



**SEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY**

**DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**(UNREVISED)**

**FIRST SESSION**

**TUESDAY 02 APRIL 2024**

**CONTENTS**

**PAPERS LAID**

**QUESTIONS (*Oral*)**

**MOTION**

**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

## THE CABINET

(Formed by Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth)

Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity
Hon. Louis Steven Obeegadoo	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology
Dr. the Hon. Mohammad Anwar Husnoo	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management
Hon. Alan Ganoo, GCSK	Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail
Dr. the Hon. Renganaden Padayachy	Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development
Hon. Georges Pierre Lesjongard	Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo, GCSK	Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity
Hon. Soomilduth Bholah	Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance
Hon. Kavydass Ramano	Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change
Hon. Mahen Kumar Seeruttun	Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security
Hon. Maneesh Gobin	Attorney General, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional

## Integration and International Trade

Hon. Jean Christophe Stephan Toussaint	Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation
Hon. Mahendranuth Sharma Hurreeram	Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development
Hon. Darsanand Balgobin	Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Soodesh Satkam Callichurn	Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training
Dr. the Hon. Kailesh Kumar Singh Jagutpal	Minister of Health and Wellness
Hon. Sudheer Maudhoo	Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping
Hon. Mrs Kalpana Devi Koonjoo-Shah	Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare
Hon. Avinash Teeluck	Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage
Dr. the Hon. Mrs Marie Christiane Dorine Chukowry	Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection
Dr. the Hon. Anjiv Ramdhany	Minister of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms
Hon. Ms Naveena Ramyad	Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives

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**MAURITIUS**

**Seventh National Assembly**

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**FIRST SESSION**

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**Debate No. 02 of 2024**

**Sitting of Tuesday 02 April 2024**

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

**The National Anthem was played**

*(Mr Speaker in the Chair)*

**PAPERS LAID**

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Papers have been laid on the Table.

**A. Prime Minister's Office****Ministry of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications**  
**Ministry for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity**

- (a) Certificate of Urgency in respect of the Environment Bill (No. I of 2024). (In Original)
- (b) The Civil Aviation (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 52 of 2024)
- (c) The Civil Aviation (Amendment of Schedule (No. 2) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 53 of 2024)

**B. Ministry of Land Transport and Light Rail**

- (a) The Road Traffic (Construction and Use of Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 59 of 2024)
- (b) The Road Traffic (Public Service Vehicle, Road Service and Carrier's Licence) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 60 of 2024)

**C. Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development**

- (a) The Certificate of Audit and Report of the Director of Audit on the Accounts of the Government of the Republic of Mauritius for the Financial Year 2022-23.
- (b) The Certificate of Audit and Report of the Director of Audit on the Accounts of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the Financial Year 2022-23.
- (c) The Certificate of the Director of Audit on the Annual Statements of the Government of the Republic of Mauritius for Financial Year 2022-23.
- (d) The Certificate of the Director of Audit on the Annual Statements of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for Financial Year 2022-23.
- (e) The Annual Report of the Central Procurement Board for the year ended 30 June 2023.
- (f) The Excise (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 55 of 2024)

(g) The Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 56 of 2024)

(h) The Customs (Amendment) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 57 of 2024)

(i) The Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 58 of 2024)

**D. Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities**

The Central Water Authority (Dry Season) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 61 of 2024)

**E. Ministry of Health and Wellness**

The Human Tissue (Removal, Preservation and Transplant) (Importation and Use of Corneal Tissue) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 51 of 2024)

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

The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 6) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 54 of 2024)

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**  
**RÉDUIT TRIANGLE – SOCIOCULTURAL ORGANISATIONS – PLOTS OF**  
**LAND - RESTITUTION**

**The Leader of the Opposition (Mr X. L. Duval)** (*by Private Notice*) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to State Land at Réduit Triangle initially allocated to the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust and the Indo Mauritian Catholic Association, he will state if –

- (a) consideration will be given for the restitution of the original plots of land to the two organisations and, if not, why not;
- (b) the land has been allocated to other developers and, if so, indicate to whom and the purpose thereof, and
- (c) in addition to the restitution of the land to the said organisations, consideration will be given for compensation to be paid thereto in view of any prejudice caused to meet the cost of construction of their cultural centres.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to bid good morning to the Leader of the Opposition and thank him for the question put to me this morning.

The House may refer to PQ B/438 of 09 May 2023 and to the PNQ of the Leader of the Opposition, going back to 23 May 2023, which referred to land leased to sociocultural organisations in Réduit.

The wording of the present PNQ, of course, requires that I should set the context for the issues raised. Now, for recall, this land refers to the Réduit Triangle, which was made available for development, by the acquisition in 2001 by the then Government, of land from Lonrho Sugar Corporation under the so-called ‘Lonrho Deal’. Thereafter, in 2004, a planning exercise was carried out to decide what would be done with that land and ensure coherent land use.

However, in 2006, under a different Government, these planning proposals were reviewed, and the then Government granted land to a number of different public and private organisations for purposes that were varied and totally unrelated. For instance, today, the building of the Independent Commission Against Corruption stands in the immediate vicinity of a hospital whereas land has been attributed for all sorts of different purposes, namely –

- (i) the Electoral Commission Office;
- (ii) the Trade Union Trust Fund;

- (iii) a spiritual complex;
- (iv) a transformer room;
- (v) a retirement home;
- (vi) the Local Government Service Commission;
- (vii) National Archives, and
- (viii) a telephone cellular-based station.

And as I have already said in this House, such injudicious and haphazard use of State Land was not in accordance with the basic principles of land use and planning and does not serve the public good; does not serve the national interest.

In the meantime, the region of Réduit has become increasingly central with various developments, including extension of the Metro line. Accordingly, in 2021, in line with its mandate to ensure appropriate land use and monitoring of State Land leases, my Ministry conducted a survey that revealed that out of 24 plots of State Land, either leased or vested in the Réduit Triangle, only 11 had been developed whereas 13 had not. Thereupon, Government decided to proceed with a new planning exercise by clustering compatible activities, taking into account, of course, existing buildings and retrieving all unused land.

There were two exceptions –

- The first one was the land vested in the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage for the setting up of the National Archives and National Library because it had reached a very advanced stage in terms of the procurement exercise.
- The second was the land vested in the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology for the setting up of a planetarium because that land was not so-called ‘Illovo Land’ and it was on the other side of Rivière Cascade.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** You have said so...

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** In any event, both projects lie squarely within the scope of an educational hub. Now, the new planning exercise provides that alongside the educational hub, should be developed a medical hub together with related services.

Now, there were four sociocultural organisations concerned by retrieval of land: the Hindi Speaking Union, the Indo Mauritian Catholic Association, the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust and the Urdu Speaking Union. A number of meetings were held, I believe it was early 2023 or end 2022, by the Prime Minister and/or the Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage

with these four organisations to explain the rationale of Government's decision and to propose their relocation to a new site to be agreed upon by everybody, and all four organisations conveyed their agreement and my Ministry proceeded accordingly to retrieve the relevant plots of land in accordance with standard procedures.

Subsequently, the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust and the Indo Mauritian Catholic Association changed their stand as regards retrieval of the land. In the meantime, the Government and my Ministry identified various alternative sites which were proposed to all the organisations and eventually, a site visit was effected by my colleague, the Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage, accompanied by representatives of all four organisations - because there was an ongoing dialogue - and at that site visit, all four organisations expressed their satisfaction and gave their verbal agreement. The alternative site is very centrally located at Côte d'Or and this site is now being acquired from Landscape Mauritius Ltd by the State. The agreement was that each of these four sociocultural organisations would be leased a plot of land, the size of which would be no lesser than that which they held under a lease at the Réduit Triangle.

Since then, three of the organisations, namely the Hindi Speaking Union, the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust and the Urdu Speaking Union have formally conveyed their agreement to the offer made by Government whereas the Indo Mauritian Catholic Association has not accepted the offer.

Now, as regards part (a) of the question, the issue of restitution of the original plot of land does not arise and has never arisen for the simple reason that, as I stated, the Ministry of Housing has proceeded with a planning exercise in the national interest and Government has agreed to a new planning scheme, if I may so term it. Restitution would be tantamount to going back to the status quo ante with all the developments there. Restitution does not arise the more so as three of the four organisations have already conveyed their agreement to the relocation.

As regards part (b) of the question, the answer is in the negative.

As regards part (c) of the question, the issue of compensation does not arise as no prejudice has been caused to any of the four organisations by virtue of the cancellation of the leases, in view of the proposed reallocation of a plot of land to each one of them at a new site at Côte d'Or.

For recall, the leases of the land at Réduit Triangle dates back, in the case of the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust, to July 2010; in the case of the Indo Mauritian Catholic Association, to February 2013 (11 years ago), and in the case of the Urdu Speaking Union and the Hindi Speaking Union, the leases go back to September 2016. It is to be noted that all these leases carried conditions that construction had to start within nine months as from the date of signature of the lease agreement and that condition had not been adhered to.

Nonetheless, I would like to remind the House that this Government has always been supportive of all religions and cultures and cultural centre projects. As a matter of fact, over the last 10 years, the Ministry of Arts and Culture has allocated, for instance, no less than Rs37 million to the one Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust. Government will stand together with sociocultural organisations belonging to all religions to assist them in the furtherance of their projects.

Now, in the precise case of Côte d'Or and the sociocultural organisations that have agreed to be relocated there, firstly, let me stress that Côte d'Or is deemed even more appropriate, in view of the surroundings, for the activities of these four organisations and the development of cultural centres. Secondly, while the State is in the process of acquiring that land which belongs to Landscape, Landscape has already embarked upon works to develop the land. Right now, work is ongoing, the site has been cleared, survey of site has been completed, and excavation works are in progress. Government is coming in – and this was decided a long time ago – to ensure that all the basic infrastructure (road access, infrastructure for provision of water and electricity, including street lighting and all the drain infrastructure) is in place. That is already ongoing. The work has been contracted out and is proceeding smoothly. We are looking to an early completion of that work.

Thereafter, and again this was decided quite a while ago by Government, Government will construct, on behalf of each of these organisations we have mentioned, namely the Hindi Speaking Union, the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust and the Urdu Speaking Union, eight cultural centres at its own cost. This testifies to this Government's unprecedented and sincere commitment to support all religions, all communities and all cultural centres in this country in the interest of peace, stability and shared development for all the people of Mauritius.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Tamil community and the Indo Mauritian Catholic community are extremely disappointed, as I am, that Government has not deemed it fit to reconstitute, to return the land that has been granted to them previously.

The Deputy Prime Minister referred to the land being undeveloped. Is he now aware, has he looked at the file now, as opposed to the last PNQ, to see, for instance, for IMCA, that it was his own Ministry that refused planning clearance for the IMCA to go ahead with the construction? And then, his Ministry has the cheek to take the land back because there has been no construction! I have the dates and I can table the documents.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I hope we are not going to have a repeat of the PNQ...

**Mr X. L. Duval:** You were not aware last time.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** ...of 23 May 2023, when exactly the same points were made.

So, let me first recall that land development did not occur on any one of the four sites; we are talking of the four sociocultural organisations. Secondly, as regards the Indo Mauritian Catholic Association, an association which I am very well acquainted with, it has never been brought to my attention, despite several meetings I have had with the persons responsible for that organisation, that there was any planning clearance in abeyance at the Ministry of Housing. That is a fact which I am stating here in Parliament.

Now, in early 2023, I remember meeting the President and Executive Committee members of IMCA. We explained to them the rationale for this project and why we wanted a coherent and orderly development for our country, and such is the mission of my Ministry. They were in wholehearted agreement. It was the same agreement that they indeed conveyed to the Prime Minister. They even...

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Tell him to reply short ...

**Mr Speaker:** Wait!

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** I am sorry.

**Mr Speaker:** Wait!

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not have any control over the question put by the Leader of the Opposition; the manner, the wording, the phrasing and the length. I have the same liberty to phrase my answers as I so wish.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Not to waste time!

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** That is normal parliamentary procedure.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** And abusing!

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** So, what I was saying is that I had met again and again IMCA and they requested assistance as regards additional land in the east of the country, which we promised to look into. Of course, had there been request for planning clearance before this exercise was embarked upon, it might have been considered.

But once this exercise was initiated, the priority was relocation and beyond relocation. This Government is going further than any Government has done before, in terms of extending, and I have just given the details...

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Mr Speaker, Sir, he should let us have a chance to ask a question. You are wasting time.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** ... concrete help, concrete assistance to construct cultural centres and if IMCA wishes to join the other three organisations, certainly Government will consider.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Now, you have taken a year from the last PNQ to come up with this, no doubt because your speeches are too long.

I am going to refer you to two letters that IMCA has sent – one on 15 April 2019 and another one, follow-up on 25 June 2020, pleading your Ministry for planning clearance. And you say that IMCA has agreed to your plan! I refer and I will table a letter, a very tough letter sent on 10 May 2023, signed by the General Secretary and the National President of IMCA where,

believe it or not, they talk about genocide under the Geneva Convention. This is the letter; I will table it. Do you have any record that IMCA has agreed to this land?

**An hon. Member:** Shame!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Let the Minister reply!

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Do you have anything that you can table?

**Mr Speaker:** Wait!

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Before I respond, could I have the date of the second letter mentioned?

**Mr X. L. Duval:** June 2020. You are not on top of this file!

**Mr Speaker:** No comments!

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I will not respond to insults. That is not my manner of proceeding and I will not, there, suggest that the Leader of the Opposition is not on top of this file although he is offering us a mere repetition of what was stated in May of last year.

Now, firstly, in April 2019, I was not at the Ministry of Housing and Lands and was never made aware of the existence of such a letter. Likewise, I have not seen a letter of June 2020 and have never been made aware of it, but, let me insist once again, I personally met with the President and Executive members of IMCA at my office at the Ministry of Housing in Ebène in a very cordial atmosphere, and we discussed all the issues and activities pertaining to IMCA, and never was a matter of planning clearance at Réduit raised. Had it been raised, as holds true for any sociocultural organisation on leased State Land, it would have been given due consideration.

Now, let me go further to state that the letter of May 2023, with the language referred to by the association, of course, came to the knowledge of Government and I will let the public judge.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Mr Speaker, Sir, these organisations cannot be victims of the apparent disorganisation of your Ministry where before responding to one or two PNQs, you are not aware of what actually has happened in your Ministry. These people cannot be the victims of this disorganisation. Mr Speaker, Sir, I will table these letters for the knowledge of the Deputy Prime

Minister because his Ministry took the land back because it had not been constructed upon, whereas it is your own fault that it was not constructed upon.

**Mr Speaker:** So, let the Minister reply at this stage! Let the Minister reply!

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the land had not been constructed upon in the case of all four organisations over a period stretching over, we said 2010 up until 2016, up to 2024. That is a fact, but the land was retrieved because most importantly, there was a newer survey and a new planning exercise. We can talk and talk and talk over for many PNQs. The same PNQ as this one can be asked over and over again. The facts remain that all four organisations were not able to build.

This Government not only is proposing relocation to a more appropriate site and laying down the entire infrastructure, but, furthermore, is embarking upon the unprecedented gesture. It is more than a gesture; an action of constructing cultural centres for the Hindi Speaking Union, the Indo-Mauritian Catholic Association, the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust, and the Urdu Speaking Union. Never before has any Government put its words to action and shown its commitment to supporting the cultural development, the cultural centres of all the components of the Mauritian population.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Mr Speaker, Sir, one year ago, I asked the same Deputy Prime Minister whether he would financially help these cultural centres and he categorically refused, and now, on the eve of the election, haha, suddenly...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** No, put your question!

**Mr X. L. Duval:** ... suddenly, the money is found.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition...

*(Interruptions)*

No, don't show me your hands! Don't show me your hands! This is disrespect! I am asking you...

**Mr X. L. Duval:** What?

**Mr Speaker:** ...to put your questions! Don't make comments!

**Mr X. L. Duval:** I am saying that on the eve of the elections, suddenly the Government now comes up with that money...

**Mr Speaker:** Let the Minister reply to that!

**Mr X. L. Duval:** When he is saying...

**Mr Speaker:** Let the Minister reply to that!

**Mr X. L. Duval:** I have the right to ask my question.

**Mr Speaker:** Put your question! Last time!

**Mr X. L. Duval:** I will put my question! What's the matter with you?

**Mr Speaker:** The matter is with you!

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Exactly! I will put my question. Now, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister is saying that the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust agreed whereas we all know that the community itself and the Mauritius Tamil Temples Federation have never agreed. Is he aware that all the Board members of the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust are appointed by the Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage and, furthermore, a large number of them are civil servants? These people cannot...

**Mr Speaker:** Let the Minister reply!

**Mr X. L. Duval:** ... represent the Tamil community or any community because, in fact, all they do is representing Government because they are civil servants.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, once a year, the Leader of the Opposition wakes up and he is suddenly concerned with the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust and the Indo Mauritian Catholic Association. Once a year! The last PNQ dates back to almost a year. The Leader of the Opposition, as opposed to the example of several Members of the Opposition, has not been involved in the demagoguery we have heard, and I had hoped that he would maintain the same standards today.

Let me again respond to him that since May 2023, this Government has not remained inactive, has not remained with its arms folded. We have moved very concretely since that time to identify, together with the four sociocultural organisations, the land where they would be relocated. Proposals had been made for La Vigie; proposals had been made for, I believe, land in the region of Hermitage. It was only when the four organisations, in the presence of the Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage, gave their agreement and said they were happy and satisfied that we could then, in a consensual manner, embark upon this project in a concrete manner.

As soon as that was decided, action was taken to verify that the land was appropriate for the building of a cultural centre. Discussions embarked upon with Landscape for the acquisition

of the land. Tendering procedures were undertaken and the contract was allocated by Landscape for the work to be done.

Right now, my colleague, the Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage, is in the process of meeting with these organisations or at least the three of them, to agree upon the precise location of the plots which will be attributed to each one of the three. So, one can either talk and wake up once a year to do some new talking or one can act! And this Government is acting decisively to support all cultural centres.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** The DPM says ‘decisive action’ after 12 whole months have gone past! It takes a PNQ to get the truth out of you!

Mr Speaker, Sir, the DPM has not replied to the question. When the Government is talking to the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre, they are, in fact, talking to themselves because they are talking to civil servants and no civil servant is going to go against the instructions of a Prime Minister or even a Deputy Prime Minister. I would like to ask the Deputy Prime Minister now...

*(Interruptions)*

Money is not everything! There is also integrity, honesty and dignity.

I would like to ask the Minister whether he will now apologise for having called these venerable persons ‘usual troublemakers’ and their project ‘*projet galimatia*’.

**Mr Bhagwan:** *Dezorder!*

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Again, Mr Speaker, Sir, it pains me. This is not just any Leader of the Opposition; it is somebody whom I respect and who has got us accustomed to other standards of debate in this House. That he should now share in the same demagoguery that other Members of the Opposition do, really pains me.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Are you denying?

**Mr Bhagwan:** *La communauté tamoule pe atann twa!*

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Let me respond to what is being said. I thought the Leader of the Opposition would not share in the demagoguery I am now hearing from others on the Opposition side, and you can hear them.

**Mr Bhagwan:** *La communauté tamoule pe atann twa!*

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** And you can hear them as well as I do.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**An hon. Member:** *Bwar Lysol do!*

**Mr Bhagwan:** *To pou disparet! To pou kone!*

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Bhagwan:** *To pou disparet!*

**An hon. Member:** *Lysol! Lysol!*

**Mr Bhagwan:** *Ale ek Lysol do! Zot dan bez!*

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** These Members can put their Parliamentary Questions...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bhagwan:** *Zot dan bez!*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Hon. Bhagwan!

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** ... instead of...

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Hon. Bhagwan!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Bhagwan, order!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can't you hear over there?

**An hon. Member:** *Met twa deor!*

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! I have said order everywhere!

*(Interruptions)*

Order, both sides of the House!

**Mr Bhagwan:** *Dife pou lor zot!*

*(Interruptions)*

*Dife pou lor twa! Mo p atann twa!*

**Mr Ramano:** ... *Enba lepep! Enba lepep!*

**Mr Bhagwan:** *Dan Quatre Bornes, dife pou lor twa! Dans Quatre Bornes, mo p atann twa! Mo p atann twa! Dan Quatres Bornes, La Source ! Mo p atann twa dan La Source laba !*

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order, both sides of the House! Last time!

**Mr Bhagwan:** *Mo p atann twa dan La Source.*

**An hon. Member:** *Li pe fatigue dan La Source laba li...*

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, both sides of the House! Last time!

Continue with your reply!

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The Leader of the Opposition says it has taken a year for the truth to be stated. I don't know what truth he is referring to. We have all stated the truth – what was the state land, who gave that land away in such a manner, what the project was; to go back to planning principles, how the retrieval of land concerned not one or two organisations but 13 different plots of land, including Ministries, the Prime Minister's Office, private sector organisations and NGOs of different types. So, it is not one or two associations but 13 plots of land having been retrieved. Let this truth be known to the nation!

Beyond the sly innuendos and the defamatory remarks of the Opposition. Firstly, the truth is that the whole of the Réduit Triangle Area has been looked at afresh with a new planning exercise. Secondly, the Leader of the Opposition refers to this Cultural Centre Trust with civil servants and so on. Now, when were these centres set up? This was set up between 2000 and 2005 by the MSM/MMM Government, and we are proud of that. Since then, they have done their work for the promotion of cultural developments of everybody in this country. They have been supported by Government, and Government has worked hand-in-hand with these organisations.

I don't know whether the Leader of the Opposition is against cultural centres and cultural centre trusts.

*(Interruptions)*

If that be the case, he should say so! He should say so!

**An hon. Member:** *Problem!*

**An hon. Member:** Very cheap!

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Because, Mr Speaker, Sir,...

**An hon. Member:** Cheap! Cheap! *C'est* cheap!

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** What does he call them? Eminent, venerable? The Leader of the Opposition has been in Government since 2005! To my knowledge, after 2005, never has he come forward to propose the change or the abolition of cultural centre trusts. These cultural centres exist; we are proud that we brought them into existence. We will go on working with them just as we work with all religions and sociocultural organisations of all religions. Now, let me go back...

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Come on, Mr Speaker, Sir!

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Now, let me go back to the truth.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** What is this?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** I am blamed by the Leader of the Opposition...

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Is this a monologue or what?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** ...by speaking of usual troublemakers.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Is this a monologue or what? Is this Prime Minister's Question Time?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Everybody in this country knows that this matter has been politicised just to score cheap political points.

*(Interruptions)*

**An hon. Member:** *La honte!*

**Mr Toussaint:** *Nou kone kisanla sa!*

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Even if it has meant threatening the stability and the social community spirit of the population of Mauritius.

**Mr Toussaint:** Yes! *La honte!*

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** And this is not the first time the Opposition does so.

Secondly, there is a campaign that the Minister would have termed the project of the Tamil Cultural Trust ‘*galimatia*.’ That is not what was said! They know fully well and the Leader of the Opposition first! The term ‘*galimatia*’ was used to say that when there is no urban planning. Take any area of the country, if you allow, as did the Government after 2005 – and my friends from the MMM will know what I am saying. Between 2000 and 2005, we put in place planning guidelines so that activities that emerge would be compatible; there will be an orderly and coherent development. After 2006, they did the contrary so that you have haphazard development. That is what was referred to! Now we are seeking to bring back some coherence in terms of development of land. That is the mandate of my Ministry and that is what we are doing, not only in Réduit, but across the country, to look at State leases that are not being utilised and State Land that is not being productively used. That is the work of Government! We are doing our work. We are supporting cultural centres and the population will judge.

**Mr Speaker:** Time over by six minutes!

Prime Minister’s Question Time!

Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ B/90 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation. PQ B/157 will be replied by the hon. Prime Minister, time permitting.

I now call hon. Doolub!

### **AGALÉGA – NEW AIRSTRIP & JETTY – DEVELOPMENTAL AGENDA**

**(No. B/82) Mr R. Doolub (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to Agaléga, he will state how the construction and operationalisation of the new airstrip and jetty facilities thereat fit in the developmental agenda of the Republic of Mauritius.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have already stated in this House previously, the socio-economic development of Agaléga had been neglected for far too long, and the needs and aspirations of its inhabitants had been receiving little attention, leaving them with the bare

minimum for their subsistence. However, with the realisation, under my Government, of the two major infrastructural development projects mentioned by the hon. Member, namely, the airstrip and the new jetty, the stage is now set for Agaléga to embark on a transformative journey towards a better and brighter future for the Agalegans and their children.

In regard to these two projects in question, it is a fact that the state of the old airstrip, which was constructed in the early eighties, had worsened over time to such an extent that landing and take-off of the Dornier aircraft had become a challenging exercise in view of the serious risk for the aircraft, its crew members and passengers. Only some patching works had been undertaken in 1999, but that also did not last long. Thereafter, from 2003 onwards, some attempts had been made to upgrade the airstrip but to no avail. The state of the airstrip continued to deteriorate through lack of repair and maintenance. With each landing and take-off of the Dornier, both the aircraft and the airstrip sustained damages, so much so that a decision had to be taken by the Department of Civil Aviation to limit flying to Agaléga only for urgent medical evacuation and which was restricted to daytime only.

The old jetty, which is 60 metres long, was constructed in 1985 and is in a very bad condition, despite repairs that were effected over the years. Moreover, the old jetty could not allow ships to berth as such embarkation and disembarkation of passengers and goods had to be made via barges. Ships like MV Trochetia had to lay in anchor at some 400 metres away from the jetty at the St James anchorage located at a reef free area where the minimum depth of 60 metres was available. Not only that, in certain past voyages, MV Trochetia could not even anchor and had to be kept on the drive for both embarkation and disembarkation of goods and passengers in the high sea due to bad weather conditions resulting in greater risks, delays and additional financial costs.

Access to the Island by air and by sea therefore remained severely constrained because of the poor state of the airstrip and the jetty.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on acceding to power in 2014, the then Government promised to ensure that the needs and requirements of our fellow citizens of Agaléga were catered for. The Government Programme 2015-2019 further provided as follows, and I quote –

“Government will equip Agaléga with appropriate amenities including an airstrip and a new jetty to improve accessibility and connectivity. In view of its specificity, the use of renewable energy will be promoted there.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, following consultations between the Government of Mauritius and the Government of India, a Memorandum of Understanding for the improvement in sea and air transportation facilities at Agaléga, was signed during the visit of H.E. Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, to Mauritius in March 2015.

The realisation of these two major infrastructural development projects in Agaléga is yet another testimony of this long standing relationship of mutual benefits and trust between our two countries. These projects will go a long way towards improving the air and sea access to the island and contribute significantly to improving the standard of living of our Agalegan brothers and sisters as well as also broaden the scope of economic activities in Agaléga. In addition, the implementation of these projects will also cater to the future development needs of Agaléga as well as implementation of measures to promote, protect and safeguard our maritime security needs in the following areas, amongst others –

- (i) surveillance and monitoring of our vast EEZ of 2.3 million square kilometres;
- (ii) counter-piracy, counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics and human trafficking;
- (iii) controlling poaching and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing;
- (iv) provision of hydrographic services;
- (v) promoting economic development, including blue economy initiatives;
- (vi) emergency response, including search and rescue;
- (vii) marine pollution response, and
- (viii) Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster relief activities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the actual works on these two main projects started in October 2018. However, mobilisation of resources and progress of work were severely affected by the

challenging sea conditions which posed serious difficulties in the supply of construction material to the island.

It must be pointed out that the projects involved a significant amount of mobilisation of plant, machineries and equipment such as barges, tugs, dumpers, batching plants, pavers, sewage treatment plant, desalination plants, amongst others. This is exclusive of accommodation that had to be constructed for workers, workshops and medical facilities at site.

Later, the unforeseeable circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic had also severely impacted the project and resulted in decrease in work progress due to inability to mobilise manpower with required skills as well as construction materials which led, in fact, to considerable delay in the realisation of those projects.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I must also point out that the Agaléga Infrastructural Development Project included surface dressing of the existing airstrip. As I said earlier, the coral bed airstrip is a primitive structure with periodic peeling-off of debris, due to the impact of landing aircrafts.

Accordingly, an additional layer of surface dressing was applied over the entire airstrip which was thereafter compacted with rollers to ensure the free debris were arrested. In addition, as a Standard Operating Practice, inspection and compacting was ensured, as and when required, before every emergency sortie of Dornier to Agaléga to ensure safer landing and take-off and avoid any damage to the aircraft.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the new airstrip is 3 km long and 45 m wide in North-South orientation. Unlike the existing airstrip, the new airstrip is an all-weather concrete airstrip with capabilities for day and night landing.

This material intensive project required mobilisation of a large quantum of construction materials. All civil works of the airstrip, including taxiway and apron have been completed. The works on associated infrastructure such as Air Traffic Control Tower, Fire Fighting Services, Passenger Terminal Building, Aircraft Hangar and Electrical Substation were also severely impacted due to COVID-19 pandemic, but these works have also been completed, except for certain peripheral works like navigation, meteorological equipment, which are expected to be completed by December 2024. Trial landings during day time had been undertaken successfully

by the Dornier aircraft and the ATR-72 in March 2023 and in February 2024, respectively. I would also like to point out that the new airstrip will allow night flights.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to the new jetty, I am informed that this was the more complicated aspect of the project with work interface at the sea. However, despite the several challenges, all works related to the new jetty have been completed and this jetty would be able to accommodate up to three ships at a time. Inaugural berthing of both MV Trochetia and CGS Barracuda were undertaken during the inauguration of the new jetty.

Mr Speaker, Sir, following the 2019 General Elections, the new Government renewed its commitment to develop the island and optimise its economic potential with the establishment of the new jetty and airstrip. In this regard, in spite of the setback caused by COVID-19 pandemic which impacted heavily on the implementation schedule, the Government of Mauritius extended its full support for the timely realisation of the project.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the House will be aware that I visited Agaléga from 29 February to 02 March 2024 for the inauguration of the new airstrip, the new jetty and six other small development projects jointly with H.E. Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, who was live from New Delhi.

The official delegation comprised, *inter alia*, five Ministers, namely the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management, the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation, the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping, and the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation, three Members of the National Assembly representing Constituency No. 3, Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East, two Parliamentary Private Secretaries, the High Commissioner of the Republic of India, Senior Government Officials, representatives from five private press, the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation and the Government Information Service. All the costs, including travel and accommodation were borne by Government.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition was also invited to form part of the delegation, but his secretariat subsequently informed my Office that he would not be joining the delegation. Hon. Shakeel Mohamed also did not turn up despite being invited.

The inauguration ceremony was held on Thursday 29 February 2024 at 11 30 hours and was attended by a large number of Agalegans. H.E. Shri Narendra Modi and I jointly unveiled the e-plaques for the following projects –

- (i) the new airstrip;
- (ii) the new jetty, and
- (iii) six other small development projects.

Mr Speaker, Sir, these six small projects are the following –

1. **Construction of a Library with computers and IT infrastructure.** The project has been implemented on the North Island in Village Vingt Cinq to cater to the needs of both school goers as well as the local residents. It is also equipped with four computers with internet connection.
2. **Construction of a larger shop.** The project has been implemented on the North Island in Village Vingt Cinq to provide a fully air conditioned larger shop with better storage conditions.
3. **Construction of an Office-cum-Administrative quarters on South Island.** The project has been implemented on the South Island in Village Sainte Rita as the South Island did not have an appropriate administrative office as well as the existing shop is small and old. This building also has an earmarked area which will function as community centre for South Island.
4. **Construction of Fish Landing Station.** The project has been implemented on the North Island at La Fourche. The purpose of the Fish Landing Station is to facilitate and promote fishing activities in Agaléga.

5. **Construction of a Community-cum-Multipurpose Hall.** The project has been implemented on the North Island in Village Vingt Cinq. It consists of the construction of a building to accommodate a Community-cum Multipurpose Hall for social activities.
6. **Two kiosks at boat-alighting points on both North and South Islands.** The project consists of the construction of one kiosk at La Pointe on the North Island and one kiosk at La Pointe on the South Island to provide shelter for passengers waiting to boat.

Mr Speaker, Sir, all these infrastructural development projects have been entirely financed by the Government of India.

I again express my deepest gratitude to H.E. Shri Narendra Modi and the Government of the Republic of India for their generous and valuable support in the socio-economic development of Agaléga.

Mr Speaker, Sir, one of the most visible and valuable benefits of the new jetty project is that all disembarkation/unloading and embarkation/loading operations are now being undertaken in much safer conditions. The House will recall that formerly, all such operations were undertaken on the high sea with all its inherent risks and difficulties. Furthermore, all those operations are now taking much less time as it used to before.

Mr Speaker, Sir, these projects have indeed translated my vision and that of my Government to spearhead development in every single part of our territory into a reality. In my speech at the inauguration ceremony, I stated that the quality of life of our Agalegan brothers and sisters will improve as these projects will generate significant economic activities and employment opportunities for both the North and the South Islands. I again reassured everybody, especially the Agalegans, that there has never been any agenda to transform Agaléga into a military base.

I note, however, that, in spite of the reassurance given, some Members of the Opposition here are continuing their campaign of disinformation and instilling fear and doubts in the minds

of the people. They are still raising questions about the length of the new airstrip, which according to them is too long.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the length of the airstrip is commensurate with the objectives of these facilities, which I enumerated earlier. As I mentioned, the delegation which proceeded to Agaléga also included five members of the private press, who had reached Agaléga on 27 February 2024, that is, two days prior to the inauguration ceremony. Therefore, they had had ample time to visit every nook and corner of both North and South Islands. I must say that none of their post-visit reports have confirmed any of the allegations, accusations and insinuations that the Opposition had been making against the projects, both outside and inside the National Assembly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the two Members from the Opposition, who were in Agaléga as part of the delegation, were also totally free to move around and see for themselves the projects being implemented on the island. The Leaders of the parties in the Opposition could have asked those two Members whether they have seen the underwater tunnels or submarines, war planes or war ships which they had been talking about in the local media at a certain point in time.

I must say that it is only the Opposition here in Mauritius that is distilling all sorts of rumours on the Agaléga projects. Most of the people of Agaléga have, in fact, welcomed the realisation of these projects. I would invite the Opposition to listen to the speech of the Resident Manager of Agaléga at the Inauguration Ceremony.

In fact, in his speech, the Acting Resident Manager, Mr Emmanuel Jasmin, conveyed, on behalf of the inhabitants of Agaléga, his heartfelt gratitude to the Government of India for its tremendous support and assistance extended to Agaléga. He also thanked the Government to have kept the development of Agaléga high on its agenda and indicated that the dream of Agalegans for better connectivity and a better standard of living has been realised. He also mentioned the new relations and friendship between the inhabitants of Agaléga and the people of India through the Project Monitoring Team, the staff of AFCONS and RITES, and other technical specialists.

M. le président, durant ma visite à Agaléga, j'ai eu l'occasion de constater de visu le potentiel de développement qu'offre l'île et surtout le retard à être rattrapé dans différents secteurs tels que la télécommunication, le logement, l'éducation, la santé, la pêche, et d'autres.

Durant ma visite, j'ai aussi eu l'occasion de rencontrer les représentants des Agaléens qui ont fait quelques propositions, précisément dans le domaine de la santé, l'éducation et la formation, afin de continuer à améliorer la qualité de la vie des Agaléens.

M. le président, avec la réalisation de ces deux projets majeurs, qui vont grandement améliorer l'accès aérien et maritime, nous allons certainement pouvoir adresser les préoccupations des Agaléens avec beaucoup plus d'efficacité.

Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding the interaction with the representatives of the Agalegan community of the North and South Islands, I have requested my Office to ensure the necessary follow-up on the issues raised by them. I must point out that a Committee at the level of my Office is currently working on a Master Plan for the development of Agaléga. The Committee will work in collaboration with all the Ministries concerned and the O IDC to ensure that all issues, including those raised during my visit, are addressed, namely –

- (i) implementation of mitigation measures against beach erosion;
- (ii) protection of historical monuments;
- (iii) provision of sports facilities;
- (iv) development of fishing;
- (v) upgrading of health services;
- (vi) boosting food crops and livestock production;
- (vii) improving fire and rescue service;
- (viii) enhancement of educational facilities;
- (ix) improvement of land transport facilities;
- (x) improvement of internet and mobile connectivity;
- (xi) construction of housing units and maintenance of existing units and staff quarters,  
and
- (xii) employment opportunities and training.

Mr Speaker, Sir, coconut oil extraction being one of the main activities on the island, I am informed that one new coconut oil extraction machine has been generously provided by RITES under its Corporate Social Responsibility programme. The new machine has already been delivered on site and will be installed shortly. In addition, the O IDC is in the process of procuring another new coconut oil extraction machine which is expected to be delivered and installed in two months' time. Moreover, the O IDC is working on a project for further exploitation of coconut by-products.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have also heard queries regarding operation of commercial flights to Agaléga. I wish to reiterate what I said during my press statement in Agaléga on 01 March 2024. Proper planning and consultations need to be carried out with all relevant stakeholders for the airstrip to become operational for commercial flights. In addition to financial viability, there are several technical and operational requirements that need to be catered for to ensure the smooth operation of commercial flights.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Director of Civil Aviation and the management of Air Mauritius that, at present, the core facilities are available and same have already been published in the Aeronautical Information Publication Supplement. However, there are certain other requirements that need to be looked into.

I am also informed by the Director General of Immigration that in accordance with Sections 2 and 22(1) of the Immigration Act 2022, the Terminal at Agaléga will have to be declared a "Port of Entry" to enable it to operate as such.

Mr Speaker, Sir, all these requirements are being examined at the level of the Committee I just mentioned and subsequently, recommendations will be made on the way forward.

In regard to staffing of the new facilities, the Committee at the level of my Office is currently working on the operational requirements, including manpower deployment. Appropriate provisions will be made in the coming budget for those operational requirements from the Mauritian side. I must point out here that the airstrip and the jetty will be vested in the Mauritius Police Force which will have full control of these facilities. However, the Government of India will assist the Government of Mauritius in the operation and maintenance of the facilities, particularly in scarcity areas. Obviously, the human resource requirements will evolve

over time. As I said, we do not foresee the start of commercial flights any time soon, as this will depend on the viability of such flights and the availability of proper and adequate accommodation and ground handling services.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the setting up of this new airstrip and jetty facilities in Agaléga is the fulfilment of yet another Mauritian dream, which many generations have cherished in their hearts. However, the realisation of such a mega project at 1,100 kms away from mainland Mauritius was a daunting challenge indeed. And I must say that the realisation of these projects would not have been possible without the support and assistance of the Government of India.

Let me restate, in no uncertain terms, that the Agreement signed between the Government of Mauritius and the Government of India satisfy the principles of mutual benefit as well as that of being in strict compliance with the sacrosanct principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

There is no doubt that with the new facilities in Agaléga, there is a huge potential for developing economic activities on the Islands while preserving its ecosystems. As is the case for Rodrigues and eventually the Chagos Archipelago, the socio-economic development in Agaléga will contribute to increasing wealth creation in our Republic but more importantly will ensure that none of our fellow citizens living in our outer islands are left behind while the Republic cruises towards a better and brighter future.

Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Time is over! I cannot allow you any further questions.

PQs B/92 and B/94 have been withdrawn. Questions to other Ministers!

Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ B/107 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation, B/110 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail. PQ B/121 will be replied by the hon. Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development.

I will now call hon. Quirin!

**PUBLIC CONCERTS & CULTURAL EVENTS – SITES IDENTIFICATION**

(No. B/99) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage whether, in regard to public concerts and other cultural events, he will state where matters stand as to the alternatives sites proposed by his Ministry for the organization thereof, indicating –

- (a) if any appropriate site has been identified, giving details thereof;
- (b) if any meeting has been held with event organizers and artists in connection therewith and, if so, give details thereof, and
- (c) when Government will authorize the holding thereof.

**Mr Teeluck:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to public concerts and other cultural events, my Ministry had several meetings with representatives of *l'association l'Union des Artistes* and event organisers to address, *inter alia*, this issue.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that *l'association l'Union des Artistes* had, at a meeting held at my Ministry on 21 December 2023, in the presence of the representatives of the Police Department, submitted a list of five proposed sites, namely Domaine VIP Business Park, Riche Terre Business Park, Domaine 7 Cascades, Medine Football Pitch, Côte d'Or and Domaine St Aubin. The Commissioner of Police has, after carrying out site visits at these five sites, informed my Ministry recently that only two of them, namely Côte d'Or and Domaine 7 Cascades have been found conducive for the holding of public concerts and other cultural events.

As regards the holding of public concerts at the Anjalay Coopen Stadium, I will refer the answer to the other PQ coming down afterwards.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, seven meetings have been held with representatives of *l'association l'Union des Artistes* and professional event organisers on 17 July 2023, 27 October 2023, 21, 26 and 28 December 2023, 26 February 2024 and on 20 March 2024.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regard to part (c) of the question, as mentioned earlier, in reply to another PQ B/1727 on the same issue, the holding of public concerts is regulated by the Public Gathering Act 1991 and other applicable legislations. Accordingly, necessary clearances have to be sought and obtained from the competent authorities prior to authorisation to be given for the holding of concerts and cultural events. It must be emphasised, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the organisation of musical concerts has not been prohibited by Government, but, of course, appropriate clearances are required for same from relevant authorities.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président, je dois faire ressortir que l'honorable ministre avait pris l'engagement, qu'il avait promis de prendre les choses en main et que rapidement son ministère allait venir avec un *one-stop-shop* qui allait permettre aux artistes, aux organisateurs d'évènements de voir la lumière au bout du tunnel. Mais l'honorable ministre peut-il nous dire pourquoi pratiquement une année, malgré toutes les rencontres, les réunions qui ont eu lieu entre lui et les artistes et les organisateurs de concerts, aucune solution n'a été trouvée et aucune proposition concrète faite aux artistes et *professional events organiser* à ce jour ?

**Mr Teeluck:** Mr Speaker, Sir, firstly the question does not relate to one-stop-shop. The question relates to appropriate sites for holding of concerts. So, my answer is limited to the question.

Coming to various meetings being held, of course, it does take time, Mr Speaker, Sir, because when we are talking about public concerts, cultural events, so many other authorities are concerned and involved. As I mentioned, we had a very constructive meeting where proposals were tabled in terms of where we can hold concerts. The Commissioner of Police has recommended certain sites which I mentioned. There is also the Anjalay Coopen Stadium that is being considered. So, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is very wrong to say that nothing is being done.

Also, as I said, Government has never prohibited the organisation of concerts. It is a matter of getting the right clearances. And the one-stop-shop, I mentioned, we are working on it and we will come forward with it. But at no point does that hinder the organisation of concert. For instance, one example, Mr Speaker, Sir, following an application made by ECOS Production, there is a concert being held on 06 and 07 April 2024 by The Prophecy and other artists.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is very wrong to say that nothing is being done or that concerts are not being organised.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président, il y a une politique de deux poids, deux mesures dans l'octroi de permis par les autorités.

**Mr Speaker:** No, hon. Member, calm yourself down. The Minister just said that the question should be linked to the main question. So, this is a comment. This is an opinion you are making.

**Mr Quirin:** I am coming to my question.

**Mr Speaker:** Put a question!

**Mr Quirin:** Yes, I will do it!

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** This is the preamble.

**Mr Speaker:** Put your question and I will listen to it!

**Mr Quirin:** *I will do it!* Comme je le disais, M. le président, certains concerts sont autorisés et d'autres pas. Le ministre a-t-il été informé que certains - je le dis bien - ripoux se font grassement payés afin de faciliter les formalités d'usage qui, dans certains cas, prennent des mois ?

**Mr Speaker:** Let the minister reply!

**Mr Quirin:** En est-il au courant?

**Mr Teeluck:** Mr Speaker, Sir, these are very serious allegations and warrant a proper complaint to the Police. So, rather than asking me that question, if the hon. Member has information...

**Mr Quirin:** Are you aware of what I am saying?

**Mr Teeluck:** If he has the information...

**Mr Speaker:** So, let me put the question straightforward. Can you substantiate what you just said in Parliament? If this goes to the court, you have to say the same thing that you just said here now! Can you? Hon. Quirin, can ...

**Mr Quirin:** I am asking...

**Mr Speaker:** Please, I am talking!

**Mr Quirin:** Yes.

**Mr Speaker:** Can you substantiate the allegation you just made in Parliament right now? Yes or no?

**Mr Quirin:** I am asking a question to the hon. Minister, whether he is aware....

**Mr Speaker:** No, no! Don't run away!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Quirin:** Was he made aware of certain facts?

**Mr Speaker:** Don't run away! Don't run away!

**Mr Quirin:** Event organisers ...

**Mr Bhagwan:** We are not running away!

**Mr Speaker:** Quiet!

**Mr Bhagwan:** He is asking a question!

**Mr Quirin:** It's a question!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Quiet! There is only one MP Quirin, and there is only one question.

So, I reiterate my question. Can you substantiate?

**Mr Quirin:** I am the one who asks questions in Parliament!

**Mr Speaker:** No, if you cannot substantiate, I disallow the question!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Quirin:** My question...

**Mr Speaker:** So, you cannot substantiate, I disallow the question!

**Mr Quirin:** I am not here to reply. I am the one who asks questions!

**Mr Speaker:** I am asking you, can you substantiate on the allegation against the Police?

**Mr Quirin:** I am not going to reply to your question!

**Mr Speaker:** If you can substantiate, I will allow the question.

**Mr Quirin:** I am not going to reply to your question!

**Mr Speaker:** If you cannot substantiate, I disallow the question!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Quirin:** Do what you want to do!

**Mr Speaker:** So, you cannot substantiate, I disallow the question!

**An hon. Member:** Bravo!

**Mr Speaker:** Let us continue!

#### **BAIE DU TOMBEAU – DENSE TRAFFIC – ROAD DECONGESTION PROGRAMME**

**(No. B/100) Ms J. Tour (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the Road Decongestion Programme, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the measures proposed for the improvement of traffic flow in Baie du Tombeau.

**Mr Hurreeram:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the village of Baie du Tombeau which comprises a geographical area of 7.2 km<sup>2</sup> with around 15,000 inhabitants, has experienced various residential, commercial and industrial developments during the past years, leading to a higher standard of living in that region.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Road Development Authority that, currently, the traffic flow along Baie du Tombeau (B29) is quite high, with a huge percentage of vehicles, including heavy ones using the road. In fact, the road consists of several bends, two of which are located before and after the existing Bruniquel Bridge. These bends represent a safety hazard to road users due to visibility problems and contribute to traffic congestion in the region.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Bruniquel Bridge which is of a width of 6 metres was constructed in the year 1926 with reinforced concrete and masonry. It consists of a poor structure and there is a lack of pedestrian facility, thereby constituting a potential traffic hazard, impeding the traffic flow of heavy vehicles in both directions of the road.

I am advised by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit (TMRSU) that during morning and afternoon peak hours, traffic queuing is observed along B29 and B33 to exit the Motorway M2. Additional traffic congestions may arise due to vehicular breakdowns, road crashes, road works and several vehicles awaiting for right turn onto public areas. In addition, very few alternative routes exist in order to redirect congested traffic.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with a view to addressing the issues I have mentioned, the RDA is currently realigning the road B29 over a distance of 700 metres so as to improve visibility, traffic flow and minimising risks of accidents thereat. Moreover, compared to the existing 6-metre bridge, a new bridge of 11-metres is being constructed, comprising two lanes of width of 3.5 metres each and footpaths on both sides of the bridge of 2 metres each so as to improve traffic flow and pedestrians movements in Baie du Tombeau. The actual Bruniquel Bridge will thereafter be used by pedestrians only.

Works have started on 26 April 2023 and have reached 70% and is expected to be completed in May 2024.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that the TMRSU is proposing to implement the following measures to improve traffic flow at Baie du Tombeau –

- (i) installation of a set of traffic signal equipment during next financial year at junction of the Baie du Tombeau B29 and Riche Terre B33 in order to improve traffic flow and road safety thereat;
- (ii) restricting on-street parking near busy and poor visibility intersections to help reduce traffic congestion;
- (iii) converting on-street bus stops into laybys along congested traffic stretches, subject to sufficient land being available;
- (iv) improving public bus service to encourage modal shift from private cars to buses;
- (v) extending the Road Decongestion Programme to the Cocoterie and Riche Terre roundabouts at Baie du Tombeau, and
- (vi) increasing the presence of Police Officers to help ease traffic congestion during peak hours.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Ms Tour:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the possibility is being envisaged to construct a grade separated junction at Cocoterie roundabout similar to the one that has been constructed at Quay D?

**Mr Hurreeram:** Mr Speaker, Sir, currently with the coming into operation of the Quay D flyover, we are now constructing the flyover at Terre Rouge. So, we will wait to see what the incidences of the traffic on the Baie du Tombeau roundabout are before deciding about a flyover because of the high cost involved. In our opinion, we think that we might not need a flyover at this stage. Baie du Tombeau might need some minor improvements, maybe like adding another lane to improve the traffic flow towards Terre Rouge where in the end, the traffic will go through the flyover towards the North. So, we will wait, analyse the situation and then we will decide accordingly. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Members, I suspend the Sitting at this stage for one and a half hour.

*At 12.59 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 2.38 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.*

**Mr Speaker:** Please be seated! I call MP Aumeer!

**CYCLONE BELAL – DAMAGED PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE –**

**REPARATION COSTS & COMPLETION DATE**

**(No. B/101) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the Rs500 million earmarked for repairs of public infrastructure and amenities damaged by cyclone Belal, he will state –

- (a) where matters stand as to the works carried out thereunder, giving a list of the works effected as at date, indicating –
  - (i) the cost thereof, and;
  - (ii) expected date of completion, and
- (b) if any contract has been allocated for same and, if so, indicate the names of the respective contractors.

**Mr Hurreeram:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I shall reply to PQ B/101 and PQ B/131 together as they pertain to the same subject matter.

In January 2024, Mauritius experienced torrential rainfall caused by cyclone Belal, as a result of which numerous roads, both classified as well as non-classified, were damaged. In view of the extent of damages, to ensure the safety of road users, Government earmarked a sum of Rs500 million under the Projects Development Fund for the urgent repairs. These works will be carried out by the local authorities, the Road Development Authority and the National Development Unit, in consultation with my Ministry.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that 254 road resurfacing and rehabilitation projects have been identified by the Ministry of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management to the tune of Rs199.5 million. Out of these, contracts for 29 projects have been awarded by the District Councils of Moka, Flacq and Grand Port. I am further informed that the remaining projects are at bidding stage.

On its part, the RDA has identified a list of 58 projects out of which contracts have been awarded for 10 projects to the tune of Rs2.7 million and contracts for the remaining works will be allocated in the coming days under its Framework Agreement. In addition, the RDA has already effected emergency works across the island to restore the road networks including the lopping of branches and felling of trees.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regard projects to be implemented by the NDU, 224 road projects and resurfacing projects have been identified which will be implemented on a priority basis. Currently, surveys and field visits are being carried out by the engineers to work out the scope of works. Works Orders for these projects are expected to be issued as from April 2024.

With regard to Constituency No. 15, I am informed that three road projects amounting to some Rs12.2 million will be implemented by the NDU and two others amounting to Rs14.1 million by the RDA.

I am tabling the information to parts (a) and (b) of PQ B/131. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Dr. Aumeer:** Thank you. Will the hon. Minister table the project that has been earmarked for Constituency No. 2 in regard to this sum that has been disbursed?

**Mr Hurreeram:** Mr Speaker, Sir, since this is a new request, I will look into it.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question! I call hon. Juman!

#### **ROCHE BOIS – NEW COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE – CONSTRUCTION**

**(No. B/102) Mr E. Juman (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the construction of a New

Community Health Centre at Roche-Bois, he will state where matters stand, indicating when the bid therefor was –

- (a) launched, and
- (b) awarded, indicating the –
  - (i) name of the successful bidder, and
  - (ii) expected completion date thereof.

**Dr. Jagutpal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in reply to part (a) of the question, the bid for the construction of a New Community Health Centre at Roche-Bois was launched on 07 August 2020.

As regard to part (b) of the question, the contract for the construction of the Community Health Centre at Roche-Bois was awarded on 19 February 2021 to Ganessen Construction Ltd for a contract amount of Rs36,237,936 excluding VAT. The contractual completion date was 04 July 2022 and after assessment by the HSCC, that is, the Consultant, 171 days of extension of time was granted to the contractor with a new completion date of 22 December 2022.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry was informed by the Consultant that works on site stopped since October 2022. No significant progress of works was observed by the Contractor since. As at end of November 2022, the progress of works was only around 14%. So far, an amount of Rs2.7 million had been made to the Contractor.

Due to unsatisfactory progress of works, the contract was terminated on 22 May 2023. I am informed that Performance Security amounting to Rs3,623,793.60 has been recouped.

The Consultant assessed the pending works and provided the revised scope of works, Bill of Quantities, cost estimates and tender documents to relaunch bids on 30 September 2023. On 17 October 2023, the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development was approached to provide additional funds to complete the project. The project would be completed once additional funds are provided.

Mr Speaker, Sir, you will be surprised to note that for Financial Year 2008-2009, provision was made only for extension works to the old Community Health Centre. The then government did not cater for a new facility, but merely provided a meagre sum of Rs2 m. for this project. It was never a question of building a new Community Health Centre.

I will also react to the comments made in the media by two Members on the opposite side of the House from Constituency No. 3 on this project. I will quote some of these comments –

*«Mo demande le minis kifer sa projet la pas ine completer. Parski zenfan Roche Bois, zenfan no. 3!»*

Mr Speaker, Sir, since they have mentioned "*zenfants Roche Bois*", I will remind the House that all babies born in 2023, including those from Roche Bois are receiving a monthly allowance of Rs2,000 till they reach the age of 3.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** *Ki sa ena a fer ek sa kestion la?*

**Dr. Jagutpal:** Every child reaching 18 years of age receive...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

*(Interruptions)*

Order! Minister, continue!

**Dr. Jagutpal:** Every child reaching 18 years of age receive an allowance of Rs20,000, including those of Roche Bois.

We are all aware that all senior citizens, Mr Speaker, Sir...

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Senior citizens!

**Dr. Jagutpal:** ...of the Republic, including Roche Bois, earn a basic retirement pension of Rs13,500 since yesterday and today, already credited in their account.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Démagogie!

**Dr. Jagutpal:** Every worker of Roche Bois, Mr Speaker, Sir, receives a minimum salary of Rs18,500. This is what this Government has done for the inhabitants of Roche-Bois!

*(Interruptions)*

It is not the first time that these Members of the Opposition are desperately trying to build up discriminatory motives.

The following comments were also made in relation to this project –

*« Premier Ministre pe riye pe tire foto. Jagutpal pe chanter dans mariage. Sa gouvernement la pe faire gros gros projets. »*

*(Interruptions)*

These were the comments made by the Members of the Opposition.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** *Li pann tann nanye la !*

**Hon. Members:** *Ekoute!*

**Dr. Jagutpal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, at least...

*(Interruptions)*

Mr Speaker, Sir...

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

*(Interruptions)*

**Dr. Jagutpal:** ...at least these Members...

**Mr Ameer Meea:** *Pa substantiate kan fer dimal!* Can you substantiate? Can you substantiate?

*(Interruptions)*

Can he substantiate what he is saying?

**Dr. Jagutpal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, at least these Members recognise that this Government has completed so many, what they call, “*gro, gro projets*”. At least they recognise! Thank you for recognising this! But, at the same time, Mr Speaker, Sir...

**Mr Speaker:** No, no! Is it okay? You have finished?

**Dr. Jagutpal:** I will finish in two lines. Mr Speaker, Sir, I prefer by far *sante dan maryaz* than *danse macarena dan kanpman* at night, with relatives not...

**Hon. Members:** Ahhh!

*(Interruptions)*

**Ms Anquetil:** *N’importe quoi!* Irrelevant !

*(Interruptions)*

**Dr. Jagutpal:** I will end up by tabling the health activities conducted for the inhabitants of Roche Bois.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Juman:** Mr Speaker, Sir, my question is clear and direct. It is about an Area Health Centre.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Not about dancing!

**Mr Juman:** What does it have to do with child allowance, old age pension, etc.?

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Exactement!

**Mr Juman:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we are two years ahead of the completion of the project. I want to know from the Minister where matters stand to-date?

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Aussi simple comme le bonjour !

**Dr. Jagutpal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, since they have asked these questions in the media, I have replied to them. Unfortunately, they have asked the question before this PQ. Now, at the same time, I have given the details. I will not repeat it because it is clear. We will be getting the approval of the Ministry of Finance and everything has been done to relaunch this project. This is what the Government has done. There is nothing clearer than this.

**Mr Juman:** Mr Speaker, Sir, from what I understand, the project started in 2020 for an Area Health Centre, and in 2024, to-date, the tender has not been relaunched. Am I right?

**Dr. Jagutpal:** Yes, of course! That is what I have said and this is what the procedures have been. Is it not fair and transparent to give all the details about the project? Don't you know that during COVID time, everything got stuck up?

**Mr Juman:** 5 years!

**Dr. Jagutpal:** I have given all the details about this project.

**Mr Juman:** 5 years!

**Dr. Jagutpal:** Yes, it has been four years.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Ittoo!

### **E-HEALTH PROJECT – IMPLEMENTATION**

**(No. B/103) Mr A. Ittoo (Third Member for Vacoas & Floréal)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the E-Health project, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation thereof, indicating the cost incurred therefor to date.

**Dr. Jagutpal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to Parliamentary Question B/231 at our Sitting of 18 April 2023, where the House was informed that the evaluation process for the procurement of an E-Health software has been completed at the level of the United Nations Development Programme.

To finalise the selection process, given the complexity and cost of the E-Health project, a thorough due diligence exercise was conducted by independent international auditors as mandated by the UNDP procedures for projects having a procurement value of at least USD 1 million. Thereafter, the procurement case was certainly the Advisory Committee on Procurement (ACP) at UNDP headquarters for final review and recommendation for award.

I am informed that after a step-by-step, rigorous and fair selection process by the UNDP and with involvement of observers from the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation and my Ministry, the contract for the implementation of this project was awarded to the joint-venture between TrioTree Technologies Pvt Ltd, India, Informatics International (MTIUS) Limited and Netcome Partners Ltd (Mauritius) on 09 January 2024. The total amount of the contract is USD 4,440,576, that is, approximately MUR 200 m. and the award notice is publicly available on the UNDP global Procurement Notices portal.

The consortium has already started engagement with my Ministry and the implementation of Phase 1 of the E-Health project, comprising a patient administration system, a patient portal, a blood bank system and analytics will span over a period of 18 months. Upon successful completion of Phase 1 of the project, Phase 2 will be considered.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to costing, I am informed that the project is included in a co-financed portfolio between the UNDP and the Government of Mauritius, which was entered on 26 January 2022 and amended on 05 October 2023.

The contribution under the portfolio of the UNDP is to the tune of USD 3,129,669, approximately MUR 145,000,000, and our contribution is USD 7,728,981, that is, approximately Rs358 million. On the USD7,728,981 as at date USD5,400,652, that is, approximately Rs250 million have been disbursed to the UNDP in line with the provisions of the project portfolio.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the implementation of the E-Health Project has proven to be a complex endeavour which has been faced with numerous challenges panning over the past three decades. I wish to reassure the House that my Ministry has undertaken a holistic and comprehensive approach to mitigate potential risk through the implementation process. The project also comprises procurement of IT equipment, site readiness through the provision of work stations,

local area networks and electricity connectivity, the hosting infrastructure for the main data centre and the disaster recovery, internet access, training of hospital staff on basic IT literacy and E-Health solution, change management, formulation of a digital health strategy and related blue print, public engagement and providing the appropriate institutional, legal and policy framework.

**Mr Ittoo:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister comment on the allegations made in the media regarding the selection of the E-Health Project? Thank you.

**Dr. Jagutpal:** Yes. Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has taken cognisance of the allegations made in certain media on the selection process for E-Health. The evaluation was conducted according to the UNDP Procurement Process. The UNDP Evaluation Team conducted a preliminary evaluation, a technical evaluation including a demo of solutions received and a financial evaluation.

Thereafter, the UNDP contracted out independent auditors to assess the legal and financial status of bidders as well as the verification of the software. The final review and recommendation were made at the UNDP Advisory Committee on Procurement at headquarters' level based on technical and financial evaluation of bids as well as the due diligence exercise. It's regretful that some media have been making these insinuations against a reputable organisation such as the UNDP. I wish to reiterate that my Ministry has complete trust in the UNDP and its process and we are pursuing the implementation of this long awaited project.

**Mr Speaker:** MP Ameer Meea!

### **CANAL LE POUCE – KFC OUTLET & PARKING AREAS – PROPOSED DEMOLITION**

**(No. B/104) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to the proposed demolition of the premises of the Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet and parking areas constructed on canal Le Pouce, following the recommendation of the Judicial Inquiry of 2014, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal City Council of Port Louis, information as to where matters stand.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management (Dr. A. Husnoo):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal City Council of Port Louis that the Council has been advised by the Land Drainage Authority to remove all buildings, structures and slabs on Butte à Tonniere and Ruisseau du Pouce Streams because of frequent flooding in this area.

The Municipal City Council of Port Louis has already removed part of the slabs of Ruisseau du Pouce where the hawkers were operating. The part from Brown Sequard Street and Chaussée Street could not be removed as 14 out of 21 hawkers operating thereat and who had all lost their case, have lodged an appeal at the level of the Supreme Court.

In that context, a public relation exercise was carried out by the Municipal City Council of Port Louis with the hawkers to vacate the site and to move to Urban Terminal where they have been offered a stall to operate.

With regard to the construction of building by Pick N Eat Ltd, that is, Kentucky Fried Chicken, the Municipal City Council of Port Louis has informed that construction of the building, for a retail outlet, was granted by an act of Parliament, namely, the Butte à Tonniere (Authorised Construction) Act 50 of 1992 while the parking areas on Pouce Stream for Rogers Ltd and MEDCOR Ltd were granted under the Pouce Stream (Authorised Construction) Act 32 of 1992.

As the authorisation for construction was granted through an act of Parliament by the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning, the latter was, on 04 April 2023, requested to initiate appropriate action to repeal the above mentioned Acts.

The Ministry of Housing and Land had, on 14 July 2023, requested the Attorney General's Office to advise on the way forward to repeal the two Acts under reference. In its reply on 25 July 2023, the Attorney General's Office had advised the Ministry of Housing and Land that a *mise en demeure* should first be served upon the companies in order for them to be apprised of the intention, to have the building and structures constructed over the Butte à Tonniere and Ruisseau du Pouce Stream removed and a delay be given for them to vacate the premises concerned. Subsequently, the two acts will be repealed.

In the meantime, several meetings and site visits have been held by my Ministry with Pick N Eat Ltd, MEDCOR Ltd and Rogers Ltd, Land Drainage Authority and Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning to inform them of the necessity to free those areas of any structures and building to allow a free flow of water.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has, on 20 February 2024, requested the Attorney General's Office to prepare the *mise en demeure* to be served on the operators.

I wish to inform the House that a meeting was held at the level of my Ministry on 28 March 2024 with representatives of the Attorney General's Office,

Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning, the Planning Division, Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development, Land Drainage Authority and the Municipal Council of Port Louis to look into the demolition of the building, slabs and structures on the stream. The representative of the Attorney General's Office has informed that the *mise en demeure* has already been finalised and would be submitted to my Ministry shortly.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** M. le président, 11 ans après les inondations meurtrières, ayant coûté la vie à 11 personnes à Port Louis et tout récemment, on a vu les images de l'inondation du cyclone Belal, il est évident que les choses ne bougent pas. L'année dernière, en 2023, la municipalité de Port Louis avait fait un appel d'offres pour la démolition du bâtiment. La municipalité de Port Louis avait déjà pris cette décision. Ce que moi j'aurais aimé savoir c'est – où en sont les choses par rapport à l'appel d'offres pour démolir non seulement le bâtiment du Pick N Eat (KFC) mais aussi l'aire de stationnement de la compagnie de Rogers ?

**Dr. Husnoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just explained in details why it is taking the time. This does not depend on the Municipal Council. This was an act of Parliament. It was not a Council's decision. It was an act of Parliament. We went to the Attorney General's Office. They told us that we have to go by step by step, that's what we have done. We are going step by step. I have explained all this in details. I get the impression that the hon. Member does not understand, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it has been 10 years...

**Mr Speaker:** No, this is not...

**Mr Ameer Meea:** 10 years since this deadly flooding has occurred.

**Mr Speaker:** Wait! I can understand all this, but you should put a specific question if you want clarification. If you are going to insist in all your questions – 10 years, 15 years, 20 years, you will have the same answer.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** I have to!

**Mr Speaker:** I am helping you!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** I have to do this!

**Mr Speaker:** I am helping you to put a good question. Please, do your work.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I think you do not understand the situation...

**Mr Speaker:** No, don't comment upon me! I understand too much and I understand you! I understand your question very well. You are misleading the House!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Really?

**Mr Speaker:** Of course!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Really? I am misleading the House?

**Mr Speaker:** Of course, you are misleading!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** 10 years have elapsed, nothing has been done! You are telling me that I am misleading the House?

**Mr Speaker:** You have to put a specific question! Questions, Supplementary Questions should not contain comments!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** It's not comments! It's a fact!

**Mr Speaker:** The content of a question should contain question itself, not comments, not debate. So, put your question! I am giving you a last chance! If you have one!

**An hon. Member:** En 11 ans !

**Mr Ameer Meea:** My question to the hon. Minister is that after 10 years of this deadly flooding, is the Municipal Council of Port Louis back-pedaling on the project of demolishing these two buildings?

**Mr Speaker:** Let the Minister answer!

**Dr. Husnoo:** He did not understand anything! I have explained that this was done by an Act of Parliament...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Ameer Meea:** 11 ans! 11 ans!

**Dr. Husnoo:** ...and the Municipal City Council cannot act on it!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** *Ferm sa...*

**Mr Speaker:** No, please! Don't do that!

*(Interruptions)*

**Dr. Husnoo:** The Municipal City Council cannot act on it! To repeal this Act, they have to get...

**Mr Speaker:** We are not in a stable! We are in a Parliament!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** *Lontan moti pou fini fer enn la lwa !*

**Dr. Husnoo:** You have been there for 15 years! You have been there in Opposition! What have you done?

**Mr Ameer Meea:** *11 ans ! Twa tonn la 9 ans !*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** What have you done?

**Mr Speaker:** You are going out of your way! Order! What is this?

**An hon. Member:** *Pou tir marchands ambulants, kapav !*

**Mr Speaker:** You are not in a stable! You are in Parliament! You put a question, the Minister has to reply!

*(Interruptions)*

You have finished Minister?

Next question!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** *Bizin pa generalizer!*

**Mr Léopold:** B/105.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Ameer Meea:** *Tir marchand ambulants kapav!*

**Dr. Husnoo:** *15 ans to dan lopposition, fer to...*

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Ameer Meea:** *9 ans to minis ta! Nettoy to...*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Dr. Husnoo:** *15 ans!*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Ameer Meea:** *9 ans to minis, enn ferfout to pann fer!*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Ameer Meea, this is the last warning I am giving you!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** To him also!

**Mr Speaker:** I am giving you the last warning! Last warning!

Continue!

### **RODRIGUES – DENGUE FEVER – DEATHS**

(No. B/105) **Mr J. B. Léopold (Second Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to Dengue fever, he will state the number of persons in Rodrigues who have died therefrom, indicating if there is an increase in the prevalence of death resulting therefrom in Rodrigues over the last two years and, if so, the reasons therefor.

**Dr. Jagutpal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is providing full support to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in the fight against Dengue.

At the outset, in the context of enhanced preparedness for Vector Borne Diseases, my Ministry, has, in July 2023, deployed amongst others, several thermal foggers, sprayer cans together with insecticides and larvicides.

Since the outbreak of Dengue fever in Rodrigues on 19 January 2024, my Ministry has been closely monitoring the situation prevailing on the island. In this context, several coordination meetings between the Public Health Team of Rodrigues and officers of my Ministry which included the Director General Health Services, Director Health Services, Communicable Disease Control Unit (CDCU), Public Health and Food Safety Inspectorate and Vector Biology and Control Division have been held on a regular basis. Moreover, since the beginning of the outbreak, the CDCU is in communication daily with Public Health Team in Rodrigues.

Upon request from the Commission for Health of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, two Public Health and Food Safety Inspectors were deployed immediately to Rodrigues to assist the existing team in vector control activities.

Moreover, a High Level team visited Rodrigues from 05 to 07 March 2024. The team led by the Director, Health Services responsible for Public Health comprised the Acting Regional Public Health Superintendent, the Director, Public Health and Food Safety, a representative from the Vector Biology and Control Division and two WHO Consultants currently in Mauritius having wide expertise in Entomology and Vector Surveillance.

The team has carried out an assessment of the Dengue Fever situation thereat as well as response strategies, including the identification of entomological and environmental risk factors associated with the outbreak. The team has recommended control measures and provided appropriate training in vector control activities, surveillance and reporting.

Mr Speaker, Sir, during the mission, a series of site visits and consultations were held with the local team of officers in Rodrigues and relevant stakeholders with a view to contain the proliferation of mosquitoes and larvae.

It was subsequently decided to deploy two Medical Health Officers to Rodrigues. One MHO has already been posted in Rodrigues while another one will be joining shortly.

We have also obtained the support of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) for technical assistance in the context of the current Dengue Outbreak. A team comprising an Entomologist, a Logistician and an expert in Risk Communication would be deputed from Reunion Island to strengthen the strategy for vector control and surveillance in place.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that since the notification of the first case of Dengue Fever in Rodrigues on 19 January to date, 1,679, cases of Dengue Fever were detected. There are currently 158 active cases.

I am also informed that no case of death directly related to the dengue fever has been recorded by the Health Services in Rodrigues for the current outbreak and during the last two years.

**Mr Léopold:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Owing to the assessment that the experts from your Ministry have made in Rodrigues concerning the Dengue Fever outbreak, have they been able to explain why there is such an amount of deaths during this season compared to when there were COVID-19 pandemic season?

**Dr. Jagutpal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can you please repeat the last of the question? The amount of?

**Mr Léopold:** Owing to the assessment that your expert teams have made in Rodrigues, have they been able to determine as to why there is such an amount of death during the Dengue Fever outbreak compared to what had happened during the COVID-19 pandemic?

**Dr. Jagutpal:** Excuse me, I am sorry, I do not have these information. It is more likely to come up with another question probably, and then I may have this information. I cannot at this point in time have the comparison of the number of death at present compared to that of COVID-19. I will require to get information from the Ministry.

**RISING COST OF LIVING – PRICE CONTROL MECHANISM –  
COMMODITIES & MEDICINES**

**(No. B/106) Mr P. Assirvaden (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the increase in the price of commodities and cost of living, she will state if consideration will be given for –

- (a) a price mechanism control to be put in place therefor, and
- (b) certain products, including medicines, to be subsidised by Government to alleviate the burden of consumers.

**Dr. Mrs Chukowry:** Mr Speaker Sir, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry already has in place price mechanisms to control the Maximum Price and Maximum Mark-up on 38 categories of commodities for Mauritius. 36 essential products are controlled by a maximum price regime for Rodrigues.

Out of the 38 commodities, 12 essential commodities such as Gas oil, Mogas, LPG, Cement, Bread, Flour, Ration Rice, Onions and Potatoes, are regulated under the Maximum Price regime to ensure affordability and accessibility for every Mauritian.

The remaining 26 essential commodities are under the Maximum Mark-Up Regime. This regime strictly caps the mark-up range between 15% to 45%, encompassing items such as milk powder, breakfast cereals, canned fish, edible oil, Basmati rice, imported fresh fruits, infant milk powder and baby diapers, among others.

My Ministry has a dedicated team to carry out market analysis and continuous monitoring and proposals are made for intervention and control as and when the need arises.

Mr Speaker Sir, as regards part (b), I wish to highlight a significant milestone achieved by my Ministry in the previous year – a comprehensive overhaul of our price control framework for around 7,500 pharmaceutical products. In May 2023, this Government introduced a forward-thinking approach by implementing a regressive maximum mark-up mechanism.

This significant change, enshrined in the Consumer Protection (Pharmaceutical Products) (Maximum Mark-Up) Regulations, marks a departure from uniform mark-ups, towards a more equitable system where the mark-up on medicines is inversely proportional to their import cost.

The higher the cost at import, the lower the mark-up. This means that essential medicines, particularly those with higher import costs, are now more accessible due to lower mark-ups.

Mr Speaker Sir, Government is currently providing significant financial support to ensure the affordability of staple food items for the public, as follows –

- a subsidy on LPG at an amount of Rs324.97 per cylinder of 12kg which cost Government Rs2.12 billion per year, while consumers buy same at Rs240;
- a subsidy on Long Grain White Rice of Rs8.30 for every half kilogram, which translates into an annual expenditure of Rs349 million. This subsidy amounts for 61% of the price for a half kilogram bag of rice and the retail price is Rs5.40 per half kilogram;
- a subsidy on fortified flour distributed by the STC of Rs16.08 per kilogram, amounting to an annual total of Rs595 million. The retail price paid by consumers is Rs4.85 per half kilogram, and
- in an effort to keep the cost of staple bread affordable, schedule bread receives a subsidy of Rs0.44 per 100 grams, enabling us to maintain its retail price at Rs2.60.

As regards pharmaceutical products, Government already provides for free health care which includes provision of pharmaceutical products to all citizens.

Thank you.

**Mr Assirvaden:** J'ai remarqué que la ministre a parlé d'un mécanisme mis en place au sein de son ministère pour le contrôle des prix et la ministre parle aussi d'*infant milk powder*. Madame la ministre, prenons trois commodités de base, utilisées par beaucoup de mauriciens actuellement : le lait en général ou le lait pour les bébés, les couches et le fromage. Malgré vos mécanismes en place, ces trois produits ont augmenté de plus de 42 % en deux mois, 42 % ! Est-ce que la ministre est disposée, je dis bien, est-ce que la ministre est disposée à intervenir auprès de son collègue, le ministre des Finances pour trouver une solution pour les ménagères mauriciennes dans ces augmentations de prix car la dépréciation de la roupie, Madame, tue les mauriciens ?

**Mr Speaker:** Let the Minister reply.

**Dr. Mrs Chukowry:** Yes. Mr Speaker, Sir, for instance, out of the 26 essential commodities which are under the price control, it has been observed that 80% had a decreasing and stable trend while the increase is due to external factors such as exchange rates and freight costs which are beyond control. As I said earlier, there is a dedicated team at the level of my Ministry to carry out continuous market analysis and monitoring. Appropriate recommendations are made for intervention and control as and when required.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the regressive maximum markup mechanism had an immediate effective impact on the overall classes of classified medicine with a general fall of 4.6 in the retail price. However, there are other external factors – even for milk – such as the foreign currency appreciation, the international prices of milk, the freight costs which are beyond control and impact negatively on the retail prices.

**Mr Assirvaden:** A l'item (b) de ma question, Madame la ministre, on parle des médecines vendues en clinique, en pharmacie privée. Un exemple, Madame la ministre, le Galvus Met, médicament pour les diabétiques. Ce médicament, Madame la ministre, a augmenté de R 325 en quatre mois pour la boîte de quinze.

Je voudrais savoir de la ministre, est-ce que comme ministre de la Protection des consommateurs, elle ne voit pas l'urgence d'intervenir sur ce marché des médicaments pour contrôler les prix des médicaments qui tuent à cause de la dépréciation de la roupie, le pouvoir d'achat des mauriciens tous les jours ?

**Mr Speaker:** Let the Minister reply!

**Dr. Mrs Chukowry:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we have the regressive maximum markup on eight classes of pharmaceutical products namely –

- (i) anti-cancer;
- (ii) anti-diabetic, like you said;
- (iii) the cardiovascular;

- (iv) inhalers;
- (v) biologicals;
- (vi) vaccines, and
- (vii) anti-acids.

And like it is, we have reduced the profit that used to be made but unfortunately, I told you, there are things that are beyond our control like...

*(Interruptions)*

Definitely!

**Mr Speaker:** Next question!

#### **BUDGET 2023-24 – ANJALAY COOPEN STADIUM – UPGRADE**

**(No. B/107) Mr F. David (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage whether, in regard to the Rs80 million earmarked for the upgrading of the Anjalay Coopen Stadium to also host concerts as announced in the Budget Speech 2023-2024, he will state where matters stand.

**The Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation (Mr S. Toussaint):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission I will reply to PQ B/107.

Insofar my Ministry is concerned, a total amount of Rs60 million was earmarked under the National Resilience Fund for the upgrading of the Anjalay Coopen Stadium with Rs10 million in this financial year and Rs50 million in the next financial year.

The upgrading of the Anjalay Coopen Stadium will be carried out in phases. Phase 1 includes civil works, mainly waterproofing works and the two other phases comprise electrical and mechanical works.

The Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development has carried out and completed its survey for the civil works. The scope of work is being finalised. Once available, my Ministry will proceed with a bidding exercise to recruit a service provider for the civil works.

Mr Speaker, Sir, once the upgrading works are completed, the facility will be reopened to the public and the proposal to host concerts and events at the stadium will be considered. Thank you.

**Mr David:** M. le président, dans un communiqué de presse de l'Union des artistes datée du 20 mars 2024, les artistes ont déploré que la visite du stade Anjalay Coopen, dans le cadre de ce présent projet de R 80 millions, finalement semble ne pas concerner le stade principal mais les terrains avoisinants qui sont clairement inadaptés à la tenue des concerts. Puis-je demander au ministre – alors je pensais l'adresser au ministre des Arts – si toutefois il a un éclaircissement au sujet des terrains qui vont être améliorés et adaptés pour la tenue des concerts au stade Anjalay ?

**Mr Toussaint:** M. le président, comme je viens de le dire dans ma réponse, c'est le stade complètement et avec les terrains avoisinants qui, une fois les travaux complétés, seront mis à la disposition pour des événements sportifs, des événements culturels et artistiques.

**Mr David:** Puis-je demander au ministre un *timeline*, un calendrier, même approximatif sur l'exécution de ces travaux et le moment auquel vraiment nos artistes pourront commencer à se produire au stade Anjalay Coopen ?

**Mr Toussaint:** M. le président, avec tout le respect que je dois à l'honorable membre, je ne suis pas dans l'approximatif. Je suis scientifique dans mon approche et par rapport à ce que les officiers nous proposent et comme je l'ai dit dans ma réponse, les travaux seront faits sur deux phases. Pour cette année financière, donc nous avons un budget de R 10 millions, prochaine année financière, c'est-à-dire 2024-2025, nous aurons un budget de R 50 millions. Donc, nous allons procéder par phases. Donc, première phase comme je l'ai expliqué, comme le *scope of works* sera finalisé, on va procéder avec un *tendering exercise* et à partir de là les travaux vont se faire. Donc, il faudra attendre.

**Mr Speaker:** MP Bhagwan!

#### **GRA – 2024 HORSE RACING – STAKE MONEY – REGISTERED STABLES**

**(No. B/108) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to the

forthcoming 2024 Horse Racing season, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to –

- (a) the amount of stake money that has been agreed upon, indicating if the Authority has approved same;
- (b) the number of stables registered with the Authority to date therefor, and
- (c) if any due diligence exercise has been carried out with regard to the owners/shareholders participating therein by the relevant authority.

**Dr. Padayachy:** M. le président, en ce qui concerne la partie (a) de la question, je suis informé par la *Gambling Regulatory Authority* que pour la prochaine saison de courses 2024, l'organisateur des courses de chevaux, *People's Turf PLC* n'a pas encore communiqué le montant des enjeux à payer pour la saison de courses 2024.

PTP attend probablement que le calendrier des courses pour la saison 2024 soit publié par la *Horse Racing Division* avant de communiquer le montant des enjeux.

Il convient de noter que le paiement des enjeux relève de la seule responsabilité de l'organisateur des courses de chevaux et que ni la *GRA Act*, ni les règles de courses de la Division des courses de chevaux n'imposent d'obligations à la GRA ou à la *Horse Racing Division* en ce qui concerne la réglementation des enjeux.

Je dois également ajouter qu'en vertu de l'article 61 des Règles des courses, les conditions de chaque réunion de courses, y compris le montant des enjeux à payer par l'organisateur des courses de chevaux pour une course donnée, doivent être publiés au moins cinq jours avant le jour de la réunion des courses, et cela, afin que les entraîneurs soient informés à l'avance du montant des enjeux offerts et décident de désigner et d'aligner un cheval dans une course en tenant compte du montant des enjeux offerts pour la course en question.

En outre, l'article 30 du *Gambling Regulatory Act 2007* prévoit que l'organisateur des courses de chevaux doit être une société anonyme et que conformément à la loi et à ses conditions de licences, il doit être solvable et financièrement sain pendant toute la saison des

courses. Et en fin de compte, la décision concernant le paiement du montant des enjeux doit être une décision commerciale saine pour l'organisateur des courses de chevaux.

M. le président, en ce qui concerne la partie (b) de la question, je suis informé par la GRA que le nombre d'entraîneurs approuvés et autorisés à exploiter une écurie par le *Horse Racing Committee* s'élève à seize à ce jour pour la prochaine saison de course 2024.

En ce qui concerne la partie (c) de la question, la GRA a procédé à des exercices de diligence raisonnable avant l'octroi de licences ou l'enregistrement des parties prenantes impliquées dans l'industrie des courses de chevaux, y compris les propriétaires, comme le prévoient les articles 15C (1) (h) et 93B de la *GRA Act*. Merci.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Depuis que le *People's Turf* a eu son permis pour organiser les courses et que les courses font partie du patrimoine, *sports activities*, est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire s'il est au courant et s'il a discuté avec la GRA ? Parce que nous assistons à une mort lente de l'organisation des courses à Maurice, non seulement l'état du Champ de Mars, mais l'organisation des courses elle-même par la *People's Turf*.

**Dr. Padayachy:** M. le président, en ce qui concerne cette question, je pense que l'honorable membre pourrait venir avec une question dessus et je me ferai un devoir d'aller demander des précisions à la GRA.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Est-ce qu'on peut savoir du ministre, est-ce que lui en tant que ministre et que la GRA qui tombe sous sa responsabilité, ne pense-t-il pas qu'il est temps de demander à la GRA de faire une enquête sur la solvabilité du la *People's Turf*? C'est connu au niveau de tout le monde, ceux qui fréquentent le Champ de Mars, pas moi, mais je suis au courant et je lis, nous assistons à une mort lente, comme je l'ai dit, de l'organisation. Est-ce qu'il compte prendre la question avec la GRA pour commanditer une étude sur la solvabilité du *People's Turf*?

**Dr. Padayachy:** Je tiens à préciser, comme j'ai répondu auparavant, l'article 30 du *Gambling Regulatory Act 2007* prévoit que l'organisateur de courses de chevaux doit être une société anonyme et que cette société doit être solvable et financièrement saine pendant toute la saison des courses. Et je prendrai au mot l'honorable membre et je demanderai des précisions à la GRA. Merci.

**Mr Speaker:** MP Lobine!

**HIGHLANDS – GAS INCINERATOR – OPERATION**

(No. B/109) **Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to the gas incinerator and the cremation ground at Highlands, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Vacoas Phoenix, information in each case as to the –

- (a) dates of the coming into operation thereof, and
- (b) number of times these facilities have been used since January 2023 to date.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management (Dr. A. Husnoo):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Vacoas Phoenix that the LPG-Fired Human Incinerator at Highlands came into operation on 20 December 2021. I am also informed that there is no crematorium ground at Highlands whereat traditional cremation on wooden fire could be carried out since the necessary clearance from the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Ministry of Environment has not been obtained.

I wish to inform the House that there are 15 other incinerators across the island, along with that of Highlands, which have been funded under the Indian line of credit. The contract was awarded to Kanta Electricals India Limited on 26 July 2019. No provision for maintenance contract was made in the bidding document then.

As regards to part (b) of the question, I am informed that three incinerations were carried out during the period January 2023 to August 2023, and the incinerator is not operational as from that date as several faulty parts thereof need to be replaced and no maintenance agreement is available despite several bidding exercise conducted by the Council.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has therefore, with the technical assistance of the Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development, prepared a set of bidding document for procurement of repairs and maintenance of the 16 incinerators, including the one at Highlands. The bids have been launched on 27 March 2024 and the closing date for submission of the bids

has been scheduled for 25 April 2024. If we get a promoter, it is expected that the contract would be awarded by mid-June this year.

**Mr Lobine:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Vice-Prime Minister, whether he is aware that there was a promise, that there was a traditional wooden pyre that was being used at Cinq Arpents and it was moved to Highlands in the same place where the gas incinerator is, and the inhabitants were told that they will be able to use either the gas incinerator or the traditional wooden pyre? May I get from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, why as at date, this has not been the case, that is, the use of this traditional wooden pyre?

**Dr. Husnoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that we have traditional pyres for Constituency No. 15 at Trois Mamelles and Phoenix. We have two places where you can have it done.

**Mr Lobine:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask a supplementary question? May I ask the Vice-Prime Minister, is he aware that the inhabitants of Cinq Arpents, Belle Terre and Highlands, for so many years, used to go at Cinq Arpents for those traditional wooden pyres to be used, and now, it is causing serious inconvenience for them to go to Trois Mamelles or Allée Brillant or other places to undergo this traditional way of burying or cremating their dead ones? Are you aware of that?

**Dr. Husnoo:** No, we appreciate the difficulties, Mr Speaker, Sir. In fact, we were trying to solve the problem by having the LPG-Fired Human Incinerator. But, unfortunately, as I mentioned, there have been some problems with the contractor. Now, we have launched the bidding and we hope to get somebody who can repair these incinerators. As I mentioned earlier, I know for Constituency No. 15, there are two traditional pyres available at Trois Mamelles and Phoenix.

**Mr Speaker:** MP Wochit!

#### **ROAD ACCIDENTS – RISING TREND & CAUSES – REMEDIAL MEASURES**

**(No. B/110) Mr R. Wochit (Third Member for Pamplémousses & Triolet)** asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to road

accidents, he will state the reasons for the increase in the number thereof compared to last year, indicating the measures envisaged to combat the rising trend thereof.

**The Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail (Mr A. Ganoo):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to PQ B/110, which has been addressed to the hon. Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development, as it relates to my Ministry.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that 8,915 road accidents occurred last year, that is, year 2023. Out of the 8,915 accidents, 6,366 caused material damages only, 2,063 caused light injuries only, 356 caused serious injuries, and 130 were fatal accidents.

For the year 2024, from 01 January 2024 to 29 March 2024, there were 1,402 road accidents out of which 164 caused material damages only, 268 caused slight injuries only, 40 caused serious injuries and 30 were fatal accidents. For the corresponding period in 2023, that is, from 01 January 2023 to 29 March 2023, there were 25 fatal road accidents causing the death of 25 people. A comparative analysis of the figures for the two corresponding periods shows that there has been a 20% increase in the number of fatal accidents. Out of the 32 persons killed from 01 January 2024 to 29 March 2024, 6 were pedestrians, 4 were drivers, 14 were riders, 5 were passengers, 2 were cyclists and 1 was a pillion rider.

The pedestrian and two wheelers accounted for 72% of the total persons killed for period January 2024 to March 2024. Among the victims –

- 1 was below 15 years;
- 4 were between the age of 16 to 25;
- 17 were between the age 26 to 50;
- 4 were between the age of 51 to 59, and
- 6 were senior citizens.

13 out of the 30 fatal road accidents were reported to have occurred between 18 hrs to 6 hrs while the remaining 17 were reported to have occurred between 6 hrs to 18 hrs.

Mr Speaker, Sir, causes of accidents are usually determined by the Police in their investigations. I am advised that the causes of road accidents are numerous. A road crash does

not occur due to a single contributory risk factor. These include, but are not limited to the following –

- Loss of control of vehicle by driver;
- Carelessness, recklessness of driver;
- Inattentive driver;
- Attitude of drivers/motorcyclists;
- Reckless overtaking;
- Exceeding speed limits;
- Aggressive driving;
- Driving under the influence of alcohol/drugs;
- Fatigue;
- Slippery roads;
- Pedestrian wearing dark clothing;
- Animal or object on carriage way;
- State of the vehicle;
- Defective traffic signals;
- Non-compliance to traffic signals and road markings;
- Dark spots;
- Poor street lightings;
- Lack of respect for laws and the police,
- Unskilled driving.

Mr Speaker, Sir, one of the major reasons causing road accidents is also the carefree attitude of drivers and motorcyclists. To control the increase in accidents, a behavioral change is required. In view thereof, my Ministry has, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, developed a curriculum on road safety education including the teacher's guide to be imparted to students of Grade 1 to 6. The continuum of road safety education would be extended to Pre-Primary Schools including private institutions, all

Primary Schools, including private institutions, Secondary Schools including private institutions and Tertiary Education Centres.

Moreover, my Ministry in collaboration with the MITD, is in the process of setting up a Driver's Education and Testing Centre at Forest-Side to provide training refresher course to driving instructors and potential drivers in accordance to an approved national curriculum. The TMRSU has been working with key stakeholders for the implementation of road safety measures and installation of road safety furniture in line with a safe system approach that would be more forgiving to human errors in case of crashes.

Furthermore, in the light of the considerable increase in drug driving offense being detected and the impact of drugs on the cognitive driving behavior of the drivers and dangers such drivers represent on the roads, my Ministry would revisit the sentencing for drunk driving and the Road Traffic Act would be amended accordingly.

Concurrently, my Ministry is revisiting the Driver Licensing Scheme to introduce the probationary driving license which would put a set of restrictions on new drivers who have recently passed their test for an initial period of time. In parallel to all infrastructural and legislative measures, my Ministry has been conducting intensive and aggressive, sensitisation campaigns on billboards, television, radio, social media to raise awareness among road users, especially the most vulnerable ones.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is also reviewing the National Road Safety Strategy 2016 to 2025 with a view to actualising the recommended actions, infrastructural legislatives and sensitisation contained therein to be in phase with a changing environment and road infrastructures in place. Thank you.

**Mr Wochit:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Is the hon. Minister aware that from January this year till today, we have had already 35 deaths on our roads, as you stated compared to last year, there were 25? There is therefore an increase.

**Mr Ganoo:** Yes, I did mention, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Woochit:** Can the hon. Minister provide a timeline for the implementation of the proposed measures that you just mentioned and any expected targets to reduce these road accidents?

**Mr Ganoo:** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. The list is long. In fact, there are measures which have already been taken. There are measures which are in the pipeline. There are engineering measures. There are legislative measures also. I can, if the hon. Minister wishes and by your leave, Mr Speaker, Sir, go through the list of all these measures. Let us take the measures that have already been taken –

- Introduction of stricter penalties;
- Implementation of a three stage audit process with the collaboration of the RDA;
- Introduction of 40 km per hour zones along streets and 40 km per hour along collector-distributor roads, what we call the ‘sea roads’ around the island;
- Installation of Belisha Flashing lights at different zebra pedestrian crossing sites across the island to raise the awareness of drivers that they need to be cautious at such locations;
- A Web-Based Road Crash Data Management System has been set up by my Ministry whereby data on accidents are plugged in the system and reports are generated which provide information on the characteristics of accidents such as dark spot areas, time and location of the accidents as well as the type of vehicles and persons involved, age of the driver, severity of the accidents amongst others. These data enable my Ministry to take appropriate remedial measures and policies are accordingly formulated to enhance road safety and reduce the number fatalities on our roads.
- Road safety inspections are being carried out by my Ministry along with hazardous road across the island to improve the safety performance of road.

- Traffic calming and road safety measures in terms of raised tables and speed cameras and road safety measures in terms of crash barriers, pedestrian crossings, cats' eye, traffic lights, handrails, and guardrails are being implemented by my Ministry in various locations around the island to reduce the severity of the injured persons and deaths during road crashes.
- Hard shoulders are also being rehabilitated along motorway across the road.
- The Road Traffic Act has been amended to make it more stringent and to increase the fines for 204 offenses, and the fixed penalty system.
- The Road Traffic Act has equally been amended to increase the fines for speeding offences. The legislation has been amended to prevent driving under the influence of alcohol.
- Implementation of the drug driving legislation, awareness and sensitisation campaigns in relation to road safety are ongoing at the level of my Ministry.

Additional measures are being envisaged, Mr Speaker, Sir.

- I just referred to the review of the Driver Licensing Scheme to include the probationary driving license which would introduce a set of restrictions for a specified period of time for new and young drivers. The probationary driver's license is a proven measure to address the issue of novice drivers being overrepresented in road clashes.
- Enactment of new legislation regarding the mandatory use of child restraints in passenger cars to maximise the safety of passengers less than 10 years old.
- Introduction of Road Traffic Technical Prescription for Protective Helmet Regulations 2022 to ensure that all protective helmets intended to protect the wearers' head against impact during the road crash which would be imported and sold in compliance with the UN Regulations No. 22 standards.

- The introduction of the Road Traffic/Pedestrian Traffic Regulation to enhance the safety of pedestrian on our roads as statistics show that pedestrians are the most vulnerable on roads.
- Amendments to the Road Traffic Act to increase the number of cumulative road traffic offences from 11 to 32.

I can go on, Mr Speaker, Sir, but I...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Next question! Hon. Dr. Boolell is absent! So, we move to hon. Yeung Sik Yuen.

**MORCELLEMENT RAMALINGUM, CUREPIPE – FLOODING COMPLAINT–  
DRAIN PROJECTS**

**(No. B/112) Mr M. Yeung Sik Yuen (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to Morcellement Ramalingum in Curepipe, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, information as to if the Council is in presence of any complaint of flooding thereat and, if so, indicate the drains projects earmarked thereat, if any.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management (Dr. A. Husnoo):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Curepipe that on 26 March 2024, a complaint was received at the Council through an email from one Mrs A., regarding issues of drain at Chemin la Rivière and Domur at Morcellement Ramalingum, Forest Side. Here, I would also like to inform the House that the DPM and the PPS Dhunoo are closely following that complaint of flooding at Morcellement Ramalingum.

A meeting was already held regarding that issue with the complainant in the presence of hon. Dhunoo, PPS and Mr Maunthrooa, General Manager of the CWA, the National Development Unit and the Municipal City Council of Port Louis on 20 March 2024 to take stock of the situation and this was followed by site visits.

I am further informed by the Municipal Council of Curepipe that the National Development Unit, the Land Drainage Authority and the Municipal City Council of Port Louis are working on a drain network proposed to resolve the flooding problem thereat.

I wish to add that cleaning of open drains, weeding, herbiciding, lopping and mowing are carried out by the scavenging contractor appointed by the Municipal for Council of Curepipe, namely Atics Ltd on 01 March 2024.

On 28 March 2024, Atics Ltd has again started cleaning the open drains which will end on 04 April 2024. Thereafter, immediately Atics Ltd will start cleaning the cross drains and same will be completed by 11 April 2024. In parallel, the service provider has embarked in the cleaning of rivulets and bare lands as from Monday 01 April 2024 in accordance with the scope of service in the contract document for scavenging services.

**Mr Yeung Sik Yuen:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am given to understand that the first complaint was in August 2021, not in 2024. Is the Vice-Prime Minister aware that the region is being flooded with muddy water quite often and the inhabitants are incurring losses such as furniture, home appliances, wooden carpet and food items? Can he reassure the House that needful will be done urgently?

**Dr. Husnoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just mentioned that I was informed by the Council that they got a complaint on 26 March 2024. That is what was informed by the Council.

Now, as far as the works that need to be done, I have just mentioned that we had a meeting with the Municipal Council, the NDU and with the Land Drainage Authority. Everybody is trying to work on the drain network, not just one drain, but there is a whole network there to prevent this from recurring again in the future.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question!

#### **ARSENAL – SOCIAL HOUSING UNITS – FLOOD MITIGATING MEASURES**

**(No. B/113) Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the construction of social housing units at Arsenal,

opposite to the pépinière d'Arsenal, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Social Living Development Ltd., information as to if it was subjected to severe flooding during the passage of cyclone Belal and, if so, state the measures being taken to reduce the risk of inundation thereat.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the National Social Living Development Ltd. (NSLD) that part of the site opposite the *pépinière* d'Arsenal and earmarked for the construction of residential units was indeed flooded during the passage of cyclone Belal due to –

- (i) on-site surface run-off;
- (ii) off-site surface run-off from adjacent areas, and
- (iii) consequential backflow of water due to insufficient capacity of the culvert located at A4 Road to evacuate the volume of water.

I am further informed that the accumulated water had, within 24 hours, either percolated or dissipated into the existing culverts on A4 Road.

As regards the measures being taken to reduce the risk of inundation on this site, I wish to refer the hon. Member to my reply to PQ B/1551 on 21 November 2023 whereby I enumerated the measures that would be implemented by the NSLD, as prescribed by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change as well as by the Land Drainage Authority. These measures include both on-site and off-site works as follows –

Onsite works include –

- a) upgrading of the man-made canal on the site;
- b) provision of a ridge to protect the site from canal and upstream flows;
- c) fitting of all internal roads with appropriate reinforced concrete drains, and
- d) provision of four attenuation basins.

Following a detailed design report prepared by the Drains Infrastructure Construction Ltd (DICL) and approved by the LDA, off-site works will now include –

- a) construction of a new culvert along Malakoff Road with substantial increase hydraulic capacity to ensure no backflow of water;
- b) construction of the new culvert along A4 Road with substantial hydraulic capacity and upgrading of water course upstream and downstream of the culvert, and
- c) construction of cut-off drains along the side boundaries to channel there any incoming off-site water to a safe discharge. I understand this refers to an upgraded natural drainage path and Rivière Citron.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as recommended by the LDA, all these measures, I am informed, will be implemented prior year to the handing over of the residential units to the eventual beneficiaries.

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether in the course of management meetings that he chairs with the NHDC and NSLD, – I am sure he does because of the magnitude of the project, Rs.25 billion for 8,000 units – has he had the opportunity to take cognizance or question whether severe flooding has to do with the fact that on-site works to protect the construction activities, as recommended by the Land Drainage Authority, were not implemented simply because if that was implemented, design and build contract to the tune of Rs2.7 m. per unit would not have been possible because the cost would have been much more?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** I am not sure I understand the question of the hon. gentleman. All I can say is that yes, indeed, there are weekly meetings where the NSLD reports progress on all its sites. The NSLD's attention has been drawn to the fact that we need to draw lessons from the passage of Belal as regards flooding and risks of flooding on all of our 37 sites, including Arsenal.

*(Interruptions)*

Maybe you might want to listen to my answer first?

The intention of Government is to ensure that no residential complex be delivered, be handed over to eventual buyers until and unless we have done all that is within our knowledge as

advised by the technical authorities to guard against risks of flooding. As the hon. gentleman may be aware, in the past, we have had issues when unfortunately the NHDC, in years gone by, a long time ago, had not precisely done what needed to be done to guard against climate change.

Now, we know that climate change is upon us. The NSLD has strict instructions to follow the technical advice provided by the relevant authorities. Of course, we cannot question that advice. We can only ensure the timely implementation of the advice.

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** I raised my hand so that I do not lose my second question.

Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether, in the course of management meetings, he has had the chance to question if variations for extra cost have been incurred by the NSLD because of the flooding that has occurred during the passage of cyclone Belal, which may have caused damages to ongoing construction works?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** No, I do not have such information at hand. If the hon. gentleman would wish to communicate the information that he has and he is obviously well-informed, I shall be happy to look into it.

**Mr Speaker:** The Table is advised that PQs B/115, B/119, B/129, B/130, B/135, B/137, B/140, B/141, B/153 and B/154 have been withdrawn.

The next question will be from hon. Abbas Mamode!

### **E-HR PROJECT – IMPLEMENTATION**

**(No. B/114) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms whether, in regard to the E-HR Project, he will state the –

- (a) status thereof, including the coverage thereof in Ministries and Departments;
- (b) number of public officers accessing the system;
- (c) cost thereof;

- (d) transformative impact thereof in service delivery, and
- (e) plan, if any, to interface with other government IT systems.

**Dr. Ramdhany:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed in the context of digital transformation of the Public Service, my Ministry has launched and implemented the E-HR project which is an unprecedented transformative initiative and an award-winning project at the national level in the African continent.

The E-HR system consists of two main elements, namely the Leave Management System (LMS) and the Core HR Module which leverages technology to streamline and digitalise various HR processes within the public service.

This move towards digitalisation is aimed at significantly enhancing the overall efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and responsiveness of the Public Service.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the E-HR system has been implemented in phases. The initial phase of the Leave Management System was successfully implemented on a pilot basis at my Ministry and the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation and the system is fully operational since July 2021.

The second phase of the Leave Management System started in March 2022 and ended in May 2022. In the second phase, 20 additional organisations were covered. Phase 3 of the LMS started in June 2022 and was completed in December 2022, covering the remaining organisation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, as at March 2024, the Leave Management System is live in all Ministries, Departments and other Government institutions, representing 79 organisations and covering more than 47,000 employees, which equates to approximately 83% of the public officers.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regard to part (c) of the question, the total cost of the E-HR project for the three phases amounts to approximately Rs22 million.

With regard to part (d) of the question, the objectives that were set were met beyond expectations and have contributed significantly to improve and streamline intricate HR processes

which have alleviated substantially the work of the HR Cadre. Users of the system are now able to seamlessly engage with respective Ministries and Departments with a user-friendly portal for a number of HR functions which include leave management, updating of personal data, accessing payroll and the management of their leaves.

As a result of this streamlining of processes, my Ministry has been able to optimise on HR Resources and to cater for more strategic HR functions such as Strategic Planning, Training, Need Analysis, Succession Planning and Rotation Policy instead of dealing with daily operational HR matter.

Furthermore, the project has significantly contributed to the reduction of our carbon footprint as the paper intensive HR processes have now been replaced by digitally enabled ones.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as part (e) of the question is concerned, the E-HR system has already been integrated with the Electronic Attendance System. The integration of the Leave Management System with Electronic Attendance System streamline the leave management processes by allowing for a seamless communication between the two systems and ensuring real time leave updates on the Electronic Attendance System.

The E-HR project consists of a strategy asset. The whole HR database is kept centrally and in a secured environment. This asset is being made available to other systems which are being implemented in other departments of the Government. The E-HR system will also interface with pension, passage benefit and car loan system and an online case brief system which are being developed by the Accountant-General's office and the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, respectively.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry intends to interplay the E-HR with other systems with a view to promoting a whole of Government's approach towards public service delivery which places the citizen at the centre of the public service. In this context, my Ministry is actively engaged with other stakeholders such as the Mutual Aid, Civil Service Association Ltd with regard to facilitating public officers in their loan application with the institutions.

**Mr Abbas Mamode:** Mr Speaker, Sir, thank you. Can the hon. Minister inform the House, being given that this is a new project and we have been made to understand that it

concerns 83% of the public service – so has there been any complaint or is the Minister satisfied with the new system being implemented?

**Dr. Ramdhany:** Affirming positively to such a laudable initiative to an unprecedented transformative initiative which is an award-winning project at national level and even African continent but we have to sustain such initiatives for workmen's class. We are putting Wi-Fi spots on the workplace for a better connectivity so that they can use the E-HR system.

Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question, MP Bodha!

**CONSTITUENCY NO. 12 – FULLY CONCRETE HOUSING SCHEME –  
PROJECT DETAILS**

**(No. B/115) Mr R. Duval (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the Fully Concrete Housing Scheme, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Empowerment Foundation, information as to the number of –

- (a) housing units constructed thereunder in Constituency No. 12, Mahébourg and Plaine Magnien, since January 2020 to date, indicating the –
  - (i) location thereof;
  - (ii) date of delivery, and;
  - (iii) names of the beneficiaries thereof, and
- (b) on-going projects thereunder, indicating their –
  - (i) respective cost;
  - (ii) expected date of completion, and
  - (iii) delivery thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

**CONSTITUENCY NO. 16 – OPERATIONAL INCINERATORS**

**(No. B/116) Mr N. Bodha (Second Member for Vacoas & Floréal)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to incinerators in Constituency No. 16, Vacoas and Floréal, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the recent systems installed, indicating the number thereof in working conditions, in particular the one situated at Glen Park.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management (Dr. A. Husnoo):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix that one LPG Fired Incinerator has been installed at La Marie in Constituency No. 16 and same is operational since 20 December 2021.

I am further informed that the incinerator is not being put to use as from August 2023 since several faulty parts thereof need to be replaced and no maintenance contract is available despite bidding exercise carried out by the Council on 17 October 2023 and 30 January 2024.

I wish to inform the House that there are 15 other such incinerators across the island, along with that at La Marie which have been funded under the Indian Line of Credit. The contract was awarded to Kanta Electricals India Ltd. No provision for maintenance contract was made in the bidding document initially.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as already indicated in my reply to Parliamentary Question B/109, bids have been launched for repair and maintenance of the 16 incinerators on 20 March 2024 and the closing date for submission of the bids has been scheduled for 25 April 2024. It is expected that the contract would be awarded by mid-June this year.

**Mr Bodha:** I thank the hon. Vice-Prime Minister for his answer. May I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether there was a commissioning by the Indian company once the installations had been done in La Marie and in other parts of Mauritius?

**Dr. Husnoo:** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, there were 16 incinerators which were done under this project as I mentioned from Line of Credit from India and it was commissioned by a team.

**Mr Bodha:** Can I ask the Vice-Prime Minister what is the cost of this project which was funded by a Line of Credit from India and who is going to pay for the repairs?

**Dr. Husnoo:** I mean, the contract was awarded to Kanta Electricals Ltd for the sum of USD2,256,000 and now as I mentioned, actually after we had problems with the incinerators, we contacted the original contractor, that is, Kanta Electricals Ltd but unfortunately we did not get a reply at all. So, we are trying to do another bid locally to see if we can find somebody who can repair these incinerators.

**Mr Bodha:** I presume that the repairs will be made by...

**Mr Speaker:** Next question, MP Navarre-Marie!

### **CANAL DAYOT & SABLE NOIR – RETICULATED SEWERAGE SYSTEM – PIPES CONNECTION**

**(No. B/117) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the regions of Canal Dayot and Sable Noir, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to where matters stand as to the connection of pipes to the reticulated sewerage system thereat.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that the region of Canal Dayot was earmarked for connection to the public sewer network under Phase 2 of the Pailles-Guibies Sewerage Project which was awarded to contractor Sinohydro Corporation Ltd. (SCL). However, the contract with Sinohydro Corporation Ltd was terminated due to the latter's poor performance under the contract. It was subsequently decided that the outstanding works under the above contract be carried out in a phased manner.

In a first instance, priority was given to implementing projects so as to make beneficial use of the already constructed sewer infrastructure under the said contract.

Thus, bids have been launched by Wastewater Management Authority in respect of Phases 3 and 4 of the project and these cover the regions of Morcellement Le Rock, Morcellement Raffray, les Guibies, Anse Courtois and Claude Delaitre.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on one hand, Phase 3 of the project will consist of the construction of the remaining part of the trunk sewers which is around 2.2 km, and which is of prime importance as it will serve to connect the reticulation network and some 225 house connections. The works will also include construction of remaining sewer reticulation network, decommissioning of the two pumping stations and one wastewater treatment plant, and CWA pipe replacement and connection works. This phase of the project will have a duration of three years. Following the approval of the Central Procurement Board, bids were launched on 24 November 2023, with closing date on 20 February 2024. The bids received are currently being evaluated at the Central Procurement Board.

On the other hand, Phase 4 of the project will comprise the design and construction of some 1,240 house connections in the regions of Morcellement Raffray, les Guibies, Anse Courtois and Claude Delaitre. This phase will have a duration of 2 years. Following approval of the Central Procurement Board, the invitation for bids was launched on 28 December 2023, with closing date on 19 February 2024. The bids for Phase 4 are also under evaluation at the Central Procurement Board.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since Sinohydro Corporation Limited has not yet carried out any sewer infrastructure works in the region of Canal Dayot at the end of its contract, the Wastewater Management Authority proposes to carry out wastewater works at Canal Dayot in a subsequent phase. Connection of flows from the Canal Dayot region will be possible only after construction of four river crossings across St Louis River from Canal Dayot region to the sewer main. The project will also include laying of 1.1 km of reticulation networks and connection of around 110 houses. It is expected that works at Canal Dayot would be undertaken under Phase 5 of the project and procurement procedures could start as from early 2025.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as for Sable Noir region, this is considered to be a low-lying area near the coast. There is at present no wastewater project earmarked for this region. However, an integrated feasibility study could be undertaken in the future for the Sable Noir region and environments. I thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** M. le président, sur les 48 kilomètres de tuyaux à être installés, le ministre pourrait-il nous dire combien de kilomètres ont déjà été placés par la compagnie chinoise ?

**Mr Lesjongard:** I have already replied to that in the past. Out of the 48 km which was supposed to be laid, the contractor Sinohydro has laid some 17.7 km, which represents some 37.3% of the work to be completed.

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** Merci. Le ministre pourrait-il nous dire si le coût de ce projet, entre mai 2023 à ce jour, avait été annoncé à hauteur de R 37 millions, si ce coût a enregistré une hausse, si oui, de combien, et pour quelle raison ?

**Mr Lesjongard:** Si l'honorable membre peut répéter, je n'ai pas trop compris. R 37 millions ?

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** Oui. De mai 2023 à ce jour, est-ce que le ministre pourrait nous dire si le projet annoncé au départ à hauteur de R 37 millions, si ce projet a connu une hausse, si oui, de combien, et pour quelle raison ?

**Mr Lesjongard:** Je ne comprends pas trop. C'est quel projet de R 37 millions ?

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** Le projet de tout-à-l'égout à Sable Noir et Canal Dayot.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Le projet de tout-à-l'égout à Canal Dayot n'est pas de l'ordre de R 37 millions. C'est beaucoup plus que ça. Si je ne me trompe pas, ce que j'avais annoncé au coût de R 37 millions, c'était le *permanent resurfacing that was allocated to the contractor Gamma Civic to complete works that were left over by the contractor Sinohydro*.

**Mr Speaker:** So, we move to the next question! Hon. Armance is absent.

## **RÉDUIT – STATE LAND – CULTURAL CENTRES' REPRESENTATIONS**

**(No. B/119) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to State land earmarked for cultural centres at Réduit, he will state if any

decision has been taken thereon by Government in the light of representations made by the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust and the Indo Mauritian Catholic Association thereon.

*(Withdrawn)*

**Mr Speaker** So, MP Ms Joanna Bérenger!

**CHAMAREL, ROAD B104 – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**(No. B/120) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal)** asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the works being undertaken on the road B104 at Chamarel, he will state if an Environmental Impact Assessment has been carried out thereinto prior to the start thereof and, if so, when, indicate if a copy thereof will be tabled and, if not, why not.

**Mr Ramano:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the question pertains to road B104 and I am informed by the RDA that there are currently no ongoing works along that road.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Il s'agissait de la route B103. Peut-être que le ministre peut quand même donner l'information ? Est-ce qu'une étude EIA a été faite avant que les travaux soient entrepris sur cette route ?

**Mr Ramano:** Ce sera avec plaisir, Madame. Mais, M. le président, la question a trait à B104, et si l'honorable membre vient avec une autre question qui a trait à B103, je me ferai un plaisir de lui répondre.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** *P sove !*

**Mr Ramano:** *To pa konn poz kestion! Ki sove?*

**An hon. Member:** Exactly!

**Mr Speaker:** What is happening? What is happening now?

**Ms J. Bérenger:** *Nanye pa ti anpes ou reponn !*

**Mr Speaker:** When I am quiet, you people are unruly! What is happening in this House?

*(Interruptions)*

I want you to be quiet also!

So, the question B/120 was from MP Ms Joanna Bérenger. Is that answered already? Yes.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** *Non, li pa reponn li !*

**Mr Speaker:** So, we move on to...

**Ms J. Bérenger:** *Li pa anvi reponn !*

**Mr Speaker:** So, we move on to MP Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

**Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha:** B/121.

*(Interruptions)*

**An hon. Member:** *Li'nn rat sime!*

**Ms J. Bérenger:** *Al fim to simik trankil twa!*

**Mrs Mayotte:** *Ey!* On a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir!

**Mr Speaker:** Yes.

**Mrs Mayotte:** The hon. Ms Joanna Bérenger said: '*Al fim to simik to fer bien twa!*' Is that acceptable in the Parliament, please?

**Mr Speaker:** No! MP Ms Bérenger, please apologise for that!

**Ms J. Bérenger:** He needs to apologise!

**Mr Speaker:** Please, please apologise for that!

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Okay, okay, I apologise!

**Mr Speaker:** Yes, good!

So, we move on MP Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

**An hon. Member:** *Maintenant tou dimoune koner! Bravo Mayotte!*

**Ms J. Bérenger:** *Pou enn fwa, li p...*

**Mr Hurreeram:** *Ankor dan gardri!*

## **CONSTITUENCY NO. 20 – FLOOD-PRONE AREAS – REMEDIAL MEASURES**

(No. B/121) **Mrs K. Foo Kune-Bacha (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to flooding in Constituency No. 20, Beau-Bassin and Petite Rivière, he will state if a survey has been carried out to identify the flood-prone areas following the recent floods caused by cyclone Belal thereat, indicating the –

- (a) damages caused as a result thereof, and
- (b) remedial measures envisaged to address same.

**The Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development (Mr M. Hurreeram):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Land Drainage Authority has already identified a list of 20 flood-prone areas in Constituency No. 20, Beau-Bassin Petite Rivière, specifically in the region of Petite Rivière, Gros Cailloux, Albion, Coromandel, Chebel, Barkly, Mont Roches, and Beau Bassin.

To that effect, projects are being undertaken by the National Development Unit and the Drain Infrastructure Construction Ltd to mitigate the flooding events in these regions. As at date, six projects have been completed, seven projects are at design stage, one project is at land acquisition stage, and seven projects are at survey stage.

With regard to part (a) of the question, following the recent floods cause by Belal, the LDA has observed that Kinoo Lane, Citronelle Avenue and Lobine Lane which are in the region of Petite Rivière, were inundated with approximately a flood mark level of 40cm at Kinoo Lane and Citronelle Avenue and a flood level of 20cm at Lobine Lane. This was due to the overflowing of natural and manmade streams which cross the build-up areas.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that the Ministry of Local Government and Disaster Risk Reduction Management that damages were observed to road infrastructure necessitating upgrading and resurfacing works and that 26 cases of house flooding were reported.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regard to part (b) of the question, with a view to mitigating flooding at Kinoo Lane, Citronelle Avenue and Lobine Lane, the LDA has proposed the following remedial measures –

1. Immediate cleaning of the main RDA drain along B78 of a stretch of 500 metres, and
2. As a long term measure to increase the conveyance capacity of the streams and drains within the build-up areas in these localities.

On the other hand, I am further informed that the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill has obtained financial clearance to proceed with the following works –

- Reconstruction of roads in the region of Coromandel;
- Patch work and resurfacing work on roads wherever required;
- Cleaning of drains in the region of Beau Bassin, Mont Roches, Barkly and Coromandel, and
- Implementation of flood mitigation measures at Napier Broom, Beau Bassin.

Thank you.

**Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha:** Avec le changement climatique et une pluviométrie plus intense, les données ont changé et les endroits inondables sont devenus plus nombreux. Est-ce que le ministre a l'intention de faire un *Flood Risk Assessment* pour savoir quels chemins, quels bâtiments ou quelles maisons sont à risque d'inondation et de cartographier les drains existants de la Circonscription No. 20 pour permettre d'identifier les endroits où il y a un manque de drains ou les endroits qui nécessitent de nouveaux drains ?

**Mr Hurreeram:** Ceci a déjà été fait, M. le président, et d'ailleurs le Land Drainage Authority a déjà identifié 1,700 drains construits à travers le pays et ceci est en cours et bien sûr, comme l'a si bien dit l'honorable membre, c'est une situation dynamique et on est en train de s'adapter *as and when required*. Merci.

**Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha:** Suite aux pluies de Belal, l'honorable ministre a sans nul doute reçu plusieurs plaintes par rapport aux maisons inondées que ce soit à travers la mairie, le District Council et les CAB, autre que celui qu'il vient de mentionner et d'ailleurs, je suis moi-même en possession de différentes requêtes que je peux lui communiquer plus tard. Est-ce que le ministre peut donner un *timeframe*, peut donner la garantie à ces habitants de la circonscription qu'avant la prochaine saison cyclonique que tous ces problèmes en question seront résolus et que les habitants n'auront plus à craindre que leur maison soit une fois de plus inondée?

**Mr Hurreeram:** Mr Speaker, Sir, when dealing with flood, we need to understand that we are into mitigating. We are not into resolving, it's absolutely impossible to have a dry feet policy in case of flash flood and flooding. The LDA, the NDU, the RDA, the TMRSU, the Local Government, the Ministry of Local Government, we are all working together to try to make our island as safe as possible. So giving a timeframe, I don't think it's fair to ask.

**Mr Speaker:** MP Anquetil!

#### **NATIONAL GENDER POLICY – TECHNICAL COMMITTEES – OUTCOME**

**(No. B/122) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floréal)** asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the setting up of the 4 technical committees in the private sector, academia, media and civil society organisations, as recommended in the National Gender Policy, she will state if same have been set up and, if so, when, indicating in each case –

- (a) the number of meetings held, and
- (b) the outcome thereof.

**Mrs Koonjoo-Shah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, since the launching of the National Gender Policy 2022-2030 in March 2022, my Ministry is implementing all the recommendations mentioned therein. It is being implemented in a phase wise manner where the mechanism put forth has been set up namely, first of all –

1. The National Steering Committee on Gender Mainstreaming;
2. The Inter-ministerial Gender Technical Working Group Committee, and

3. Dedicated gender cell in all Ministries and Departments as well as at the level of Local Authorities.

As at date, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have reached 48 gender cells across Ministries and Departments. Given that the National Gender Policies span over a period of eight years, my Ministry is sustaining gender mainstreaming at public sector's level, including Rodrigues and will thereafter extend across all the four sectors that is, the private sector, the media, the academia and civil society organisations.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a guideline will be used for the setting up of the gender technical working groups on gender mainstreaming in the four respective sectors I have just mentioned. These guidelines are presently at drafting stage, taking into consideration the dynamics of our societal set-up and the varying requirements of those four sectors I have mentioned. Thank you.

**Ms Anquetil:** Je vous remercie, M. le président. La ministre peut-elle indiquer à la Chambre la composition de chaque comité ?

**Mrs Koonjoo-Shah:** The composition is going to come when the paper, the terms of reference and the guidelines are finalised, that is when it is going to be put forward.

**Ms Anquetil:** Une dernière ? Je vous remercie, M. le président. Pouvons-nous obtenir de la ministre la liste des officiers de son ministère, nommés dans chaque comité ainsi que leurs compétences respectives? Merci.

**Mrs Koonjoo-Shah:** Yes, I can, for the four technical working groups, you mean? Can I just clarify whether the hon. Member wanted the members of the four technical working groups? Is that the question?

**Ms Anquetil:** Yes!

**Mrs Koonjoo-Shah:** I will very happily table it to the National Assembly Library.

**Mr Speaker:** The Table has been advised that PQs B/123, B/126, B/127, B/134, B/144, B/147, B/149, B/155 have been withdrawn.

#### **CIGARETTES IMPORTATION – AMOUNT PAID & TAXES COLLECTED**

**(No. B/123) Mr N. Bodha (Second Member for Vacoas & Floréal)** asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to cigarettes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the quantity thereof imported since January 2023 to date, indicating the –

- (a) amount paid therefor;
- (b) country of origin, and
- (c) amount of taxes collected therefrom.

*(Withdrawn)*

**CANTON NANCY, PAMPLEMOUSSES – FROPPIER BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION  
– CONTRACT**

**(No. B/124) Mr R. Wochit (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet)** asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the construction of Fropplier Bridge at Canton Nancy, Pamplemousses, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Development Unit, information as to the –

- (a) date for the award of the contract, indicating the name of the contractor;
- (b) specified duration of the works;
- (c) contract value thereof, and
- (d) expected completion date thereof.

**Mr Hurreeram:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the replies I submitted in response to PQ B/1225 and PQ B/1315 for the Sitting of 17 October and 24 October 2023 respectively wherein I gave detailed information regarding the complexity of the project, resulting in delays encountered for the execution.

With regard to part (a) of question, as I mentioned already in my previous reply, I will give it again, I informed that on 05 April 2022, the Road Development Authority awarded the

contract for the upgrading of the Froppier Bridge at Canton Nancy, Pamplémousses to Gamma Civic, so it remains Gamma Civic till now.

With respect to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the works started on the 12 April 2022 and were initially scheduled to be completed on 04 November 2022. However, given the various difficulties faced during the execution of work, the completion date has had to be revised.

Regarding the part (c) of the question, as I already mentioned twice previously, the sum of the project, the contract value is still Rs33.4 million inclusive of VAT.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (d) of the question, I am informed by the RDA that the actual progress on site is around 55% and major offsite works namely; the preparations of forecast elements have been completed.

The project is now expected to be completed by the end of June 2024 with the restoration of traffic onto the new bridge and I must put on record, Mr Speaker, Sir, I must thank my colleagues: the PPS Ramkaun and hon. Minister Callichurn for the precious help to the Ministry, the RDA to solve all the issues that we have had on site and thanks to them, we have greatly advanced in the project. Thank you.

**Mr Woochit:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House why there has been a noticeable absence of workers on site in the recent months and today itself, leading to significant delays and disruption of the road users?

**Mr Hurreeram:** No, Mr Speaker, Sir, that's not the case. In fact, there are very few people working on site because I said there are precast elements that are being prepared offsite. So, one is done offsite, will come and place it onsite. So, currently, yes, there is no work on site.

**Mr Woochit:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the work was supposed to be completed on 04 November, according to the Minister and it will end at the end of June. So are there any penalties or any consequences outlined in the contract with the contractor?

**Mr Hurreeram:** Delays do not automatically mean having penalties etc., Mr Speaker, Sir. As I said, it was a very difficult site. Replying to the question he had put to me on 17

October and 24 October, I had explained that it was a difficult site. We have had an old bridge that at some point in time we wanted to preserve, but seeing that it could create additional problem around in the vicinity, to buildings in the vicinity, we have decided to do away with the existing bridge. So, we have had to secure what we already have on site, the building on site. So, all these do take time, Mr Speaker, Sir. And, of course, we have had inclement weather and that also add up to the delay.

**Mr Speaker:** The Table is advised that PQs B/133, B/145, and B/156 have been withdrawn. Time is over!

## MOTION

### SUSPENSION OF S. O. 10(2)

**The Prime Minister:** Mr 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 Gobin seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

## STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

(4.24 p.m.)

### BALFOUR, BEAU BASSIN – THEFTS – CAMERAS INSTALLATION

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I wish to make a statement, pursuant to the matter raised by the hon. Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière, on adjournment of the Sitting of the House on 26 March 2024, pertaining to alleged increase in thefts and other crimes in the region of Balfour, Beau Bassin and to the suggestion to have security cameras installed at the junction of Rue Trotter and Henri Lemaire.

I am informed, by the Commissioner of Police, that since 2020 to 29 March 2024, six cases have been reported to the Police, that is, two in 2020, two in 2021 and another two in 2022. No case has been reported in the year 2023 and for the period January 2024 to 29 March 2024.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that for the installation of Safe City cameras, the following factors are considered, namely –

- (i) crime prone areas;
- (ii) accident prone areas;
- (iii) strategic public areas in cities, towns and villages;
- (iv) educational institutions;
- (v) places of worship, and
- (vi) major roads, where there are heavy traffic flows.

A total of sixty-eight Safe City cameras have been installed and are operational in the Beau Bassin region, including eleven in five sites along Trotter Avenue and its vicinity, Balfour. The five sites are –

<b>SN</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>No. of Cameras</b>
1.	Junction Rennards Street and Trotter Street	2
2.	Balfour Avenue in front of Balfour Garden Gate	3
3.	Royal Road Beau Bassin near Tang way	2
4.	Junction Gaetan Raynal and Shand Streets	2
5.	Boulevard Cowin and Queen Alexandra Streets near Mosque	2

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that, nevertheless, the Police have taken additional measures to reinforce security in the Beau Bassin region through patrols. Moreover, in the context of Ramadan, special policing arrangements have been made in the vicinity of mosques across the island for the security of those attending prayers, as well as for the other road users.

Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Ganoo!

(4.27 p.m.)

**ST LOUIS METRO STATION – AGRESSION & THEFTS – POLICE OFFICERS  
– POSTING**

**The Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail (Mr A. Ganoo):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall make a statement following matters raised by hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie, at adjournment time at the sitting of 26 March 2024, regarding alleged cases of thefts and aggression occurring within the vicinity of the St Louis Metro Station.

The hon. Member said the following –

*“En effet, cette station est devenue un véritable repère de voleurs et ceux qui utilisent ce service de jour comme de nuit sont souvent agressés et dépouillés de leurs biens.”*

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that according to information provided by the Metro Express Limited, it has not received any report of theft at the Metro Station of St Louis.

As part of the security measures already in place, the St Louis Metro Station is already equipped with cameras and a video surveillance system as well as an emergency call system which can be activated by any passenger, by pressing a button to alert the Operation Control Centre of Metro Express Ltd, for instance, in case of any emergency or dangerous occurrence.

According to information provided to me, there was an alleged case of theft which occurred far outside the station on a footpath located at the end of a municipal road and next to a residential area.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with a view to further enhancing security within the above locus, my Ministry has requested the Commissioner of Police to deploy Police Officers at the St Louis Metro Station, especially during off-peak hours as a deterrent measure against potential defaulters. The Police have, in addition, been requested to reinforce patrols within the precincts

of the Station, including at the staircase that leads to the Pailles Road so as to make the locus safer for passengers and residents.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that the Metro Express Limited, along with other relevant authorities, would continue investing in the surroundings for the betterment of neighbourhood and for community development.

To this end, a full embellishment of the vicinity has been implemented, including the landscaping thereof, mural painting and provision of additional lighting at the said locus and the periphery.

Works for the creation of a new drop-off area along Pailles Branch Road have also started with a view to further unlocking the area.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we should also not lose sight that the Metro Express Project has generated several benefits within the area of St Louis-Camp Chapelon by providing a modern, rapid and affordable mode of commute for the public and the residents. The area will continue to be upgraded with additional projects which are being or would be implemented by different organisations with the support of the Government.

I thank you for your attention.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Dr. Jagutpal!

(4.30 p.m.)

### **SIDS – 8<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF MINISTERS OF HEALTH – DEVELOPMENTS**

**The Minister of Health and Wellness (Dr. K. Jagutpal):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I wish to apprise the House of the pivotal developments stemming from the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Ministers of Health of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) within the African Region of the WHO, convened in Victoria, Seychelles from 25 to 27 March 2024.

Acknowledging the shared health challenges faced by SIDS, the WHO Regional Office for Africa endorsed the establishment of a regional SIDS forum, uniting Cape Verde, Comoros,

Mauritius, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Seychelles. This forum stands as a beacon for SIDS to confront health vulnerabilities head-on, fostering resilience and sustainability. Since its inception in Seychelles in 2006, SIDS Health Ministers have committed to biennial gatherings to exchange insights and monitor progress in health development. Invitations were extended to Madagascar and Guinea-Bissau to join the SIDS network, with a specific focus on pooled procurement.

The participants pledged to collaborate to strengthen national measures for pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response, and endorse common positions on proposed international agreements and regulations, notably the new Pandemic Treaty and International Health Regulations (IHR). Furthermore, we remain committed to exploring all avenues to access available funding mechanisms to address the health impacts of climate change.

Mr Speaker, Sir, two countries expressed keen interest in hosting the SIDS Pooled Procurement Secretariat, namely Mauritius and Cape Verde. The deliberation was based on the Evaluation Mission Reports, whereby Mauritius had secured a score of 39 out of a possible 40 points, representing an outstanding 97.5%.

After meticulous consideration, amidst commendable candidacy from both Cape Verde and Mauritius, a closed voting system ensued, culminating in Mauritius securing victory with 4 votes against Cape Verde's 3. Consequently, consensus was reached to designate Mauritius as the host for the Secretariat, entrusted with spearheading the operationalisation of the SIDS Pooled Procurement Initiative.

This pivotal responsibility bears testament to our dedication to facilitating increased access to affordable, quality-assured, and safe medicines and medical supplies across SIDS. The establishment of the Secretariat will harmonise medicines management systems, elevate supplier performance, and alleviate procurement burdens. Moreover, it lays the groundwork for guiding principles and a robust governance structure, comprising a secretariat and technical committees.

I express profound gratitude to Cape Verde, Seychelles, Comoros, São Tomé & Príncipe, Guinea Bissau and Madagascar for having endorsed this decision. I further reaffirm our unwavering commitment to fulfilling this duty with utmost diligence for the collective welfare of all nations.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Minister Ramyad!

(4.34 p.m.)

### **EXPORT-ORIENTED TEXTILE & CLOTHING ENTERPRISES –GOVERNMENT SUPPORT**

**The Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives (Ms N. Ramyad):**

With your permission, Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to make a statement on the additional Government support being extended to Export-Oriented Textile and Clothing Enterprises in the face of unprecedented challenges that are impacting on their export performance.

I wish to emphasise that the Export-Oriented Textile and Clothing sector remains a backbone of the manufacturing industry in view of its significant contribution to employment, foreign exchange earnings and Gross Value Added. The importance of the Textile and Clothing sector was highly valued during the COVID-19 pandemic through its versatility to shift to production of essential products to ensure health and safety of the population. At the same time, it was among the very few economic activities to generate substantial foreign exchange earnings for the country during the lockdown periods.

It should be reckoned that the sector is currently evolving in a highly volatile business environment characterised by rising production costs, severe competition from low-cost producing countries, geopolitical tensions in the Middle-East, ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia, and lack of visibility regarding renewal of the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

The compounding effects of these pronounced challenges are already being witnessed by Export-Oriented Textile and Clothing Enterprises as evidenced by a contraction in their exports by 16.6% for the year 2023, as compared to 2022. I wish to underline that such a distressing situation prevailed in 2020, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, where export plummeted by more than 15%, when compared to 2019. However, Government took bold actions to reverse the deteriorating trend and this resulted in an export growth of 8.7% in 2021 and 8.0% in 2022.

The Textile and Clothing sector is again at a crossroad whereby it has to overcome daunting challenges arising from shortage of skilled labour, increase in industrial electricity tariffs, lower level of technology uptake and constraints to embrace sustainable practices, with the overall objective to maintain competitiveness and remain in business.

Feedback obtained by my Ministry from textile operators, tend to indicate that these restrictive factors are likely to persist in the near future, thereby putting additional pressure on their smooth manufacturing operations. I wish to stress that Government has been proactive in taking remedial measures to address these impediments as evidenced by more streamlined work permit policies, establishment of an Energy Efficiency Audit Scheme and implementation of a Manufacturing 4.0 Initiative, amongst others, for the manufacturing sector.

Furthermore, dedicated schemes such as the Trade Promotion and Marketing Scheme and Freight Rebate Scheme, are already in place to accompany operators in their export drive. I wish to highlight that a total amount of more than Rs1.6 billion has been disbursed since 2015 under these programmes.

On another note, it is acknowledged that the increase in National Minimum Wage and Salary Compensation in 2024 have put enormous pressure on the cashflow of Export-Oriented Enterprises, impacting on their overall competitiveness.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have already underscored that the Export-Oriented Textile and Clothing Enterprises are facing a more precarious situation and they need to be fully supported to navigate through the ongoing turbulences. The Mauritius Export Association (MEXA) is also on the same wavelength and has urged for more targeted assistance towards this category of enterprises.

In this perspective, Government is going the extra mile by providing an additional monthly financial assistance of Rs1,500 and Rs1,000 per full-time employee to cater, respectively, for the payment of the National Minimum Wage and the 2023 Salary Compensation to these companies for the period April to June 2024.

May I end, by mentioning that this Government has, at heart, the sustained development of the Textile and Clothing sector and will leave no stones unturned to ensure its long-term viability for greater economic prosperity.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.