor since January 2025 to date, and
(c) average response time to emergency calls, region-wise.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for the question because it concerns a service which is at the heart of emergency care in Mauritius.

I wish to state at the outset, that I am fully aware of the challenges facing the SAMU service. However, it is important for the House to understand that the issue is not only of vehicles. A SAMU is not simply an ambulance. It is an advanced life support service requiring a specialised team, proper medical regulation, trained doctors, nursing staff, drivers, equipment maintenance and a dispatch system capable of identifying real emergencies and sending the appropriate response.

Therefore, the strengthening of SAMU cannot be done by merely buying more vehicles. Procurement of SAMU ambulances must go hand in hand with recruitment, training and retention of specialised personnel. Otherwise, vehicles may be available, but teams may not be available to operate them safely on a 24-hour basis.

A SAMU team normally consists of one SAMU doctor, two nursing staff and one driver. The present human resource position includes 27 emergency physicians, 30 post graduate doctors under training who are expected to complete in June 2027, 72 nursing personnel deployed nationally within SAMU and ambulance services, 24 *permanenciers* and 23 drivers.

With the present human resource available, it is not possible to add additional SAMU teams on a 24-hour basis without proper recruitment and training. Staff are already

performing significant overtime to maintain existing coverage. However, my Ministry is working towards the setting up of an additional SAMU team.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is also important to make a distinction between SAMU ambulances and ordinary ambulances. A SAMU ambulance is an advanced life support ambulance staffed by trained personnel and used for life threatening emergencies such as cardiac arrest, severe respiratory distress, coma, serious road traffic accidents, major trauma and the transfer of critically ill patients.

An ordinary ambulance is mainly used for non-urgent transport including inter-hospital transfer, transport of patients for haemodialysis and transport of patients with physical impairments for appointments. In exceptional circumstances where SAMU is not immediately available, an ordinary ambulance may be used to ensure that the patient reaches hospital rapidly.

In regard to part a (i) and (ii) of the question, I am tabling the information pertaining to the allocation of SAMU region wise and the acquisition dates.

With regard to part a (iii) of the question, I am informed that presently the SAMU fleet consists of 15 vehicles, out of which12 are operational and three are under repair. It is worth noting that an additional SAMU is expected to be delivered during the course of this month, thus increasing the fleet to 16 vehicles. The newly acquired vehicle will be allocated to Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the total cost incurred from January 2025 to date for maintenance and repairs of 15 SAMU vehicles amounts to Rs3,537,040.60.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that the average national response time to emergency calls is around 13 to 17 minutes, depending on the distance from the hospital or base station, traffic, weather conditions, call volume, dispatch efficiency and fleet availability.

The SAMU is a national service, and a SAMU ambulance from one region may be dispatched to another region if this is the most appropriate operational response. We do not, therefore, calculate response time regionally. The demand for ambulance and SAMU services

has increased substantially, not only for life-threatening emergencies, but also for other urgent requests.

However, this increase in demand has not always been matched by the corresponding increase in capacity. Historically, the SAMU service increased from around five teams between 1997 and 2010 to seven teams between 2010 to 2014, and then to around 10 teams and as at now, there are 11 SAMU teams.

Since November 2024, my Ministry has implemented the renewal policy of the fleet of vehicles, including both SAMU and other ambulances as priority is being given to emergency response vehicles to patient transport vehicles after years of ageing fleet problems.

Accordingly, ambulances and SAMUs have been acquired as follows –

- For financial year 2024-2025, five ordinary ambulances;
- For 2025-2026, four SAMU vehicles;
- For the financial year 2026-2027, my Ministry has planned to acquire two SAMU vehicles and four ordinary ambulances.

In conclusion, I wish to reassure the House that priority is being given to the procurement of new SAMU vehicles as well as ordinary ambulances, the repair and maintenance of existing fleet, recruitment and training of specialised personnel, expansion of SAMU teams in a safe, sustainable manner, and the consideration of formalising collaboration with Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services, similarly to what is done in other countries.

The objective is clear: to ensure that when a Mauritian citizen faces a real medical emergency, the system is capable of responding rapidly, professionally and safely.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, l'honorable ministre ne convient-il pas que le renforcement des effectifs est tout aussi important que l'acquisition de nouvelles ambulances pour améliorer le temps de réponse aux urgences ?

Mr Bachoo: This is what I have entailed that the number of SAMU vehicles are increasing. At the same time, we are trying to increase the number of personnel as well.

Actually, there are 30 doctors who are being trained for that purpose. You cannot put any doctor, like those who are working in the hospitals. They need to have additional training for that purpose. That is being undertaken at Mauritius Institute of Health (MIH) and at the same time with Bordeaux University.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'ai une dernière question avec votre permission. L'honorable ministre a parlé de formation. De ce fait, peut-on savoir quelle formation est dispensée au personnel du SAMU afin de garantir une prise en charge conforme aux meilleures pratiques en médecine d'urgence ?

Mr Bachoo: Those emergency doctors, I am told, are supposed to be properly fit in order to handle dangerous cases like somebody suffering from cardiac arrest, or someone has faced a dangerous accident. In such situation, the doctor usually is specialised for that purpose. These are the SAMU doctors who are also working in our trauma centre as well. So, they have a different type of training to deal with cases urgently and immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table have been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/1060, B/1067 and B/1069.

ILLEGAL WATER CONNECTIONS – CASES DETECTED – FINES COLLECTED

(No. B/1060) Mr K. Lobine (**First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to illegal water connections, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, since January 2025 to date, information as to the number of cases thereof detected, indicating the –

(a) nature of the actions taken against the offenders, and

(b) total revenue collected in terms of fines in connection therewith.

(Withdrawn)

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

WATER SUPPLY – RESERVOIR STATUS – MITIGATION & LONG-TERM SECURITY MEASURES

(No. B/1061) Ms A. Savabaddy (First 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 Water Resources Unit, information as to –

(a) the current water level in each reservoir, indicating whether same will be sufficient to meet demand over the coming months;

(b) the measures taken/being envisaged to ensure continuity and reliability thereof;

(c) whether water restriction or rationing measures are being envisaged and, if so, give details thereof, and

(d) the medium- and long-term measures being implemented/envisaged to strengthen national water security and mitigating drought impacts.

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, en ce qui concerne la partie (a) de la question, la *Water Resources Commission* de mon ministère m'informe que le taux de remplissage des sept principaux réservoirs du pays est actuellement de 66,4% contre 88,6% à la même période de l'année dernière.

Je dépose la liste des différents remplissages des réservoirs du pays.

M. le président, outre le déficit global du stockage d'eau de 22%, il convient de souligner que le réservoir de Mare aux Vacoas, principale source d'inquiétude et d'approvisionnement en eau potable du plateau central, n'est actuellement rempli qu'à 45% de sa capacité.

Ce niveau est nettement inférieur à la moyenne historique ainsi qu'à celui enregistré l'année dernière. Au 14 juillet 2025, donc, aujourd'hui, le taux de remplissage du réservoir de Mare aux Vacoas s'élevait à 83,3% l'année dernière. Ce déficit de 38% l'année dernière et de cette année-ci représente l'équivalent de trois mois d'approvisionnement en eau pour le plateau central.

M. le président, cette situation résulte principalement d'une période prolongée de pluie inférieure à la moyenne observée au cours des derniers mois. Le récent phénomène El Niño a

également influencé les conditions météorologiques régionales, entraînant une diminution des pluies et des apports vers nos réservoirs, ce qui accentue les défis liés à la sécurité hydrique du pays.

M. le président, concernant les parties (b) et (c) de la question, la situation des ressources hydriques et de l'approvisionnement en eau à travers l'île fait l'objet d'un suivi rigoureux par la *Water Resources Commission* de mon ministère et la *Central Water Authority*. Compte tenu du déficit préoccupant enregistré au réservoir de Mare aux Vacoas et de la baisse persistante des pluies, la *CWA* a, depuis le 17 juin 2026, réduit les heures de distribution dans les régions de haute et basse Plaine Wilhems.

La situation continue d'être évaluée quotidiennement. Si les pluies demeurent nettement insuffisantes, des mesures restrictives pourraient être étendues à d'autres zones d'approvisionnement afin de préserver les ressources disponibles et de garantir la continuité des services jusqu'à la prochaine saison de pluie, attendue aux alentours de novembre et décembre de cette année-ci. Je tiens à rappeler que nous n'avons pas bénéficié des pluies estivales attendues l'année dernière.

Donc, en hiver l'année dernière, la pluie a été inférieure. Espérons que cette année-ci, ce n'est pas le cas. Les précipitations ont été largement inférieures à la moyenne et le mois de février, habituellement le plus arrosé de l'année, a été cette fois-ci l'un des plus secs.

M. le président, concernant la partie (d) de la question, mon ministère a mis en œuvre plusieurs mesures à moyen et long terme afin de renforcer la sécurité hydrique nationale. Le gouvernement a ainsi approuvé en octobre de l'année dernière, en 2025, la mise en œuvre d'un plan Marshall sur une période de deux à trois ans, articulé autour des six piliers suivants.

Les piliers de *borehole* ; je l'ai dit à plusieurs reprises. Les six piliers que nous avons élaborés sur lesquels nous travaillons. Par ailleurs, afin de répondre aux besoins en eau dans les régions du sud et sud-est, la procédure d'appel d'offres pour la construction du barrage de Rivière des Anguilles est actuellement en cours. Le démarrage des travaux, espérons-le, est prévu à la fin de cette année-ci.

Nous avons aussi d'autres projets. Par exemple, nous avons le projet de l'agrandissement du réservoir de La Ferme à Bambous. Nous avons aussi la réhabilitation et

la modernisation du canal d'alimentation pour La Nicolière. Nous voulons agrandir La Nicolière parce que La Nicolière alimente que le nord. Donc, Midlands alimente La Nicolière et La Nicolière alimente le nord en domestique et aussi pour les agriculteurs.

Nous avons aussi les 114 km de tuyaux qu'il faut changer à travers la ligne indienne que j'ai précisée un peu plus tôt. Nous allons commencer à partir d'août de cette année-ci. Donc, les 43 km qui vont dans quatre régions, le travail va commencer en août de cette année-ci.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Ms Savabaddy!

Ms Savabaddy: Merci, M. le président. La situation est quelque peu inquiétante. L'honorable ministre peut-il dire s'il existe un plan de long terme pour mettre fin au stress hydrique et non pas seulement aux mesures temporaires en période de sécheresse ? Merci.

Mr Assirvaden: Oui, bien sûr. Le plan, comme je le disais un peu plus tôt, est articulé autour de six piliers. C'est à long terme. Moi, en tant que ministre, je ne dirais jamais que le 24/7 va être pour demain. Loin de là !

Donc, ce gouvernement n'a pas la prétention de dire que nous allons du jour au lendemain régler ce problème. Notre souci, c'est qu'il y a le changement climatique. Notre souci, c'est que nous perdons 62% de l'eau que nous mettons sur nos réseaux. Ce que nous avons fait jusqu'ici en une année et demie, c'est que nous avons augmenté la capacité pour mettre sur le réseau.

Donc, nous avons *drill* plusieurs *boreholes* et nous avons actuellement 52 CPF qui puisent de l'eau dans les rivières pour être traitée pour mettre sur le réseau. Nous avons passé une commande et acheté autour de 20 CPF pour d'autres rivières, pour pouvoir augmenter sur le réseau. Nous avons aussi demandé au CEB l'eau que le CEB utilise pour faire le hydro à la fin de la production, de l'usage. La CWA en collaboration avec le CEB à *Tamarind Falls*, puise l'eau pour remettre sur le réseau de la CWA. Avant, cette eau se perdait dans la mer.

Nous avons aussi demandé à la *Wastewater Management* de proposer au secteur privé d'acheter de l'eau traitée pour l'irrigation. Nous savons qu'il y a une réticence pour arroser les plantes avec l'eau traitée, mais nous avons demandé à la *Wastewater Management* de voir avec la l'agriculture, l'irrigation, le ministère de l'Agro, parce que nous rejetons 50 000 ou 60 000 mètres cube d'eau dans la mer tous les jours, de la *Wastewater Management*. L'eau est

traitée bien sûr à un niveau peut-être pas assez appréciable pour pouvoir être utilisée, mais c'est l'eau qui est jetée. Donc ceci dit, je dois le dire, pour faire prendre conscience et rentabiliser et mettre les moyens à nos dispositions, nous travaillons aussi sur des révisions tarifaires actuellement, au niveau industriel, commercial et pas domestique, bien sûr. Nous travaillons aussi sur les six piliers à moyen et long terme, mais aussi des révisions tarifaires d'ici le mois prochain.

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

BUDGET SPEECH 2026-2027 – FISH FARMING SITES – PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT

(No. B/1062) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the proposed establishment of 28 fish farming sites, namely, 20 in-lagoon, 8 off-lagoon and 6 in barachois, as announced in the Budget Speech 2026-2027, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

(a) the criteria and selection process applicable;

(b) whether an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment will be required prior to the award of contract, particularly, regarding the in-lagoon sites, and

(c) the measures being envisaged to safeguard the interests and livelihoods of traditional artisanal fishers in the localities concerned therewith.

Dr. Boolell: I thank the hon. First Member for Montagne Blanche and Grand River South East for his question.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, local and international applicants who wish to engage in fish farming activities in the fish farming zones will be evaluated on the basis of –

(i) their proposal for the type of aquaculture project and methodology to be used;

(ii) the site location and the rationale;

(iii) the infrastructure, equipment and technology to be adopted;

(iv) the implementation phases;

(v) the job creation plan;

(vi) the contribution to community development;

(vii) environmental safeguard and risk management measures, as well as stakeholder engagement.

As far as the selection process is concerned, proposal for all future aquaculture projects will be evaluated by a technical committee under the aegis of the Economic Development Board. This committee will comprise representatives of the Fisheries Division and the competent authority of the Ministry, representatives of the Ministry of Finance, of the Ministry of Housing and Lands, Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, including the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Division, and of course, representatives of Ministry of Tourism, Department for Continental Shelf, Maritime Zones Administration and Exploration, and the EDB and then, of course, the *Association des Hôteliers et Restaurateurs de l'île Maurice*, there will be a representative from the association. The technical committee will, therefore, submit its recommendations to the supervising officer of the Ministry.

As regard barachois, an Expression of Interest was launched by the Ministry in May 2025 to invite potential promoters. However, none of the 13 proposals received could be recommended by the Evaluation Committee set up at the level of the Ministry, as the project did not meet minimum requirements as established in the policy of barachois to qualify for allocation of a barachois.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government is committed to leveraging investment to increase our fish production capacity, support import substitution and improve national food security. However, the criteria established by the previous government were too prohibitive for potential promoters to be able to engage in aquaculture activities in barachois. Now, if we want to encourage investment in this sector, the barachois policy has to be reviewed. In this regard, my Ministry has already initiated consultations with relevant stakeholders, including Ministry of Finance, Housing and Lands, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change and EDB to review the barachois policy.

As regards part (b) of the question, once a project for fish farming zone is approved, the promoter will be issued with an authorisation in principle by the Ministry to enable him to apply for an Environment Impact Assessment licence from the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change and for concession from Prime Minister's

Office. For fish farming within a barachois, I am advised by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change that there is no requirement for an EIA licence under the Environment Act.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further advised that a Social Impact Assessment will be required only for large scale projects in fish farming zone. Promoters will be required to identify the impact of the proposed project on the local community and to indicate the benefits which shall accrue to the local community, as well as to small entrepreneurs in terms of employment and business opportunities. The promoters will also be required to submit their proposal for stakeholder engagement. Upon signature of the Deed of Concession, the promoter will be eligible to apply for a Fish Farming Licence with the Ministry to operate the aquaculture project in the allocated fish farming zone.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerning part (c) of the question, I wish to reassure the House that promoters intending to conduct fish farming activities in both fish farming zones and in barachois will mandatorily need to carry out stakeholder consultations with, *inter alia*, traditional fishers, Non-Governmental Organisations, tourism operators in the relevant localities to address and resolve any conflict that may arise, as I previously stated through my intervention on the Budget Speech, at our Sitting of 25 June 2026, we will make sure that everybody is taken on board. There will be wide and open discussion with all stakeholders, be they traditional artisanal fishers or the NGOs and we will make sure that there is a call for fishers to be part of the process.

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

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY – WASTE SEGREGATION & MARKET WASTE - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/1063) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the elaboration of a Solid Waste Management Strategy, he will state where matters stand, indicating the –

(a) expected implementation date thereof, and

(b) measures being envisaged to encourage –

  (i) waste segregation at source, and

  (ii) composting of market waste by local authorities.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry had started the elaboration of a new waste management strategy and an action plan in two phases with the assistance of the *Agence Française de Développement* since March 2017. The appointed consultant, Tractebel ENGIE from Belgium submitted the phase one strategy report in December 2017, laying emphasis on the need to shift to sustainable waste management with focus resource recovery and incorporating the principle of circular economy. The strategy comprised of five strategic areas of sustainable waste management, namely –

(i) prevention and environmentally responsible consumption;

(ii) increase of resource recovery;

(iii) provision of technologies for energy recovery from waste;

(iv) provision of adequate disposal infrastructure, and

(v) information, education and communication.

In phase two, a feasibility study report on regional composting plants and sorting units on public-private partnership basis was submitted in July 2021. Government took note of the recommendations of the feasibility study report on 13 August 2021, including the implementation of a waste segregation at source to ensure the successful operation of the composting plants and sorting units.

In February 2022, the services of a Transaction Advisor, namely Kukuza Property Development Corporation was enlisted by the BOT Project Unit, with prepared project documentations, to carry out the procurement exercise.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 03 October 2024, following approval of Government, my Ministry entered into concession agreements with the concessionaire, namely Sotravic Limitée, for the setting up of an operation of two integrated waste processing facilities in the northern and western regions. Upon start of operations of the two IWPFs, it is expected to divert some 208,000 tonnes of waste from the Mare Chicose Landfill on an annual basis, raising the recycling rate performance from 6% to 45%. The IWPF project is currently in the pre-construction phase, with the concessionaire and Government having to meet their respective conditions precedent before the construction of the IWPFs can start.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, it is expected that the IWPF will come into operation by end of 2028. Source segregation and collection of sorted

waste by local authorities at national level will be effective only if the waste receiving infrastructures and regulatory framework are put in place.

With the advent of the IWPF project coming into operation, my Ministry is holding consultation with large commercial organisations with a view to enhance source segregation of waste –

- drafting of regulations based on the Extended Producer Responsibility Principle for the management of e-waste and plastic beverage containers;
- preparing feasibility study with the assistance of the European Union on the management of construction, demolition waste and regulations to make the sorting and recycling of such waste compulsory;
- finalisation of a regulation for the management of end-of-life vehicles, and
- collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government on a source segregation programme in District Councils on pilot basis.

With regard to part (b) of the question, it is highlighted that the proximity principle in waste management means that waste should be treated or disposed as close as reasonably possible to where it is generated. This reduces transport costs, greenhouse gas emissions, traffic impacts and environmental risks, while encouraging local responsibility for waste management. Along this line of reasoning, this policy will be discussed and is being discussed with the Minister of Local Government and local authorities. Our aim is to reduce as much waste going to Mare Chicose Landfill through upstream recovery of resources and recycling.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Member.

Mr Ramdass: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in respect of part (b) of the question, may we have a timeline from the hon. Minister as to the implementation of same?

Mr Bhagwan: Well, I would say, there is an established timeline, but we, at the Ministry, are not happy because we have inherited such a situation. We are working on the process. It all depends on the concessionaire, and then also on other practicalities during the course of action of the project.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. First Member for Vacoas!

Ms J. Bérenger: Étant donné le retard dans l'implémentation du projet et les manquements du concessionnaire, quelles actions sont envisagées par le ministère, s'il vous plaît ?

Mr Bhagwan: There are delays. There is definitely a delay in the implementation of the project. We are working with the State Law Office to see what are in the terms of the concession agreement, and see how we can take action. It is both ways. It is not only on the part of the concessionaire but also, on the part of Government itself, with the recruitment of engineers. There have been delays because we have inherited this project as it was.

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

SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGE BAMBOUS – ALLEDGED MISMANAGEMENT – REMEDIAL ACTIONS

(No. B/1064) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the recent allegations of mismanagement at the SOS Villages d'Enfants Maurice and the findings of the Ombudsperson for Children regarding same, particularly, the Bambous Village, she will state whether an inquiry has been initiated thereinto and, if so, indicate –

(a) the prompt measures taken, if any, by her Ministry for the protection, welfare and psychological support of the children concerned, and

(b) whether the monitoring and accountability mechanisms applicable to non-governmental organisations and institutions entrusted with the care of vulnerable children will be revisited.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Residential Care Institutions (RCIs) for Children Regulations 2022, made under the Children's Act 2020, establish a comprehensive regulatory framework governing the operation of residential care institutions for children. The regulations provide, *inter alia*, for the licensing and registration of institutions, inspections, record keeping, management, staffing, food provision, transport, security and reporting obligations. In accordance with

these regulations, officers of my Ministry carry out regular inspection visits to RCIs to ensure compliance with the prescribed norms and standards.

I am informed that during routine inspections carried out at SOS Children's Village Bambous, officers of my Ministry identified a number of shortcomings which were immediately brought to the attention of the management of the institution. My Ministry was also made aware of allegations of mismanagement from various sources. The main shortcomings identified were as follows –

- the absence of a Village Manager;
- shortage of staff resulting in inadequate supervision of children;
- inadequate provision of fresh vegetables, fruits and dairy products;
- irregular disbursement of the monthly household budget;
- deficiencies in record keeping, and
- poor standards of cleanliness in certain houses.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that in view of the allegations levelled, and in line with the principle of the best interest of the child, my Ministry took immediate measures to ensure the protection, welfare and well-being of the children residing at SOS Children's Village Bambous. Consequently, an urgent meeting was convened at my Ministry, on 02 April 2026, with the Managing Director and representatives of SOS Children’s Village Mauritius, the Secretary of the NSIF, National Social Inclusion Foundation, and officers of my Ministry to address these issues and agree on immediate corrective measures.

During the meeting, the management of the institution acknowledged the challenges being encountered and undertook –

- to recruit a Village Manager at the earliest to ensure the proper management and supervision of the village;
- to recruit additional staff to address existing manpower shortages;

- to secure a new supplier to ensure the regular provision of fruits, vegetables and dairy products, and

- to regularise the disbursement of the monthly household budget.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry immediately reinforced its monitoring of the institution. As from 02 April 2026, Enforcement Officers of my Ministry carried out daily inspection visits to closely monitor the implementation of the agreed corrective measures and ensure that the welfare of the children remained fully safeguarded.

I am informed that, following this continuous monitoring, the SOS Children's Village Bambous has implemented a number of corrective measures. These include –

- ensuring the regular supply and distribution of food items, including fresh fruits, vegetables and dairy products;

- enhancing standards of cleanliness within the residential houses;

- strengthening record keeping procedures;

- ensuring the timely allocation and distribution of household budgets, and

- the appointment of an Assistant Village Manager by the Management of SOS Children’s Village, who assumed duty on 13 April 2026. Upon successful completion of the prescribed six-month training programme and subject to a satisfactory Performance Appraisal, she will be confirmed in the post of Village Manager.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, thereafter, the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children had also conveyed recommendations in respect of the situation at SOS Children's Village Bambous.

I wish to highlight that my Ministry had already taken appropriate actions, as indicated earlier in my reply, to ensure compliance to standards of care at the institution.

Mr Deputy Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question. I wish to inform the House that my Ministry is currently reviewing the residential care institutions for Children’s Regulation 2022 with a view to further strengthening the regulatory framework governing

Residential Care Institutions. The review will reinforce monitoring and inspection mechanisms, strengthen governance and accountability requirements, enhance service delivery standards, and ensure a more effective continuum of care for children placed in residential institutions.

In this context, my Ministry organised a consultative workshop with stakeholders on 08 and 09 April 2026. The policy orientations, which would be included in the new regulations, are being validated. My Ministry will continue to exercise close oversight over all residential care institutions and will not hesitate to take any action warranted under the law to ensure that the rights, welfare, and best interest of every child entrusted to institutional care are fully protected.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes!

Ms J. Bérenger: Merci. L'honorable ministre peut-elle nous dire si le personnel de l'institution, mis à part la dame qui sera promue *Village Manager* et qui, j'ai bien compris, suit une formation, mis à part elle, est-ce que le reste du personnel bénéficie d'une formation sur la protection de l'enfance, la prévention des abus et le signalement obligatoire des abus ?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Je ne suis pas en présence de cette information. Je peux rechercher l'information et *table the information.*

Ms J. Bérenger : En attendant que les nouvelles régulations soient mises en place, est-ce que l'honorable ministre peut nous assurer qu'il existe bien déjà au sein de l'institution, une procédure assurant une confidentialité et qui puisse permettre non seulement aux enfants, mais aussi au personnel de partager leurs inquiétudes ?

The Deputy Prime Minister: C'est ce que nous faisons, M. le président.

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

FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMISSION – FORMER CEO – EMPLOYMENT TERMS, OVERSEAS VISITS & RESIGNATION REASON

(No. B/1065) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning whether, in regard to Mr D. V., former Chief Executive Officer of the Financial Services Commission, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

(a) his terms and conditions of employment, official overseas visits undertaken and costs thereof, during his tenure of office, and

(b) the stated reasons for his resignation.

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Mr. D.V. was appointed Chief Executive of the Financial Services Commission on a three years contract basis with effect from 16 September 2025, and he resigned with effect from 30 June 2026.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the terms and conditions of the contract of the former Chief Executive were as follows –

(a) a monthly salary of Rs375,000;

(b) a monthly entertainment allowance of Rs15,000;

(c) an official car with a driver, and

(d) 25% gratuity upon completion of 12 month of satisfactory service.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to official overseas visits undertaken, I am informed that during his tenure from 16 September 2025 to 30 June 2026, Mr. D.V. proceeded on three overseas missions at a total cost of Rs2,001,789.

I am hereby tabling the details regarding the mission attended and the cost incurred for each mission in terms of air ticket, per diem, and other allowances.

Finally, with regard to part (b) of the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Mr. D.V. notified the FSC on 01 May 2026 of his decision to step down from his position as Chief Executive for family reasons as he needed to be physically outside the country to attend to same.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes!

Mr Rookny: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Could the hon. Minister please advise the House, given the very short tenure of the ex-Chief Executive of the FSC, whether he was pressured in any manner by either politicians or whomsoever to leave the FSC at an earlier time?

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, there were some press reports – when he resigned recently – that there was pressure on him to resign for all sorts of reasons. It was also being said in certain quarters that there was pressure on him to resign. I had called him personally, at least twice, to have one-to-one conversation with him and asked him whether there was any issue. On both times, he reassured me that he was very committed to working

at the FSC, and that, unfortunately, he had a very personal family situation that required for him to be abroad.

In fact, between December and June, he had to travel back to his home country where his family is, at least three times, to attend to family matters. So, I can only say that I can only trust what he told me that he had to resign, unfortunately and regretfully, for family reasons.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes!

Mr Seeburn: Can the hon. Minister inform the House as to whether the appointment of a new Chief Executive Officer is in the pipeline or any timeframe for such an appointment?

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the moment, there is a COO who has been recruited by the board, who is acting as Officer-in-Charge. The process for the recruitment of a new CEO will be undertaken.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. First Member for Savanne & Black River!

CASE NOYALE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE – MEDICAL SERVICES & RENOVATION

(**No. B/1066) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the Community Health Centre at Case Noyale, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

(a) construction year thereof, indicating the number of times same has been renovated;

(b) medical services provided thereat, indicating the number of staff posted and average weekly attendance of patients thereat, and

(c) medical supplies stock held thereat at any given time.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Case Noyale Community Health Centre is presently housed in an old colonial building vested in my Ministry since more than 30 years.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that there are no records available at the level of my Ministry regarding the exact year of construction of the building. I am further informed that in 2021, renovation works comprising concrete flooring and provision of a covered bin for clinical waste were carried thereat. In addition, maintenance and repair

works are being undertaken by the maintenance team at the hospital level as and when required.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the Case Noyale CHC provides the same services as other CHCs, namely general consultations, dressing of wounds, vaccination, and community rehabilitation services, antenatal clinic, non-communicable diseases services, family planning, blood collection, services of a nutritionist. The Case Noyale CHC operates from 08h00 in the morning to 16h00 in the afternoon on weekdays and from 08.00 a.m. to noon on Saturdays. The facility is closed on Sundays. One male nursing officer, one female nursing officer, and one general worker service are at the Case Noyale CHC on a daily basis from Monday to Saturday.

In addition, a medical health officer is deployed to conduct half-day consultation sessions on a daily basis. The average weekly attendance of patients at Case Noyale CHC is around 40.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed there is an adequate stock of medicines and medical supplies comprising, *inter alia*, medicines for management of non-communicable diseases and other common medical conditions, antibiotics, analgesics, and anti-inflammatory medicines, syrups, suppositories, injectable medicines and other pharmaceutical products to cater for patients attending the Case Noyale CHC.

The Case Noyale CHC maintains approximately one month stock of medical supplies, which is replenished through established supply arrangements. Where additional supplies are required before the schedule replenishment cycle, these are obtained from nearby healthcare facilities, including Dr. Yves Cantin Community Hospital and Victoria Hospital, thereby ensuring continuity of supplies and uninterrupted healthcare services.

I wish to emphasise that my Ministry has taken all necessary action within its purview to address the infrastructural constraints at Case Noyale Community Health Centre. Following site visit conducted by officers of my Ministry, action was initiated for the construction of a new building to house the CHC at existing site.

However, my Ministry was informed that the existing site was unsuitable as it was insufficient in extent and situated within the high-water mark. Furthermore, no suitable land had been identified in the region for same purpose.

In view of these constraints, my Ministry actively pursued an alternative solution for construction of a container type facility on the existing site.

The Minister of National Infrastructure was requested to undertake the necessary technical studies and design works, and the project has been earmarked under the list of projects under preparation in the budget estimates of my Ministry. Further progress on the project remains dependent on the completion of the required technical processes by MNI, including a geotechnical investigation and the submission of necessary cost estimates.

My Ministry will be in a position to proceed with the subsequent stages of the project upon receipt of the required technical inputs from MNI. Another option is to shift the services of CHC into an adjacent building which was used to accommodate the ex-Post Office and ex-Civil Status Office. Accordingly, consultations are ongoing with the Civil Status Division regarding the feasibility of the relocation.

CAMP FOUQUEREAUX FOOTBALL GROUND – RECONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE

(No. B/1067) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Camp Fouquereaux Football Ground, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the urgent remedial measures being envisaged for the –

(a) reconstruction of the dilapidated synthetic pitch and provision for the future maintenance thereof, and

(b) installation of a new floodlighting system at the adjacent playground, indicating in each case, the expected start and completion dates thereof.

(Withdrawn)

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

FOREIGN SPECIALIST DOCTORS – MEDICAL SPECIALITIES – SELECTION CRITERIA

(No. B/1068) Dr. Ms R. Daureawoo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the engagement of the services of foreign specialist doctors in specific medical fields through international visits to Mauritius, he will state –

(a) the medical specialties concerned therewith;

(b) the selection criteria used, and

(c) whether an assessment of the unavailability of the required expertise locally prior thereto was carried out and, if so, indicate the findings thereof.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry enlists the services of foreign specialist doctors through short-term international visiting missions with the objective of providing highly specialised clinical services, facilitating knowledge transfer, strengthening the capacity of our local healthcare professionals and reducing the associated costs for sending patients abroad for overseas treatment.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the medical specialties for which foreign specialist doctors come to Mauritius include, amongst others –

- Oncology and Paediatric Oncology;
- Vascular Surgery;
- Renal Transplant;
- Cardiothoracic Surgery;
- Spine Surgery;
- Neurosurgery;
- Urology;
- Laparoscopic Surgery;
- Thoracic Surgery;

- Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Surgery;
- Ophthalmology including vitreoretinal surgery and corneal transplantation;
- Haematology, and
- Other highly specialised disciplines such as autism and diabetic foot care as and when the need arises.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has entered Memorandum of Understanding with several Private Health Institutions in India in the field of healthcare delivery. These MOUs provide for the treatment of patients inoperable in Mauritius abroad. The MOUs also cater for the training of our health professionals and the dispatch of consultants to Mauritius to carry out complex surgeries.

Under the MOUs, my Ministry provides air fares, accommodation and transport facilities. In addition, many Mauritian doctors who have settled abroad often visit the country to provide their services on a pro bono basis. My Ministry also provides air tickets. Furthermore, my Ministry also benefit from visit of other highly specialised doctors from UK, South Africa, Australia, France and United States of America who undertake complex surgeries in different fields.

I wish to highlight but a few examples of such doctors who provide their services to my Ministry on a voluntary basis. Dr. Rittoo, a vascular surgeon from UK comes to Mauritius every two months and has already operated on or around 100 cases since his first visit. Professor Patrick and Cynthia Yu from UK also come to Mauritius to carry out glaucoma screenings.

Presently, Dr. Heerani Woodun, a Mauritian born, and Dr. Shailendra Singh from UK are in Mauritius to conduct onco-paediatric surgeries. In the same vein, Dr. Vinay Kumar, a vascular surgeon from India is also in Mauritius to perform complex cases. Dr. Jeena Joseph Rosemary, an onco-surgeon from India is also in Mauritius to conduct complex surgeries at National Cancer Centre as from today.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the beginning of the year, other eminent specialists in different fields have also come to Mauritius to carry out complex surgeries. To name a few,

in January 2026, Dr. Ashley D'Cruz, and his team carried out seven complex paediatric surgeries while Professor Ravi Ramalingam from India performed 12 ENT surgeries. In addition to the above, there is a team of specialists and paramedical staff presently undertaking cataract surgeries.

In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the waiting list for patients awaiting cataract surgeries has gone up to more than 2,500. With the existing capacity of our local ophthalmologists, around 75 to 80 surgeries are being performed on a weekly basis. At this rate, many patients would have lost their eyesight before being considered for surgery.

In accordance with the provision of the MOU, KIMS Hospital has, therefore, sent its medical team to undertake these surgeries and up to now, 550 patients have already been operated. It is expected that the waiting list will be cleared by mid-September. The expenses incurred for these interventions include costs of airfares, accommodation and a fee of Rs5,500 per intervention. This amount is far less than the sum which was paid by the previous government. From May 2023 to August 2024, an amount of Rs116,790,000 was paid by the previous government to private clinics in Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerning part (b) of the question, the engagement of foreign specialist doctors is based on the following selection criteria –

(i) lack of specialised expertise in the public health sector;

(ii) need to perform complex procedures which are not routinely available locally or for which local capacity is limited;

(iii) potential to reduce the number of patients requiring treatment overseas;

(iv) expected contribution of visiting specialists towards the training, and skill transfer to local specialists and other healthcare professionals;

(v) availability of required infrastructure, equipment and multi-disciplinary support in the public hospital, and

(vi) experience and recognised expertise of the visiting specialist.

Prior to the engagement of foreign specialist doctors, my Ministry carries out an assessment of the availability of the required expertise within the public health sector. The assessment is conducted by the relevant clinical departments and technical officers, taking into consideration the existing human resource capacity, the complexity of the procedures required, patient demand and waiting list, as well as the continuity and sustainability of the services.

The assessments have identified that in certain highly specialised medical fields, there is either no specialist available in the public sector or an insufficient number of specialists to adequately meet service demands. In some instances, although specialists are available locally, additional expertise is required for highly complex procedures, the introduction of new techniques and technologies or to provide advanced training to local medical teams.

Accordingly, my Ministry continues to engage foreign specialist doctors on a need basis to complement existing local expertise, improve patient access to specialised healthcare services, reduce waiting times, minimise referrals for overseas treatment and strengthen the capacity of the public healthcare system through knowledge and transfer skill.

FORMER SUPREME COURT OF MAURITIUS – LAND & BUILDING – CURRENT USE

(No. B/1069) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Attorney-General whether, in regard to the land and buildings which formerly housed the Supreme Court of Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

(a) current use made thereof, and

(b) project, if any, earmarked for implementation thereat, if any.

(Withdrawn)

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over! Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/1070, B/1072, B/1073, B/1074, B/1075, B/1076, B/1077, B/1078 and B/1080.

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: Madam Speaker will take the Chair.

At this stage, Madam Speaker took the Chair.

PUBLIC BILL

Second Reading

THE MAURITIUS HYDROGRAPHIC SERVICES BILL

(NO. XI OF 2026)

Order for Second Reading read.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister!

(3.40 p.m.)

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Mohamed): Thank you, Madam.

Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Mauritius Hydrographic Services Bill (No. XI of 2026) be read a second time.

Madam Speaker, this is a short Bill, 17 clauses and five parts, yet it addresses one of the oldest responsibilities a maritime nation owes. The duty to know, to measure, to publish the truth about its own waters.

For an Island State whose land area is 2040 km^2, but whose maritime jurisdiction extends over some 2.3 million km^2 of the Indian Ocean, that duty is a foundational attribute of sovereignty.

Every chart used by a vessel entering Port Louis, every depth sounding of Rodrigues, every survey line run over the Saya de Malha Bank is a sovereign act. It says, this water is Mauritian, and Mauritius is answerable for its safety, its science, its commerce. Until today, that Act has been carried out by a small but dedicated hydrographic unit of my Ministry, operating under administrative practice rather than statute. This Bill at last gives that work the legal foundation it has always deserved.

Madam Speaker, three converging realities have made this Bill urgent. First, Legal, Mauritius is a State party to UNCLOS and to SOLAS. Chapter 5, Regulation 9 of SOLAS obliges every contracting Government to arrange for the collection of hydrographic data and the publication of nautical information. We have honoured that obligation by administrative practice. This Bill translates that practice into law.

La deuxième réalité, Madame la présidente, est d'ordre géographique. Elle est décisive. Le 22 mai 2025, la République de Maurice et le Royaume-Uni ont conclu l'accord sur l'archipel des Chagos par lequel, le Royaume-Uni reconnaît la souveraineté pleine et entière de Maurice sur l'ensemble de l'archipel. À cela s'ajoute notre soumission à la Commission des limites du plateau continental concernant la région de Rodrigues, environ 183,000 km^2 au-delà de la ligne des 200 milles marins, ainsi que la zone de cogestion conjointe convenue avec la République de Seychelles et sur le plateau des Mascareignes.

L'espace maritime placé sous notre souveraineté figure désormais parmi les plus vastes de tous les petits états insulaires de l'océan Indien. Or, Madame la présidente, on ne gouverne pas ce que l'on n'a pas mesuré. On ne défend pas ce qu'on n'a pas cartographié. On n'exploite pas légitimement ce qu'on n’a pas relevé. Ce projet de loi nous donne précisément l'instrument statutaire pour faire les trois.

The third, Madam Speaker, is economic. Four submarine telecommunication cables SAFE, LION/LION 2, MARS and T3, land on our shores, carrying more than 98% of our international data traffic. Port Louis handles the vast majority of our external trade. Our Exclusive Economic Zone contains significant tuna fisheries, prospective offshore renewable

energy sites, and some of the most ecologically important coral ecosystems in the Western Indian Ocean.

Each one of those interests, Madam Speaker, depends on reliable hydrographic knowledge. I would add a fourth reality. Mauritian industry has been asking for this clarity. Marine consultancies, port engineering firms, cable operators, cruise liners, insurers, and offshore developers have all indicated that the absence of clear statutory framework is a friction cost in their operations. This Bill removes that friction.

Madam Speaker, this legislation confers five clear advantages on the Republic. First, data sovereignty in law, clause 12 declares that all hydrographic data collected within our maritime zone shall be deemed the property of the State. When a foreign research vessel surveys our seabed, when a private consultancy maps a reef, when a cable lay-up contractor charts a corridor across the continental shelf, the resulting data does not leave Mauritius as a commercial byproduct. It vests in the Republic. It becomes national heritage. This aligns us with Norway, France, Australia, and Canada and moves us decisively beyond the colonial era arrangements under which our waters were surveyed and the data retained by others.

Second, full charting authority over the Chagos Archipelago. I say again, full charting authority over the Chagos Archipelago and the extended shelf. Following the 2025 agreement, the primary right to publish official nautical charts of the archipelago passes in coordination with the United Kingdom hydrographic office, to Mauritius. Without this Bill, we would be a sovereign without a cartographer.

Third, explicit compliance with SOLAS, UNCLOS, and the standards of IHO, IALA, and IMO, all named in Clause 5. Mauritius will discharge its international obligations not by administrative circular, but by Act of Parliament. A distinction material to every ship owner, every classification society and every marine insurer.

Fourth, a single authoritative national voice. Clause 6 creates the office of the Chief Hydrographer, who will be the single point of contact with the IHO, with foreign hydrographic officers, and with ships' masters reporting charts errors in our waters.

Fifth, reinforcement of our regional leadership. Mauritius currently holds the Vice Chair of the Southern African and Islands Hydrographic Commission of the IHO. The Bill

signals to that community that we intend to hold that seat with the full authority of the statute behind us.

Madam Speaker, sovereignty is the frame within which lies tangible economic opportunity. I highlight five streams of value. First, recurring revenue from electronic navigational charts. Every SOLAS class vessel is required to carry digital charts, distributed through the IHO regional ENC coordinating centres, and licensed on a paid basis. Once established with statutory chart issuing authority, Mauritius becomes a producer nation, and every ENC cell covering our waters, represents a recurring royalty to the Republic.

Second, a more competitive Mauritius. Modern, up-to-date, large-scale charts reduce insurance, insurance premium, permit deeper draft vessels to call with confidence and shorten pilotage times.

Third, derisking of the submarine cable industry. Clause 9 establishes a licensing regime for route surveys, deposits the resulting bathymetry with the national custodian and protects the corridors from unauthorised interference. For cable operators, this is not a burden, it is regulatory certainty.

Fourth, a regulated market for private hydrographic surveys. Clause 8 explicitly provides for private persons to conduct surveys subject to authorisation. It creates a market with rules, and markets with rules attract investment.

Fifth, is the foundation for offshore energy, climate resilience, and marine tourism. You cannot site an offshore wind turbine without knowing the seabed. You cannot expand a fishery sustainability without knowing its habitat.

You cannot defend a coastline against sea level rise without repeat *bathymétrie.* The Bill creates the institution that will hold, curate, and release the data on which every one of these industries depends.

Madam Speaker, I would add that the hydrographic data assembled by the MHS will constitute the foundational geospatial layer for any future scientific or economic assessment of our seabed. From marine spatial planning to fisheries habitat mapping to the eventual evaluation of seabed resources. Yes, seabed resources. Whatever choices future Governments

may make in those domains, they will make them on the basis of Mauritian data, held in Mauritian custody under Mauritian law.

Clause 1, Madam Speaker, provides the short title. Allow me to run through the clauses very briefly. Clause 2 provides the interpretations. Hydrographic data is defined broadly. Nautical chart includes both paper charts and electronic navigational charts. The definitions are drawn from IHO publications so that Mauritian law speaks the same technical language as the international community.

Madam Speaker, Clause 3 first establishes the MHS as a department of my Ministry. Clause 4 sets out its objects.

Clause 5 catalogues its functions, the collection of hydrographic data, the production, publication and updating of nautical charts, the maintenance of uniformity with IHO standards, the assurance that surveys meet established benchmarks, and the representation of Mauritius in international hydrographic fora.

Administration – Clauses 6 and 7. Clause 6 establishes the office of the Chief Hydrographer, a public officer with technical qualifications recognised by the IHO. Clause 7 provides for staff drawn from officers of my Ministry. This is a lean structure. No parastatal, no board with per diems.

This is for Clauses 8 to 13, the operative heart of the Bill. Clause 8 requires authorisation for any non-MHS hydrographic survey, a quality assurance mechanism, not a barrier to entry. Clause 9 sets the conditions of authorisation referenced to IHO Special Publication S-44. Clause 10 reserves the issuance of official charts to the MHS. Clause 11 confers carefully circumscribed power of entry onto adjacent land, preserving any right to compensation. Clause 12 vests all hydrographic data in the State. Clause 13 imposes confidentiality obligations subject to disclosure only with written authorisation.

Clause 14 establishes the offences. Producing an unofficial chart purporting to be official, refusing to submit data or falsifying hydrographic data, each attracts a fine up to Rs500,000 and imprisonment up to 5 years. Some Members may consider those penalties severe. They are calibrated to the gravity of the harm. A false chart is not a paperwork error. It is a document that can sink a ship.

Clause 15 confers regulation-making power on the Minister. Clause 16 provides seamless transition. The existing Hydrographic Unit is deemed to be the MHS and it its head becomes the Chief Hydrographer. Clause 17 provides for commencement by proclamation, which I intend, within 90 days, to obtain assent as quick as possible.

As far as financial implications, Madam Speaker, the Bill carries no immediate additional cost. Staff officers and equipment of the existing unit are carried forward. Regulations under Clause 15 will introduce a schedule of fees expected to place MHS on a partial cost recovery footing. Capital investment will be brought before this House in the ordinary budgetary way. The Ministry of Finance has confirmed the provisions of this Bill are within existing votes for the current financial year.

Mauritius, now, joins a movement of maritime states, Madam Speaker, including the Bahamas, recognised in 2026 as the newest IHO member, and more recently Gambia, that have placed their hydrographic services on a statutory footing.

I would like to record the constructive engagement of the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office in preparing for the orderly transition of charting responsibilities in the Chagos Archipelago, and the support of the IHO Secretariat in Monaco and of our partners in the SAIHC, in particular the South African Navy Hydrographic Office.

Madame la présidente, je tiens à souligner tout particulièrement dans la langue qui convient deux partenaires francophones dont l'appui a été constant. À la République française et à son Service hydrographique et océanographique de la Marine, le Shom, avec lequel nous partageons les responsabilités qui s'attachent aux eaux environnant la Réunion, j'exprime la gratitude sincère du gouvernement mauricien pour la qualité d'une coopération technique et scientifique qui s'inscrit dans la durée.

À la République des Seychelles, avec laquelle nous administrons conjointement la zone de gestion conjointe sur le plateau des Mascareignes – *I would have done that in Kreol, but I will keep that for another time* –, j'adresse également nos sincères remerciements pour un partenariat exemplaire de ce que peuvent accomplir des États insulaires unis par la géographie, par l'histoire et par une même volonté d'affirmer leur droit sur l'océan qui les entoure.

Madam Speaker, it is only right that I should pay a particular tribute to the Government of the Republic of India. The partnership between Mauritius and India in the maritime domain is longstanding, deep and in the specific field of hydrography, a very direct consequence to the Bill now before this House.

The Indian Naval Hydrographic Department of Dehradun has, over many years, extended to Mauritius practical assistance of a kind that only a fellow Indian Ocean State with world class hydrographic capacity could offer –

- joint hydrographic surveys in our waters;
- the training of Mauritian officers at the National Institute of Hydrography;
- capacity building missions conducted by Indian survey ships, and
- the sharing of technical expertise in chart production, tidal analysis and modern survey methodology.

I place on the record of this House the sincere gratitude of the Government of Mauritius to the Government of India for its continued support and close collaboration in the field of hydrography. The institution which this Bill establishes will, I have no doubt, deepen that partnership further.

Madam Speaker, before I conclude, I owe a number of tributes closer to home. Je tiens en premier lieu à exprimer ma profonde gratitude au très honorable Premier ministre, dont la conviction personnelle que Maurice doit parler pour ses propres eaux a porté cette législation du concept jusqu'à cette Assemblée. Ce projet de loi n'existerait pas sous cette forme sans son leadership constant, sans son orientation stratégique au lendemain de l'accord sur les Chagos de mai 2025, et sans sa vision claire d'une île Maurice pleinement maritime, non pas simplement un État qui se trouve être une île.

J'étends cette gratitude à l'ensemble des officiers du bureau du Premier ministre dont la coordination diligente, à travers l'appareil gouvernemental, a permis à cet instrument d'arriver devant les membres de cette Chambre bien rédigé, dûment concerté et prêt à être adopté.

I wish also to record my sincere thanks to the officers of my Ministry who have been *clairement les chevilles ouvrières* of this piece of a well drafted legislation.

I wish to place on record my sincere thanks to the hon. Attorney General and to all the officers of the Attorney General's Office. The technical drafting of a Bill that must harmonise the domestic law with UNCLOS, SOLAS and the standards of the IHO, IALA and IMO while also giving proper effect to the charting implications of the 2025 Agreement on the Chagos Archipelago is a demanding exercise. The Bill, therefore, before the House, is a testament to their skills, their patience and their care for the constitutional integrity of the Mauritian legislations.

My thanks extend also to the Mauritius Ports Authority, the National Coast Guard, the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping – my colleague who is here –, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who is also acting for today, and to industrial representatives, including the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industries Maritime Committee.

Madam Speaker, this Bill does four things in a single coherent legal act –

(i) it establishes an institution;

(ii) it vests our hydrographic data in the Republic;

(iii) it creates a regulated market for surveys and charts, and

(iv) it positions Mauritius to assume full responsibilities and to reap the full benefits of sovereignty over one of the largest maritime jurisdictions in the Indian Ocean.

It is a modest Bill in its length. It is an ambitious Bill in its consequences. It says to our seafarers: Your safety is a matter of law. It says to our industries: Your operating environment is one of legal certainty. It says to our neighbours in the Indian Ocean: Mauritius will hold its place at the regional table.

Ce projet de loi envoie un message clair, Madame la présidente, à la communauté internationale tout entière : cette République prend au sérieux les obligations de la souveraineté sur le vaste espace maritime que lui confèrent la géographie, le droit des traités et la reconnaissance récente de ses droits sur l'archipel des Chagos. Pour un pays de la mer, un pays dont le destin a toujours été lié à l'océan qui l'entoure, il est difficile d'imaginer un texte de loi plus approprié à présenter devant cette Assemblée.

Madame la présidente, I commend the Bill to the House, and I beg to move that it be read a second time.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Mr Baboolall!

(4.00 p.m.)

Mr C. Baboolall (First Member Montagne Blanche & GRSE): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Somewhere tonight, in our 2.3 million km^2 Exclusive Economic Zone, 40 times the size of our land mass, a fishing boat, a cargo vessel, or a cruise ship is trusting a chart to tell its captain where the reef ends and safe water begins. That chart did not draw itself. It was measured, sounded, surveyed and verified, often with the cooperation of partners such as the Indian Navy, whose survey ships have visited our waters some 15 times since 2006, producing 12 nautical charts and 14 electronic navigational charts our seafarers rely on today.

The novelist Herman Melville once wrote that "it is not down on any map; true places never are". That may be true of the poet's imagination, Madam Speaker, but it cannot be true of the mariner's chart. Every reef, every safe passage in our waters must be down on a map precisely because lives depend on it. That is the quiet promise behind this Bill.

This House does not often debate hydrography but our fishing industry, our tourism sector, our blue economy ambitions and the safety of every vessel leaving Port Louis Harbour all depend on someone, somewhere, having correctly measured the water beneath the keel. That is what this Bill is really about. Water, safety, sovereignty and the unglamorous work of knowing what lies beneath our sea.

Madam Speaker, I speak on this Bill also as someone for whom water carries a meaning deeper than measurement. As a Mauritian of Hindu faith, I was raised to see water as sacred. We venerate Ganga Maa, Mother Ganges, as the source of life itself and here, at Grand Bassin, Ganga Talao, our community gathers each year believing those waters flow in a spirit home to her. If our faith teaches us to hold water sacred, this House owes no less a duty to protect the waters that sustain every citizen of this Republic. Be it Hindu, Christian, Muslim and all other who call this island home.

I rise, Madam Speaker, in support of the principle of this Bill. It takes a unit that has served us capably since 2013, a finalist for the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management's Innovation Award and it gives it at last the statutory backbone it has deserved for over a decade. An island nation with blue economy ambitions and sovereignty over an EEZ 40 times its landmass cannot leave the instrument that maps that sovereignty as an administrative footnote. This Bill corrects that anomaly and for that principle, the hon. Minister deserves credit.

Rachel Carson wrote simply: “the sea lies all about us”. It lies about Mauritius too. Not as a boundary that isolates us, but as the very reason this is small island nation matters on the world stage. A well-governed sea is our inheritance and our opportunity.

Let me be plain, Madam Speaker, about what this Bill gets right and what it leaves undone. Before I turn to my specific proposals, on the credit side, it gives our hydrographic work at long last a proper statutory home, matching the seriousness the ocean economy deserves. It settles that hydrographic data collected in our waters belongs to the State of Mauritius and it aligns us formally with international standards set by the International Hydrographic Organisation, the International Maritime Organisation, and the International Organisation for Marine Aids to Navigation and with our obligations under the United Nations Conventions on the Law of the Sea, and the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea. These are not small achievements, and I do not pretend otherwise.

But on the debit side, this Bill, as drafted, has some gaps. It creates a body with significant coercive power to enter private land, demand data, and prosecute, yet, builds it no duty to report annually to this House. It grants broad powers of entry with no safeguards of notice or compensation; defines the very land it touches so broadly it could sweep in leased *pas géométriques* and private beachfront concessions and sets the same five-year maximum penalty for a minor administrative slip as for a deliberate falsification of navigational data.

A Bill can be right in its ambition and still incomplete in its safeguard. This one, I submit, is exactly that. This House has itself been reminded through the Director of Audit's own report that good intentions poorly monitored produce weak outcomes. Let us not allow this Bill to become a footnote in some future Audit Report. So let me raise five matters with the hon. Minister – not to wreck this Bill, but to strengthen it.

Madame la présidente, cette Assemblée n'a pas besoin qu'on le lui rappelle deux fois. Il y a plus de deux siècles au large de Poudre d'Or, le naufrage du Saint-Géran a donné

naissance à l'un des récits les plus poignants de notre île. Paul et Virginie, une tragédie si profondément ancrée dans notre mémoire collective que des générations de Mauriciens ont grandi en pleurant un naufrage survenu bien avant la naissance de leur arrière, arrière grands-parents. Et de mémoire vivante, en juillet 2020, le Wakashio s'est échoué sur le récif de la Pointe d'Esny, déversant 1000 tonnes de *fuel* dans le lagon de Blue Bay, gravant dans la mémoire de cette génération ce que le Saint-Géran avait gravé dans celle d'une autre. Deux naufrages séparés de plus de 250 ans sur les récifs d'une même île. Les choses ont-elles vraiment changé entre les deux ?

This Bill, if we get it right, is part of how we answer, yes. A properly accountable Mauritius Hydrographic Services coordinating closely with our environmental agencies is how we prevent the next Wakashio. I would ask the hon. Minister whether clause 4 should explicitly require coordination with the Ministry of Environment, not merely relevant maritime safety regulators in identifying high-risk reef zones. Protecting our coastline is not only about navigation. It is about the coral, the mangroves, and the marine life, our identity as an island nation depends upon.

My first point concerns clause 8. The Bill rightly declares that hydrographic data collected in our waters shall be deemed to be the property of the State of Mauritius. Data is the new coastline, Madam Speaker. Whoever holds it, in some real sense, holds the maps of our sovereignty but I ask the hon. Minister plainly, what happens practically to the decades of survey cooperation already underway with Government of India, our principal chart producing partner? Will that cooperation which has given us 12 nautical charts and 14 electronical navigational charts to date, now require written authorisation under clause 8, subsection 2? I ask the Minister to confirm that this Bill preserves and does not inadvertently disrupt our hydrographic cooperation with India.

My second point is clause 10, “Powers of entry”. This Bill allows an officer of the MHS to enter, and I quote –

> “(…) any plot of land to perform such acts as may be necessary (…)” at all reasonable times.

I do not dispute that survey works sometimes require access to private land.

This clause contains no requirement of prior notice, no reference to compensation for damage caused, and no defined limit on frequency or duration. A citizen of Montagne Blanche, a planter in Grand River South East, a family with a modest beachfront plot passed

down through generations, they deserve to know at reasonable times, meaning more than an individual officer's discretion on any given morning. I urge the hon. Minister to accept an amendment at Committee stage, inserting a clear notice and compensation framework.

My third point concerns clause 8, the power of the Minister over the Chief Hydrographer. These powers as drafted abroad, the Minister may issue directions of general character, and the Chief Hydrographer shall comply. I do not begrudge ministerial oversight, that is proper in any Ministry but this Bill, unlike a number of others this House has passed, contains no requirement whatsoever for an annual report to be tabled before this Assembly. I ask the hon. Minister whether he would accept, even at this late stage, an amendment requiring the Chief Hydrographer's annual report to be laid formally on the Table of this House. Sovereignty without accountability to this Chamber, Madam Speaker, is only half a sovereignty.

My fourth point is on clause 14, the offenses. A general contravention of this Act carries up to five years of imprisonment. I do not take breaches of maritime data security lightly but that same exposure applies to minor technical non-compliance under the catch-all wording. I ask the hon. Minister to consider proportionate tiers of penalty at Committee Stage.

My fifth and final point, Madam Speaker, clause 2 defines ‘plot of land’ simply as delimited part of land or water. A definition broad enough to reach leased, *Pas Géométriques*, and private beachfront concession. Was this breadth intentional? And what protections exist for those whose land now falls within its reach?

Madam Speaker, none of these five points are raised to obstruct this Bill. They are raised because a Bill establishing sovereignty over our waters should not itself contain ambiguity over the rights of our people on land; no uncertainty over a hydrographic partnership with India, that has served this nation for two decades. This Bill protects our waters on paper. Let us work together today to make sure it protects our people and our partnerships in practice.

Madam Speaker, I represent Constituency No. 10, Montagne Blanche, Grand River South East, a Constituency with a long coastline, fishing communities who have worked these waters for generations, and families whose land runs down the shoreline, this Bill concerns itself with directly. When I return to my constituents this week, they will not ask me about clause 8 or clause 14 by number. They will ask me one simple question; does this new law protect our sea without threatening our land? With the amendments I have proposed

today on continuity with India, on notice and on compensation for entry, on annual accountability to this House, on proportionate penalties, and on the definition of the very land this Bill may touch, I believe, Madam Speaker, the answer can be yes.

There is an old maritime saying attributed to John A. Shedd –

"A ship in harbor is safe, but that is not what ships are built for."

This Bill was not was not built to sit safely in harbor and examined. It was built to sail, and it is this House's duty today to make sure it is seaworthy. Let this House be remembered not for how quickly it passed the Bill today, but for how carefully it did so because somewhere tonight, in our 2.3 million square kilometres of ocean, a captain is trusting a chart drawn by officers of this State. Let this House be equally worthy of the trust our own citizens place in us to chart their rights on land as carefully and as faithfully as we chart our waters at sea.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. You were well within time. Hon. François!

(4.15 p.m.)

Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues): Merci, Madame la présidente. D'abord en ce 14 juillet qui m'offre l'opportunité de féliciter chaleureusement le peuple français à l'occasion de leur fête nationale, je transmets notre gratitude, et nos vœux de paix, de progrès et de prospérité à la France, surtout pour son soutien apporté à Rodrigues, notamment dans le secteur de l'eau. Bonne fête et aussi bon anniversaire au Premier ministre, Dr. Ramgoolam.

Madam speaker now, I shall provide a brief overview as a graduate Surveyor Technician on this technical Bill presented by hon. Mohamed: the Mauritius Hydrographic Services Bill (No. XI of 2026), whom I congratulate.

The Bill aims to establish Mauritius hydrographic services, which will, in relation to nautical chart production, be responsible for –

(a) national custody and safekeeping of hydrographic data;
(b) regulating hydrographic surveys and charting within Mauritius's maritime zones, and
(c) regulating hydrographic data exchange, access control, and sharing.

This is a fascinating and important subject: hydrography.

Luigi Sinapi, International Hydrography Organisation's Director, stated –

"Hydrography and derived products open up new opportunities in the maritime sectors, highlighting how important it is to invest in the hydrography sector to provide a competitive advantage in the maritime domain."

Rightly highlighted by hon. Mohamed.

Hydrography is about professional, systematic surveying of the unknown and the invisible collecting data on the sea depth, seabed shape, tides, currents, and protecting the marine environment, coastal-zone planning, and national infrastructure development. The future of navigation is digital. Hydrographers worldwide recognise that the future is blue and beneath the sea, vital for us as an island nation. The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) encourages the development and implementation of e-navigation to enhance berth-to-berth navigation using Electronic Chart Display and Information system with Electronic Navigational Charts. As interpreted in this Bill, hydrographic data covers the physical features of Mauritius's maritime zones, including coastal areas – very important – rivers – this morning I heard hon. Assirvaden talking about Mare aux Vacoas reservoir, tides, navigational features. And here, I have to mention the working relation with Rodrigues should be clearly defined.

This year, Madam Speaker, the International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO) celebrated world hydrography day with the theme "transforming how ocean data is shared," recognised the importance of digital technologies and data interoperability in maritime and ocean sectors. Surely, our Republic is an Ocean State, with its EEZ as defined, righty said so by hon. Mohamed and especially with the 183 000 km² extension around Rodrigues, essential for our sustainable maritime development.

Madam Speaker, today much of our nautical chart production is currently undertaken by India, the chart-producing nation for Mauritius, with established protocols for selling navigational products, and to date, the Indian National Hydrographic Office has produced 12 paper navigational charts and 14 electronic navigational charts: 7 for Mauritius, 3 for Rodrigues, and 2 for Agalega.

Madam Speaker, from a security perspective, the Indian Ocean is emerging as a strategic hub in a global power dynamic, with Indian engagement, the Diego Garcia base, and growing Chinese presence among African coastal states. This Bill will reinforce security

needs and the control of our seabed resources, with Mauritius playing a key strategic role in the geopolitical future, with our sovereignty claim on Chagos.

Madam speaker, we are versed in land spatial planning from a technical perspective and today, we are moving towards marine spatial planning for future infrastructure, maritime operations, sustainable management of marine ecosystems, fisheries, and environmental protection.

Clause 4 (f) of the Bill authorises hydrographic surveys in Mauritius and the production, publication, distribution, and updating of official nautical charts for use in our maritime zones.

The UN SDG 14 (life below water) emphasises sustainable use and conservation of oceans requires effective strategies to combat impacts such as overfishing, ocean acidification, coastal eutrophication, and erosion. This is part of extension of this Bill. We must develop sustainable projects and innovative solutions related to climate change, food security, safe maritime transport, and ocean use. Surely, hon. Dr. Boolell will elaborate further on that. In line with blue economy vision and growth, Mauritius will need to recruit more hydrographers or hydrographic surveyors to deepen our understanding of our seas for wider economic and social benefits.

From an environmental perspective, Madam Speaker, climate change induces sea-level rise and environmental damages demand urgent attention. Our NDC presented by hon. Bhagwan, NDC 3.0, highlights the impacts, adaptation, and vulnerabilities associated with climate change. As per our NDC, sea-level rise is accelerating beach erosion, beachfront loss, and coastal infrastructure damage, with more than 37 km, that is 17.6% of our coastal line being affected. I note that beach widths have shrunk by up to 20 metres in recent decades. This is where hydrography and hydrographic data will be important.

Therefore, as a key information producer, we have to adapt to prevent damage, to monitor coastal erosion and guide coastal public works in our Republic. Mauritius has initiated – very important – a carbon-sink enhancement program, aiming to carry out a blue-carbon inventory in our EEZ by 2035, which will require certainly hydrographic Data. Today, we do not have much data. Hon. Bhagwan is laughing! Certainly, you will hopefully elaborate on that, will you not?

Madam Speaker, Rodrigues has a rich hydrographic history with surveys dating back to late 18th and 19th centuries conducted by colonial British Royal Navy personnel, Bonne in

1780, Lieutnant Russel in 1822 and Surveyor Shearwater in 1874. Our hydrographic publication was done through a hydrographic map in February 1876 by British Navy Hydrographer Evans. Rodrigues today requires more hydrographic data around its waters, especially port of Port Mathurin. This Bill will benefit beyond navigation for Rodrigues.

Rodrigues faces, as I said, shoreline erosion, seagrass monitoring needs, and environmental concerns requiring hydrographic surveys. Hydrographic information is also needed to monitor brine discharge from desalination plants and siltation of our channels within our lagoon for local navigation.

Locally, Madam Speaker, safeguarding marine life and monitoring changes in sea routes near Rodrigues' shores are crucial. Rodrigues Hydrographic Unit should be established, manned by local surveyors, hon. Minister, who can receive further training, any training, to share marine information with local authorities and bodies also like the National Innovation Research Council (NIRC), the Meteorological Services, and the Mauritius Port Authority, amongst others.

There is need for what I call a coordinated, connected ocean-information ecosystem with Rodrigues and Mauritius as per this Bill. Imagine a civil engineer in Rodrigues who wants to obtain real-time data from the meteo services for current waves near Port Mathurin. He has to fetch this information from Vacoas Meteorological Station. Today, with the hydrography department or unit being established by the Ministry, I believe this professional, if he wants to have data, he has to fetch it from Ebène. So, ocean and maritime data must integrate into what I call a single digital ecosystem through a multidimensional approach.

Madam Speaker, the future development of Port Mathurin, as projected by its master plan, is strategic for Mauritius due to its geographical and geopolitical location. Port Mathurin requires a larger port area as trends show bigger ships, increased commercial pressure, and vessel size growth. The last maintenance dredging of the main channel and berth area of Port Mathurin was done in 1990. However, it has been done through the annex channel in 2009. My question is: what is the current hydrographic situation of the Port Mathurin channel today? Most notably, the manoeuvrability of large ships within the confined waters of the port of Port Mathurin and its capacity limits is a problem.

Madam Speaker, Rodrigues hosts one of the Republic's most significant community-based marine conservation initiatives, the South East Marine Protected Area (SEMPA), covering 43 square kilometres to protect marine biodiversity and support sustainable co-

management of coastal resources. In the context of its autonomy, there is a need to create a Rodrigues Hydrographic Unit, staffed by the local surveyors, as I said, who can thereafter receive hydrographic training. I repeat that. Pressing hydrographic survey requirements for Rodrigues and SEMPA include –

(i) within the Rodrigues lagoon: improve navigability through bathymetric data bases and sedimentation characterisation in navigable channels within the lagoon. I am looking at local perspective;

(ii) monitoring of current parameters;

(iii) fishing banks of *banc de l'Est* – this is very important for our fishers – and Hawkins bank for effective management and exploitation. We need to have accurate data thereat.

The EEZ and maritime zone around Rodrigues, from an economic perspective, are fundamental assets for our Republic. We must collect maximum marine information therefrom for the future.

Madam Speaker, let me conclude, as I said, I would be looking at the technical aspect. The maritime and ocean sectors are undergoing digital transformation. This Bill is laying the foundation for safer navigation, more efficient operations, better environmental stewardship, and informed decision-making.

In light of what I have said, I reiterate my support for the Mauritius Hydrographic Services Bill and look forward for further elaboration and debate, especially on our Chagos Agreement. Madam Speaker, that will be my contribution. I thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you! Yes, hon. Ms Collet!

Ms Collet: Madam Speaker, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr Venkatasami rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 21 July at 11.30 a.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. The House stands adjourned!

At 4.30 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 21 July at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

PRISON OFFICERS – JANUARY 2025-JULY 2026 – VACANCIES & RECRUITS

(No. B/1026) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister

of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the grade of Prison Officer, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information, as to, since January 2025 to date, the number of –

(a) existing vacancies therein;

(b) new recruits appointed thereto, and

(c) officers having ceased to serve within six months of their appointment.

(Withdrawn)

BANK CUSTOMER INFORMATION – DISCLOSURE ABUSE – LEGAL SAFEGUARDS TOUGHENING

(No. B/1027) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to bank customer information, he will state whether consideration will be given for the toughening of the legal safeguards against abuse of disclosure thereof to third parties or enforcement agencies, including the Financial Crimes Commission, indicating the recourse available, if any, to a bank customer should an Order of Disclosure be deemed to have been improperly ordered.

Reply: Information on a bank customer is not normally disclosed except only under specific circumstances and only to specific enforcement authorities, such as the Financial Intelligence Unit, the Financial Crimes Commission, the Financial Services Commission, the Mauritius Police Force and the Mauritius Revenue Authority as well as foreign supervisory institutions, and international organisations.

These enforcement authorities obtain bank customer information either through a Judge's Order, a request made to the Bank of Mauritius under the Bank of Mauritius Act and Banking Act, or under the respective legislation of the enforcement authorities.

In the past, there have been cases of abuse of disclosure of customers' information. I have been a victim of this abuse myself. Such departure should never have been tolerated and in a healthy banking system, customers should have full confidence in those who are custodian of their personal information as well as their financial details.

My Government will not tolerate any such malpractice whether it is banking institutions or third parties which have become privy of personal information during the course of any enquiry.

Section 26 of the Bank of Mauritius Act stipulates that the Bank of Mauritius should be satisfied that the enforcement authorities requesting the disclosure of information have the capacity to protect the confidentiality of the information imparted.

Furthermore, the Bank of Mauritius imposes specific conditions restricting the use and disclosure of the information imparted and the recipients must comply with these conditions.

Section 64 of the Banking Act provides a comprehensive framework to safeguard the confidentiality of customer information. Persons with access to customer information must take an oath or declaration of confidentiality. Disclosure of information is permitted only in limited circumstances prescribed by the law, or only to specified competent authorities and regulatory bodies.

These safeguards are reinforced by stringent penalties for unlawful receipt, possession or disclosure of customer information. Access to customer transaction and account information by an enforcement authority also requires an Order of Disclosure from a Judge in Chambers, who may grant the order only where the statutory conditions under the Act are satisfied.

Furthermore, Section 68A of the Financial Crimes Commission Act ensures that the Financial Crimes Commission (FCC) requests customer and account information directly from financial institutions for the purposes of an asset recovery investigation only where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that any property in the possession or under the control of a person is proceeds of crime, an instrumentality or terrorist property, or the person has derived a benefit from any unlawful activity in relation thereto.

The Financial Intelligence and Anti Money Laundering Act, the Income Tax Act, and the Public Inquiries Act also provide the necessary safeguards to protect customer information disclosed to the Financial Intelligence Unit, the Mauritius Revenue Authority and the Commissions of Inquiries.

To strengthen the safeguards against any possible abuse of disclosure of bank customer information, I am informed that the FCC is putting in place a Standard Operating Procedure

to ensure that the FCC requests the disclosure of relevant customer information from financial institutions only where there are reasonable grounds.

Section 64 of the Banking Act is being amended in the forthcoming Finance Bill to provide that financial institutions will only be required to give customer information only in compliance with the following –

(i) an order or a notice under the Financial Crimes Commission Act 2023; or

(ii) the requirements under the United Nations (Financial Prohibitions, Arms Embargo and Travel Ban) Sanctions Act.

In the circumstances wherein a bank customer feels aggrieved with the notice of disclosure, especially if it has been improperly made, he or she may sue the institution concerned for damages.

OFFICIAL VEHICLES – PARLIAMENTARY MEMBERS – COSTS INCURRED

(No. B/1028) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the official vehicles acquired over the period December 2014 to November 2024 for use by the then Honourable Members of Parliament entitled thereto other than the Honourable Ministers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

(a) number thereof;

(b) names of the beneficiaries thereof, and

(c) total costs incurred therefor.

(Withdrawn)

YIHAI GARDEN SMART CITY PROJECT – SERIOUS IRREGULARITIES – BOARD OF INQUIRY

(No. B/1029) 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 serious irregularities uncovered by the State Investment Corporation Ltd., regarding the Yihai Garden Smart City Project at Domaine Les Pailles, he will state whether consideration will be given for the setting up of a Board of Inquiry to establish the circumstances thereof,

determine the responsibilities and make recommendations for the safeguard of the public assets concerned therewith.

Reply: In my reply to the previous PQ B/962, I informed the House of the outrageous mismanagement of the Yihai project under the previous Government, where ownership of real estate, including prime Government land and buildings were transferred to an unscrupulous foreign promoter, Mr Li Hai, through Yihai Investment Ltd.

Let me reiterate the serious breaches in this investment that have severely undermined the interests of the State Investment Corporation through the fraudulent management of Yihai Investment Ltd –

(i) Yihai International Investment Management Ltd has failed to meet its full capital contribution of Rs1.2 billion in Yihai Investment Ltd, comprising Rs598 million in the form of cash of which Rs158 million remains unpaid and the remaining in the form of building materials and construction equipment which have never been brought in;

(ii) there have been substantial project implementation delays with only four villas and one apartment block of 29 units completed;

(iii) administration and management fees to Guibies Properties Ltd totalling Rs10.6 million remains unpaid;

(iv) severe governance issues such as non-submission of audited accounts since 2019;

(v) lack of accountability to shareholders;

(vi) breach of the conditions of its Smart City Scheme Certificate;

(vii) failure to pay a dividend of Rs500 million over three years to the State Investment Corporation, and

(viii) several cheques totalling Rs107 million were encashed by Mr Li Hai following unlawful and fraudulent amendments to the process for signing of cheques.

I also informed the House that a number of actions have already been initiated in this case, as follows –

(i) The State Investment Corporation has initiated legal proceedings to prevent the other shareholder of Yihai, that is, Yihai International Investment Management Limited, from exercising its voting rights in respect of unpaid share capital, and to restrain the sale of villas and apartments by Mr Li Hai.

On 28 May 2024, the State Investment Corporation obtained an interim order prohibiting and restraining Yihai from selling or otherwise disposing of part of its assets.

(ii) On 24 October 2025, Guibies Properties Ltd, a subsidiary of the State Investment Corporation, issued a Notice of Termination of the Administration and Management Agreement for the Equestrian Centre, requiring Yihai to surrender possession of the stables, the horses and the ponies, and

(iii) In May 2026, the State Investment Corporation has lodged a formal complaint with the Financial Crimes Commission against Mr Li Hai for fraud and misappropriation of funds.

I am further informed by the Economic Development Board that the process for revocation of the Smart City Scheme Certificate for Yihai Investment Ltd has been initiated. The EDB has issued a “show cause” notice under section 14C of the Economic Development Board Act to Yihai Investment Ltd on 10 July 2026, requiring Yihai Investment Ltd to explain the reasons why the Smart City Scheme Certificate should not be revoked.

There is also an investigation which is ongoing at the level of the Financial Crimes Commission as well as legal proceedings before the Judiciary.

I am also informed that the Financial Crimes Commission has lodged a Provisional Charge against Mr Li Hai personally before the Criminal Court for dealing with proceeds of crime to the prejudice of his 2 Foreign Chinese associates to the tune of Rs280 million. This cross-border siphoning of funds is inextricably linked with the Yihai Smart City Project.

In addition, proceedings have been initiated to repossess the Equestrian Centre leased to Yihai Investment Ltd under a management contract. In this respect, a notice of eviction was issued on 24 October 2025. There is also a sum of about Rs10 million due under the same management contract. This case will follow in due legal course incessantly.

However, let me reassure the hon. Member that even though the investigation being conducted by the FCC should be thorough, the suggestion of setting up a Board of Inquiry can be considered positively as its terms of reference can be enlarged.

JUNIOR MINISTERS – PARLIAMENTARY PRIVATE SECRETARIES – APPOINTMENT REVIEW

(No. B/1030) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the office of Junior Minister, he will state whether he will consider advising the President to declare the positions currently being held therein vacant and to appoint instead such number of Parliamentary Private Secretaries, as required.

(Withdrawn)

1968 VIENNA CONVENTION ON ROAD TRAFFIC – INTERNATIONAL DRIVING PERMIT VALIDITY – MAURITIUS ACCESSION

(No. B/1031) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the 1968 Vienna Convention on Road Traffic that provides for the validity of the International Driving Permit of three years, he will state the reasons why same has not been signed and ratified as at to date, indicating whether consideration will now be given thereto and, if not, why not.

Reply (The Minister of Land Transport): The 1968 Vienna Convention on Road Traffic is an international treaty adopted under the auspices of the United Nations to facilitate international road traffic and improve road safety through the harmonisation of traffic rules and driving requirements among contracting parties. The Convention establishes common standards on road signs and signals, driving licences, vehicle registration, and the mutual recognition of driving documents, including the International Driving Permit (IDP). It provides that an IDP may be issued with a validity of up to three years, subject to the validity of the holder's domestic driving licence, thereby facilitating the lawful operation of motor vehicles by drivers travelling abroad while promoting consistency in the recognition of driving credentials across participating countries.

The Republic of Mauritius is not a Party to the 1968 Vienna Convention on Road Traffic and, consequently, has neither signed nor ratified the Convention.

Following his visit to Mauritius in June 2017, on the sidelines of the First National Road Safety Conference, Mr Jean Todt, United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety, had encouraged Mauritius to accede to the following international road safety instruments –

(i) The 1968 Convention on Road Traffic;

(ii) The 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals;

(iii) The 1958 Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Technical Prescriptions for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts;

(iv) The 1997 Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles, and

(v) The 1998 Agreement concerning the Establishment of Global Technical Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts.

Subsequently, in 2017, the Ministry of Land Transport, then Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, held consultations with several stakeholders to examine the implications of acceding to the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic. Two experts from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) were called upon to assist Mauritius in this regard and they recommended that Mauritius amend its legislation as necessary and proceed with accession to the Convention.

However, the then Secretary for Foreign Affairs had recommended that further consultations be held regarding possible reservations to the Convention, particularly in relation to its territorial application. Consequently, any instrument of accession deposited by Mauritius would need to be carefully examined from an international law perspective to ensure that it fully preserves and safeguards the longstanding sovereignty claims of Mauritius and does not give rise to any legal or diplomatic implications prejudicial to the national interest.

While accession to the Convention remains technically feasible, due consideration must also be given to the specific circumstances of Mauritius as a Small Island Developing State.

Unlike countries sharing land borders, Mauritius does not experience cross-border road traffic. As such, some of the principal benefits of the Convention, particularly those relating to international road transport between neighbouring States, would have limited practical application in the Mauritian context.

Moreover, Mauritius already has domestic legal provisions that permit holders of recognised foreign driving licences to operate motor vehicles in accordance with applicable legislation. Consequently, accession to the Convention is not an operational necessity for the effective functioning of our road transport system.

AIR MAURITIUS LTD – KROLL REPORT – INVESTIGATIONS

(No. B/1032) 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 Kroll Report in respect of the investigation into transactions by Air Mauritius Ltd., concerning five aircrafts, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

(a) whether consideration will be given for the tabling of copy thereof, and

(b) the actions taken in relation thereto as at date.

Reply: As I stated in my reply to Parliamentary Question B/913 on 30 June 2026, the Board of Air Mauritius Ltd met on 25 and 29 June 2026 to examine the Report submitted by KROLL Middle East Consultancy Ltd. After considering the Report and in light of an in-person presentation to the Board on 25 June 2026, the Board has treated the matters identified therein with utmost seriousness and has resolved to take all necessary and appropriate steps to protect the interests of the Company.

I am informed that, following its meeting of 29 June 2026, the Board has been working closely with its legal team on various actions that may include referral of the matter to the Financial Crimes Commission or the Police, the filing of civil claims for financial prejudice suffered by the company. Disciplinary proceedings against some members of the staff have already been initiated, however, there might be more such actions following the internal investigation that is ongoing.

As regards the tabling of the Report, I am advised that, at this stage, it would not be appropriate to disclose the Report. Such disclosure could be prejudicial to ongoing and contemplated legal proceedings, as well as to the internal investigation, which is intended to complement the findings in the Report. Furthermore, the premature disclosure of the Report could compromise the Company’s ability to enforce its rights and could undermine enforcement actions that may be taken.

In regard to part (b) of the Parliamentary Question B/1032, I am informed by Air Mauritius Ltd that, on 03 July 2026, seven staff members who were identified in the KROLL Report were suspended from duty as a provisional measure to maintain the integrity of the ongoing internal investigation and pending any further disciplinary action, as may be justified.

Furthermore, on 08 July 2026, Air Mauritius Ltd referred the matter to the Financial Crimes Commission for investigation.

RODRIGUES – BUDGETARY ESTIMATES 2025-2026 – EXPENDITURE & OUTSTANDING BILLS

(No. B/1033) Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Budgetary Estimates 2025-2026 for Rodrigues Island, he will –

(a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the total –
  (i) expenditure incurred as at closing date thereof, and
  (ii) amount of outstanding bills, giving details thereof and the reasons therefor, and

(b) state the bearing, if any, of the implementation of the Programme-Based Budgeting Framework on the management of public expenditure thereat.

(Withdrawn)

SOLITUDE & CITÉ LA CHAUX, PLAINE MAGNIEN – INHABITANTS – PROPOSED RELOCATION

(No. B/1034) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) 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 relocation of the inhabitants of the localities of Solitude and Cité La Chaux at Plaine Magnien in relation to the proposed construction of a parallel runway at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Airports of Mauritius Co. Ltd., information as to where maters stand.

(Withdrawn)

PLAINE-CORAIL AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT – SOCIO-ECONOMIC & INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS

(No. B/1035) Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Plaine-Corail Airport Development Project, he will state whether Government, in collaboration with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the relevant stakeholders, has adopted a coordinated strategy with a view to maximising the socio-economic and inclusive development benefits arising therefrom for the inhabitants of Rodrigues Island and, if so, give details thereof.

(Withdrawn)

FINANCIAL CRIMES COMMISSION – INQUIRIES – NOVEMBER 2024-JULY 2026

(No. B/1036) 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.

(Withdrawn)

POLICE OFFICERS – DRUG TRAFFICKING – ARRESTED/SUSPENDED (2014-JULY 2026)

(No. B/1037) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to drug trafficking offences, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of Police Officers arrested and/or suspended in connection therewith since 2014 to date, indicating the number thereof convicted and where matters stand regarding the remaining cases.

(Withdrawn)

UNCLAIMED & UNIDENTIFIED BODIES – NUMBER AUTOPSIED, INQUIRIES & BURIAL ARRANGEMENTS

(No. B/1038) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to unclaimed and unidentified bodies, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the –

(a) number thereof having been subjected to autopsies by the Police Medical Unit and where matters stand regarding the police inquiries initiated in relation thereto, including, in cases of persons of no fixed abode, and

(b) measures being envisaged to ensure the dignified burial or cremation thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MR A. C. P. & TWIN BROTHER – ARREST DETAILS – OBJECTIONS TO DEPARTURE

(No. B/1039) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the arrest of Mr A. C. P. on or about 03 April 2026 and the subsequent arrest of his twin brother, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

(a) the reasons therefor and circumstances thereof, indicating the items seized in connection therewith and whether same include illicit drugs and, if so, give details thereof, and

(b) whether they are currently subjected to objections to departure.

Reply: I wish to refer the hon. Member to my reply to Parliamentary Question B/237 at the Sitting of 07 April 2026.

I am informed by the Financial Crimes Commission that in the course of an investigation being carried out into an alleged real estate scam, the Financial Crimes Commission, by virtue of section 60 of the Financial Crimes Commission Act, carried out a search on the premises of Mr A.C.P.

During the search, the Financial Crimes Commission seized –

(i) several documents, including VEFA *"Vente en l'État Futur d'Achèvement"* deeds and receipts;

(ii) seven electronic devices, including laptops, mobile phones, a monitor and a pen drive, and

(iii) one vehicle of make BAIC of an approximate value of Rs2 million.

The Financial Crimes Commission also seized two *pouliahs* of cannabis weighing 0.5 grams and one cigarette mixed with cannabis which have been secured and kept at ADSU Exhibit Room. A case of possession of Cannabis Resin was reported to the Moka Police Station. Mr A.C.P. was arrested and detained at Line Barracks.

In regard to the twin brother of Mr A.C.P., namely Mr A.C.P., the Financial Crimes Commission effected a search at his dwelling on 06 April 2026 and seized several documents, four electronic devices, including laptops and mobile phones and one vehicle of make Porsche, model Taycan, valued Rs7 million.

On the same date, Mr A.C.P. was arrested and detained at Vacoas Detention Centre.

In regard to part (b) of the question, Mr A.C.P., appeared before the Court on 04 April 2026 in relation to an alleged Money Laundering Offence in breach of Financial Intelligence Anti Money Laundering Act. A Prohibition Order was issued against him from leaving the country until the determination of the case.

Mr A.C.P. was released on bail on 06 April 2026 upon furnishing two sureties of Rs350,000 each.

As regards Mr A.C.P., he appeared before the District Magistrate of Rivière du Rempart on a provisional charge of Money Laundering on 06 April 2026. A Prohibition Order was also issued against him from leaving the country until the determination of the case and he was remanded to police cell.

On 07 April 2026, he appeared before the District Court of Rivière du Rempart and was released on bail after furnishing two sureties of Rs75,000 each.

The Commissioner of Police has informed that Mr A.C.P. was further arrested on 17 April 2026 following a declaration of Child Grooming against him at Grand Baie Police Station on 14 April 2026.

On 18 April 2026, a provisional plaint for Child Grooming was lodged against him before the Court. The Police objected to his release on bail and he was remanded to police cell.

Mr A.C.P. appeared before the Rivière du Rempart District Court on 20 April 2026 for bail. However, Police objected to his release and he was remanded to police cell up to 27 April 2026. Furthermore, an objection to departure has also been raised against him.

On 27 April 2026, Mr A.C.P. appeared before the District Court of Rivière du Rempart and was released on bail after furnishing a surety of Rs10,000 and entered a recognisance of Rs100,000 as well as not to approach the victim vide provisional cause.

ISLAND CONTAINER TERMINAL PROJECT – G2G AGREEMENT – FINANCING TERMS & REPAYMENT OBLIGATIONS

(No. B/1040) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Island Container Terminal Project, he will –

(a) table the Government-to-Government Agreement signed with the Government of the Republic of India in relation thereto, and

(b) state –

  (i) the financing terms and repayment obligations thereof, and

  (ii) whether same, including the granting of a second licence to an international operator for container handling, bunkering and transhipment, was subject to any form of competitive analysis.

Reply: Our port plays a pivotal role in the economic development of Mauritius and its strategic importance has become even more evident in the context of the prevailing situation in the Middle East and the Red Sea.

The commitment of Government to modernise and strengthen the port sector to improve this strategic role, has been defined in the Government Programme 2025-2029. A modern and efficient seaport will be of critical importance to boosting the competitiveness of our economy as a destination for foreign investment. In this context, a total revamping of the port and other infrastructure to support maritime economic activities is being envisaged.

Over the years, the port has experienced severe operational inefficiencies characterised by low berth productivity, extended vessel turnaround times, high container dwell times, periodic yard congestion and increasing pressure on existing infrastructure. These factors

have adversely impacted the overall competitiveness and efficiency of the port and have generated concerns among shipping lines, importers, exporters and other stakeholders.

In its Port Market Study Report of November 2024 commissioned by the former Government, the Competition Commission had reported that container handling, provided as a monopoly by the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd, was widely and vigorously criticised by almost all of the Port users. In addition, the Report states, and I quote –

> "CHCL is currently not meeting its own productivity targets and those targets themselves are modest in international comparison and do not fully reflect customers' needs (in that they take no account of equipment availability – on which users also believe CHCL is performing poorly)."

Furthermore, the Competition Commission recommended the construction of the Island Container Terminal with the need of a second, competing container handling company and that a concession agreement be made available for a second container handling operator. It further recommended that ideally the new private operator should be a global terminal operator without ownership links to any major shipping line due to competition implications of vertical integration. The Report also emphasises, and I quote –

> "Any such sale is likely to be considered a merger within the meaning of the Competition Act: a vertical merger for any proposed shareholder which is also a shipping line, as well as a horizontal merger if the shareholder is also a joint venture between competing shipping lines."

Various reports have also drawn attention to the poor performance of the port and the need to improve productivity. These are –

(i) the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd – Productivity and Efficiency Study by PricewaterhouseCoopers Advisory Services (Pty) Ltd 2021, financed by the European Union;

(ii) the Technical Note 2024 of the World Bank on the Mauritius Container Terminal, and

(iii) the Strategic Framework for the modernisation of Port Louis Harbour - European Union Report 2026.

The poor performance has been further confirmed since the first edition of the Container Port Performance Index Report, published by the World Bank which benchmarked Terminal and Port Operations globally. Port Louis performs quite poorly –

- 344th out of 351 ports in 2020
- 323th out of 370 ports in 2021
- 327th out of 348 ports in 2022
- 369th out of 405 ports in 2023
- 369th out of 403 ports in 2024
- 369th out of 400 ports in 2025

Furthermore, key assets of Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd are ageing because investment decisions have not been taken in the past, and productivity remains below benchmarks, deterring Shipping Lines from committing volumes. Three out of the eight Ship-to-Shore Cranes having reached the end of their economic useful lives, were removed from operations since February 2023 and were not replaced. The remaining five such cranes are already operating at full capacity and in the event of any breakdown, the operations at the port would be heavily impacted.

In fact, Port Louis has been systematically losing its attractiveness and will in the near future face serious competition from neighbouring ports in Madagascar, South Africa and Reunion Island, which are witnessing large-scale investments for their accelerated modernisation.

It is extremely urgent to modernise and expand the port infrastructure to tap on the opportunities of the re-routing of vessels of major shipping companies around the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, in view of the conflicts around the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea.

Following my State Visit to India in September 2025, the Government of India, as part of a strategic partnership for the development of critical infrastructure in Mauritius, has decided to extend a Grant cum Loan of an estimated amount of Rs2.5 billion under the Special Economic Package for the acquisition of port equipment, namely, one ship-to-shore crane, eight Rubber Tyred Gantry cranes, 26 Tractors and Trailers and eight reach stackers. In addition, both Governments had agreed, in-principle, for the redevelopment and restructuring of Port in Mauritius.

On 19 December 2025, Government accordingly agreed to the setting up of an Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Strategy for Port Development under the chair of the then Deputy Prime Minister. On 06 March 2026, Government agreed, in-principle, to the recommendations of the Inter-Ministerial Committee to, *inter-alia* –

(a) opening of capital of the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd to Maersk Ltd and Mediterranean Shipping Company Ltd as minority shareholders of up to a threshold of 40%, subject to compliance with the Public Procurement Act and the Competition Act, and

(b) the implementation of the Island Container Terminal project.

The Inter-Ministerial Committee agreed that there was extreme urgency to devise a new strategy for the very survival of the port.

The need for a new container terminal, through the implementation of the Island Container Terminal project is not only critical for the development of the national economy but it will also position Mauritius as a reliable alternative regional port for international trade and shipping in the southern hemisphere.

Government agreed on 29 May 2026 to the implementation of the Island Container Terminal Project under a Government-to-Government agreement with the Government of India. This was reaffirmed at paragraph 44 of the Budget Speech 2026/2027.

The project is expected to strengthen the resilience of the national logistics chain, support future growth in trade, and improve the attractiveness of Mauritius as a maritime and transshipment hub in the Indian Ocean region.

Presently, the two terminals operated by the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd, have an annual handling capacity of approximately 1.2 million Twenty-Foot Equivalent Unit (TEUs) containers. The new Terminal is expected to increase the container terminal capacity by up to 1.8 million TEUs, bringing the total annual handling capacity to approximately 3 million TEUs. The project will also restore the position of Mauritius as a competitive regional maritime and logistics hub, as recommended in the Port Master Plan 2024.

With regard to part (a) and (b) (i) of the question, I wish to inform the House that discussions are ongoing with the Indian Authorities before the finalisation of an agreement.

With regard to part (b) (ii) of the question, the development of an Island Container Terminal which will protect the existing Mauritius Container Terminal against waves and swells as well as increasing capacity, was a recommendation contained in the Port Master Plans of 2009, 2016 and 2024.

In October 2016, a preliminary Financial and Economic Feasibility Study, financed under a grant of approximately USD 1.73 million from the African Development Bank, was conducted by Engineering Consultants (Royal Haskoning DHV) for the construction of the Island Container Terminal project.

The Study, which was completed in March 2019, confirmed that the Island Container Terminal project is technically feasible and would decrease the downtime at Mauritius Container Terminal as well as providing increased container stacking capacity.

All these reports commissioned on the operations and performance of the Port have reached the same conclusion – the Port suffers from operational inefficiencies. Government does not consider it necessary to commission further studies. The priority is to take decisive actions for Mauritius to be future ready, centred on a forward-looking economic development.

With a view to ensuring that this project is implemented in accordance with the highest standards of transparency, accountability, and good governance, a Steering Committee will be chaired by the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service and comprising, *inter-alia*, representatives of the Ministry of Finance, the Attorney-General's Office (to act as a Probity Officer) and the Mauritius Ports Authority to oversee the implementation of this project whilst ensuring compliance with legal and procurement frameworks at every stage.

Lastly, I wish to assure this House that this project will not be undertaken at the expense of the rights of port workers. Government recognises their invaluable contribution and remains committed to protecting their legitimate interests throughout in a fair, transparent, and socially responsible manner.

AIR MAURITIUS LTD – KROLL REPORT– TABLING

(No. B/1041) 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 Kroll Report on Air Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether consideration will be given for the tabling of copy thereof.

(Withdrawn)

CONSTITUENCY NO. 18 – SAFE CITY SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM CAMERAS – COVERAGE AREA & LOCATION

(No. B/1042) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Safe City Surveillance System Cameras, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the

Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof installed in Constituency No. 18, Belle Rose-Quatre Bornes, indicating –

(a) the locations thereof, and

(b) additional areas requiring surveillance coverage and, if so, indicate whether due consideration will be given thereto.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that there are 4,000 Intelligence Video Surveillance Cameras over 2,000 sites and 157 Intelligent Traffic Surveillance cameras over 75 sites throughout the island. In Constituency No. 18 which encompasses Quatre Bornes, La Louise, Belle Rose, Sodnac and surrounding suburbs, there are:

(i) 215 Intelligence Video Surveillance Cameras over 87 sites, and

(ii) four Intelligent Traffic Surveillance cameras on two sites.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am placing in the Library of the National Assembly a list of the locations where Safe City cameras have been installed in Constituency No. 18.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that a survey has already been carried out by Police in the Constituency. Three sites have been identified for the installation of three additional Intelligent Traffic Surveillance cameras, namely –

(a) St Jean Road near roundabout towards Tulipes Avenue;

(b) St Jean Road near Surath Avenue, and

(c) Sodnac Link Road near My Choice Supermarket.

Works for the installation of cameras in the above three sites as well as 52 sites throughout the island started in March 2026 and are expected to be completed by March 2027.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD – CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER – APPOINTMENT & REMUNERATION PACKAGE

(No. B/1043) 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 post of Chief Executive Officer of the Economic Development Board, he will, for the benefit of the House –

(a) obtain information as to the terms and conditions of appointment of the current incumbent thereof, if any, indicating the full remuneration package, including basic salary and other entitlements in terms of allowances, gratuity, car and passage benefits, bonuses, medical cover, pension or any other benefits, and

(b) table copy of the contracts of employment of the last two incumbents thereof.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, at its meeting of 24 June 2026, the Board of Directors of the Economic Development Board (EDB) made an offer of appointment to Mr Raja Ramdaursingh as Chief Executive Officer on the following terms and conditions –

(a) an employment contract for 3 years;

(b) a basic monthly salary of Rs850,000, with an annual salary increment of 3.2%;

(c) a gratuity equivalent to 20% of the annual basic salary, payable at the end of each contract year;

(d) passage benefits equivalent to 5% of the annual basic salary;

(e) a 13th month bonus, calculated on the basis of one-twelfth of the basic monthly salary for each completed month of service;

(f) a chauffeur-driven official vehicle;

(g) life and medical insurance cover for the duration of the contract, and

(h) an entitlement to 22 calendar days of paid annual leave and sick leave of 15 working days per contract year.

I am informed by the EDB that the offer of employment was communicated to Mr Ramdaursingh on the same date, that is, on 24 June 2026. Mr Ramdaursingh has not yet confirmed his acceptance of the offer of employment.

With regard to part (b) of the question, a copy of the contract of employment of the last two Chief Executive Officers of the Economic Development Board is being placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

PUBLIC ROADS – BUGGIES & QUAD BIKES USE – REGULATIONS

(No. B/1070) Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to buggies and quad bikes, he will –

(a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether any survey or feasibility study has been conducted on the use thereof on public roads, and

(b) state whether consideration is being given to regulate the use thereof exclusively in coastal regions and on designated roads around the island.

(Withdrawn)

M4 MOTORWAY PROJECT (FORBACH-AIRPORT) – PROCUREMENT METHOD & LOCAL CONTRACTORS/SME'S PARTICIPATION

(No. B/1072) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the proposed M4 Motorway Project linking Forbach to the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, as announced in the Budget Speech, he will state whether local and international bids will be called for, indicating whether, in the event the contract is awarded to foreign contractors, provisions will be made for –

(a) the participation of local contractors/subcontractors, including small and medium enterprises, and

(b) local stakeholders to benefit from the economic opportunities, employment creation and transfer of expertise in connection therewith.

(Withdrawn)

COLORECTAL CANCER – MANDATORY SCREENING POLICY

(No. B/1073) Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the increasing incidence of colorectal cancer and the importance of the early detection and prevention thereof, he will state whether consideration is being given for the introduction of a national policy for the systematic and mandatory screening thereof and, if so, indicate whether same will also be extended to asymptomatic persons falling within high-risk categories as from a prescribed age group.

(Withdrawn)

CAMP CAROL, MONT DÉSERT – STATE LAND – LEASE REGULARISATION

(No. B/1074) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the proposed regularisation of the leases of the remaining plots of State land at Camp Carol, Mont Désert, in the vicinity of Le Bouchon, he will, state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS – STAFFING – REPORTED SHORTAGES

(No. B/1075) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the teaching and non-teaching staff in primary State schools, secondary State schools and private secondary schools, he will state the number thereof employed on a permanent and contractual basis, respectively, since January 2026 to date, indicating the number of shortages thereof reported category-wise.

(Withdrawn)

BEAU VALLON – FLOOD MITIGATION WORKS

(No. B/1076) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the proposed flood mitigation works to be undertaken at the flood-prone area at the former King Savers roundabout, in Beau Vallon, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to where matters stand, indicating the expected start and completion dates thereof.

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUES – QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL/ REGIONAL HOSPITAL

(No. B/1077) Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital at Crève-Coeur, in Rodrigues Island, he will state whether consideration will be given, in collaboration with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, for the upgrading of the services and status thereof to that of a Regional Hospital having regard to the demographic changes in Rodrigues Island, including an ageing population with multiple chronic illnesses and the increasing demand for complex health care services.

(Withdrawn)

PRIMARY SCHOOLS – SEN UNITS – LOCATIONS

(No. B/1078) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to students having special education needs, he will state the –

(a) primary schools and respective location thereof wherein SEN Units have been set up to cater therefor, and

(b) number of additional SEN Units and SEN Regional Development Centres earmarked for implementation in financial year 2026-2027, indicating the proposed locations thereof.

(Withdrawn)

SWAMI SIVANANDA GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – INFRASTRUCTURE SURVEY & UPGRADE

(No. B/1080) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the Swami Sivananda Government School, he will state whether a survey has been carried out to assess the state of the infrastructure thereof and, if so, indicate –

(a) the findings thereof, and

(b) where matters stand regarding the requests for the upgrading of the infrastructure and relocation of the toilet facilities thereat.

(Withdrawn)

L'AVENIR, ST PIERRE, MORCELLEMENT VRS 2 – NEW BUS ROUTES

(No. A/63) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the newly developed residential areas at Morcellement VRS 2 at L'Avenir and St Pierre, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to whether provision will be made for new bus routes along same and, if so, indicate the timeframe therefor.

Reply: The residential area at Morcellement VRS 2 at L'Avenir comprises approximately 150 residential units. It is situated at a reasonable walking distance from the main road of L'Avenir with the nearest existing bus stop being at approximately 400 metres. The locality has the same profile as L'Avenir with the residents generally commuting to St Pierre, Rose Hill and Port Louis for their daily socio-economic activities.

The village of L'Avenir, which has a population density of around 3,300, is presently served by several bus routes provided, namely along Routes 13A, 13D, 103, 103A and 74, which collectively provide connectivity between L'Avenir, St Pierre, Rose Hill and Port Louis. Service frequencies range from approximately 10 to 15 minutes during peak hours and up to 50 minutes during off-peak periods. A total of 35 Road Service Licences (RSLs) has been issued for Routes 13 and 13A, while 27 RSLs have been issued for Route 103. In

addition, two buses operate on Route 13D and three buses on Route 74. All the services are operated by individual bus operators affiliated with the Moka-Flacq Bus Owners Cooperative Society and they may be availed of by residents of Morcellement VRS.

Additionally, five taxis are currently licensed to operate from L'Avenir, St Pierre, thereby providing an alternative mode of public transport to residents both at L'Avenir and the Morcellement VRS.

On the basis of the current level of public transport provision and accessibility of services, there is, at present, no identified and adequate operational requirement for the introduction of a new bus route to serve Morcellement VRS 2. Additionally, no formal representation has been received, to date, from residents of Morcellement VRS 2 requesting additional bus services.

The situation will continue to be monitored and, should the need for service arise in the foreseeable future, the feasibility of extending an existing route will be examined, subject to the necessary operational and road safety assessments.

WATER RESOURCES – LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT & PLANNING

(No. A/64) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the long-term management and planning of water resources, he will state whether consideration will be given for –

(a) a review of the Water Resources Act 2024;

(b) the declaration of all potable water sources across Mauritius as public, and

(c) the recognition of the right of access to safe water and sanitation, having regard to the relevant United Nations' Declaration in relation thereto.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Water Resources Commission that no amendment is currently being considered to the Water Resources Act 2024 since the legal framework is already aligned with the requirements of the UN Resolution and other UN instruments such as the Paris Agreement and SDG 6-Sustainable development goals.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I have to inform the House that in line with Section 5 of the Water Resources Act 2024, all surface water, including springs and rivers, are part of the *domaine public* and are inalienable and imprescriptible. Furthermore, all underground water is vested in the State.

As to part (c) of the question, in line with international conventions signed, my Ministry priorities the supply of safe and potable drinking water over any other allocation.

DR. A. G. JEETOO HOSPITAL – ANGIOGRAPHY MACHINE REPAIR

(No. A/65) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the proposed repairs of the angiography machine at the Dr A. G. Jeetoo Hospital he will state where matters stand, indicating the expected completion date thereof, and whether, in the interim, consideration is being given for the referral of patients requiring the services thereof to other health institutions equipped therewith.

Reply: I am informed that the angiography machine at Dr A.G. Jeetoo Hospital make Philips Allura Xper FD20C was commissioned on 04 December 2013. The equipment is covered under a labour-only maintenance contract with Ducray Lenoir Ltd for the period 18 July 2025 to 18 July 2026 at an annual cost of Rs578,500.

The equipment broke down on 20 April 2026. After preliminary investigation, the Biomedical Engineering Unit and the service provider attended the site to extract the system error logs and carry out diagnostic investigations.

The initial assessment indicated a fault in the table positioning system, which was preventing the C-arm from performing its motorised vertical movements. The service provider requested for the procurement of the AD7 (NT) Height Potmeter Assembly, valued at Rs83,300. The spare part was procured on 20 May 2026.

During replacement of the Height Potmeter Assembly, the service provider detected additional system faults. Subsequent troubleshooting, undertaken in consultation with the equipment manufacturer, confirmed that the fault was attributable to a defective AMC Drive, which required replacement. This second spare part was procured on 07 July 2026, and its replacement is ongoing. The repairs are currently at the final stage with system testing and calibration in progress.

Although the replacement of the AMC Drive resolved the table movement issue, the equipment remains under repair. Following calibration and performance tests carried out on 11 July 2026, the machine continued to display geometry-related errors. According to the Biomedical Engineering Unit, these errors may be linked to the geometry industrial PC. The service provider is currently seeking further technical guidance from the equipment manufacturer, Philips, to complete the repair and calibration works, by end of August 2026.

The Ministry is closely monitoring the situation to ensure that the repairs are completed and that the equipment is returned to full operational status at the earliest.

Appropriate arrangements have been made to ensure continuity of care during the period the equipment has been out of service. About 100 patients have been referred to Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital, where angiography procedures are performed by the cardiologists of Dr A.G. Jeetoo Hospital. In addition, 37 patients have been referred to Cardiac Centre for angiography services.

PLEASURE CRAFT LICENCES – ISSUANCE APPLICATIONS

(No. A/66) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to applications for the issue of Pleasure Craft Licences, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Tourism Authority, information as to whether consideration will be given for same to be entertained all the year throughout and, if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed by the Tourism Authority that applications for Pleasure Craft Licences are received and issued all throughout the year, subject to all conditions being satisfactorily met.

LA NICOLIÈRE RESERVOIR – STORAGE CAPACITY INCREASE

(No. A/67) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the proposed increase in the storage capacity of La Nicolière Reservoir, he will state why the Central Water Authority has not yet been granted authorisation to proceed therewith, indicating the timeframe, if any, set for a decision to be taken in relation thereto.

Reply: Water distribution in the Northern part of the island is mainly sourced from Midlands dam and distributed through the La Nicolière system. Over the years, the regions in the North have witnessed a steady development. To meet the future demand for water in the northern parts of Mauritius, the Master Plan on Water Resources of 2012, which is a roadmap for mobilisation, storage and distribution of water up to horizon 2050, had recommended, *inter-alia*, the enlargement of La Nicolière Reservoir.

A feasibility study for the enlargement of La Nicolière Dam was carried out in phases and the report finalised in April 2025.

The study makes recommendations, amongst others, for a 20-metre raise of the existing La Nicolière dam with a wider footprint. With this raise, La Nicolière reservoir will see its

present capacity increase from 5.26 to 33 million m^3. The raise will also entail about 3 km re-alignment of the La Nicolière Feeder Canal before its inlet into the reservoir.

I am informed by the Water Resources Commission that the next stage will be the appointment of a Consultant to carry out the detailed design of the proposal presented at feasibility stage and preparation of bidding documents for construction works. Funds have not been provided in Estimates 2026/2027 for this Consultancy. Once awarded, the detailed design is estimated to be completed in 24 months.

Pending the enlargement of La Nicolière Reservoir, the Water Resources Commission has initiated action for the upgrading of the La Nicolière Feeder Canal to increase its conveyance capacity so as to augment water mobilised at La Nicolière Reservoir. Funds have been provided in Estimates 2026/2027 for Geotechnical investigations to be undertaken to select the optimal re-alignment option. Thereafter, the detailed design and the cost estimates of the selected option will be finalised.