



EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 15 JULY 2025

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| Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP | Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands |
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MAURITIUS

Eighth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 28 of 2025

Sitting of Tuesday 15 July 2025

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

The National Anthem was played

(The Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

—

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

- (a) Certificate of Urgency in respect of the Financial Crimes Commission (Amendment) Bill (No. XVI of 2025).
- (b) The Performance Audit Reports (June 2025) on:
 - (i) Improving the Provision of Patient Meals in Hospitals – Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals 2, 3 and 12 – Ministry of Health and Wellness. (In Original)
 - (ii) Enhancing the Registration and Licensing Services of the National Land Transport Authority - National Land Transport Authority – Ministry of Land Transport. (In Original)

B. Ministry of Health and Wellness

The Allied Health Professionals Council (Transitional Provision) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 59 of 2025)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**MAURITIAN RUPEE DEPRECIATION – FOREIGN EXCHANGE MARKET & INFLATION IMPACT**

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr G. Lesjongard) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the value of the Mauritian rupee on the foreign exchange market and the resulting impact thereof on the Mauritius inflation rate, he will state the measures taken to redress the situation, if any.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have stated several times in this House, the previous government – excuse my voice, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, – has fumbled and jumbled all the economic fundamentals. Let me dwell again on the legacy that the previous government left us.

They relied excessively on money-printing to finance the budget deficit. The Bank of Mauritius injected a total amount of about Rs180 billion into the banking system to fund Government spending and finance the Mauritius Investment Corporation. This, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, added massively to the excess liquidity that in turn contributed to the high levels of inflation, and we experienced the significant depreciation of the rupee. This excess liquidity was at an all-time high of around Rs90 billion in August 2023.

The massive amount of excess liquidity in the system and the very, I would say, accommodating monetary policy stance of the Bank of Mauritius led to a wide interest rate differentials between instruments denominated in rupees compared to those denominated in US dollars.

This excess liquidity in the system is still present although at a much lower level, and is costing the Bank of Mauritius – because it has to mop up this excess liquidity – Rs4 billion annually. Just for the mopping up of this excess liquidity!

While the experts advocated for an increase in the Key Rate, which at that time was at 4.50 per cent, in September 2024, the previous government, in spite of the experts asking to increase the Key Rate, decided, contrary to experts' advice, to go for a reduction in the Key Rate to 4.00 per cent.

So, lower returns coming from the domestic money market, as a result of the massive excess liquidity, which we have seen over the past few years, have contributed to negative interest rate differentials, as I said, again, with currencies such as the US dollar. This, obviously, would lead to a weakening of the rupee because we import most of the things in dollars.

As a result, the inflation rate reached a peak of 11.3 per cent in February 2023 while the rupee itself depreciated by 46 per cent, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, against the US dollar between the end of December 2014 and November 2024. On a cumulative basis, inflation increased by 46.5 per cent.

The trade deficit was at a high of Rs180 billion or 28.2 per cent of GDP in 2023, and it worsened further to Rs207.8 billion or 29.9 per cent of GDP in 2024 as a result of an economic model, which was based on reckless consumption and imports. That was the model they chose. It was exacerbated by the money illusion created by the previous government with the proliferation of various types of allowances and unprecedented and unjustified money printing.

Nonetheless, the headline inflation rate is at 2.9% for the 12-month period ending June 2025 compared to 4.5% in June 2024 – we are speaking of the headline inflation rate. We expect the inflation rate for this year to be below 4%, that is, within the target of the Bank of Mauritius.

I must say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there was a recent increase in inflation rate in June 2025 – there was a small peak. This is mainly due to the price increases from the budget of alcoholic beverages and tobacco. Excluding these products, the CPI Index remained the same as in May 2025.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have always said, we cannot undo the disastrous results of ten years of reckless economic mismanagement in this short period of time. When we took office, we have changed the direction of travel, if I may say so. We are changing the economic model from one highly dependent on consumption and imports to one driven by investments, exports and innovation.

Now, let me come to some of the measures taken by both the government and the Bank of Mauritius to stabilise the value of the rupee –

- (i) In December 2024, the Bank of Mauritius issued instructions to banks to ensure that all dealings in FX including swaps and other derivatives, should be effected through financial institutions which are licensed by the Bank of Mauritius, not outside. Banks were also requested to enhance due diligence on intercompany buying and selling of foreign currencies as well as swaps and other derivatives. The reason behind these measures was to prevent a parallel market, which caused distortions in the pricing and drove FX inflows away from the official market.
- (ii) In February 2025, the Key rate was increased from 4 per cent to 4.5 per cent – what the expert had said in September of last year.
- (iii) Another instruction to banks was that forward transactions should be priced in a fair manner and in accordance with market fundamentals, as some sellers in the FX market were imposing excessively high forward premia, which was against market conventions.
- (iv) The regulatory arbitrage between the Financial Services Commission and the Bank of Mauritius regarding the purchase and sale of FX by Treasury Management Companies was discontinued totally.
- (v) The Bank of Mauritius has monthly meeting with the Treasurers of Banks through the Mauritius Financial Markets Committee.

It is important to note, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that as a result of the removal of these disfunctions that the rupee stabilised on a trade weighted basis. However, due to movements in the international markets, the rupee has appreciated against the dollar by some 4.8 per cent and it has depreciated against the Euro and the Pound Sterling. It is good to recall that the bulk of our imports are dollar denominated.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to detail some other measures we have taken to tackle inflation –

- First, the reduction in fuel prices by Rs5 per litre in December 2024.
- Second, we have introduced targeted price controls on essential food products.
- Third, the mark-ups were limited between 25-30% in Mauritius and 5-8% in Rodrigues, effectively preventing speculative pricing.

- Fourth, we have removed VAT on a number of basic necessities in the Budget, including frozen and canned vegetables, infant nutrition products, and baby food – items that had become increasingly unaffordable due to imported inflation and currency depreciation. This measure translated into a direct 15% reduction in retail prices, applied immediately.
- Fifth, we have introduced strict enforcement and monitoring by the Ministry of Commerce.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as announced in the Budget, we have set up a Price Stabilisation Fund of Rs10 billion with an initial contribution of Rs2 billion. The Ministry of Commerce and the STC are working on how to operate that Fund.

We are changing the economic paradigm from one that relied excessively on consumption, imports and money illusion to one anchored on investment, exports of goods and services, innovation and technology. We also need to produce more locally and lower the import bill. We also need to produce more domestic clean energy, and lower the trade deficit. In addition, we will have to lower the fiscal deficit and the borrowing requirements and the debt to GDP.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition! Supplementary!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I thank the hon. Prime Minister for his reply. My first question to the hon. Prime Minister, after he has given a series of measures taken by the Bank of Mauritius, is whether, he is satisfied with the strategy adopted by the Bank of Mauritius to ensure that inflation expectations are solidly anchored and exchange rate pressures are contained, to use the words of the Monetary Policy Committee of the Bank of Mauritius; whether he is satisfied with the strategy?

The Prime Minister: I must say we are going in the right direction, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am glad you mentioned ‘expected inflation rate’ because that is very important. Very often, people react not on the inflation rate but what it will be in the future. I am very satisfied with how it is going because we are bringing it down.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes!

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House of the number of times the Bank of Mauritius has intervened on the Foreign Exchange Market since December 2024 and the amounts of money that have been injected each time?

The Prime Minister: I think I mentioned, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that actually the Bank of Mauritius has annually, so far, I mean, up to now, Rs4 billion intervened on the market to mop up this excess liquidity.

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House, during that same period, of the amount of foreign currency that has been made available to the different commercial banks in the country, and specifying which commercial banks, if you have the answer?

The Prime Minister: I will not be able to specify which banks, but I know measures have been taken. As I said, this has been created over 10 years, so we are trying to adjust. More foreign currency is available today than it was last year. But it is going to take some more time.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes!

Mr Lesjongard: The situation is different, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Today, SMEs have to wait for almost two weeks to have access to foreign currency and this ongoing currency shortage is affecting mainly import businesses, hon. Prime Minister. May I ask you, hon. Prime Minister, whether anybody from the Government or from the Bank of Mauritius has met with importers, trade operators and representatives of commercial banks, at least, to understand the FX shortage and try to find practical solutions?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Let's listen to the answer!

The Prime Minister: What the hon. Leader of the Opposition does not seem to remember: SMEs, at the time when you were in Government, were not getting any foreign currency. None at all!

Ms Anquetil: Exactly!

The Prime Minister: Not that they have to wait for two weeks or three weeks; they were not getting anything. That is why we are taking measures for correcting this. And as I

said the inflation rate is going down. The depreciation of the rupee is going down, against the dollar, especially, and we import everything in dollars.

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether he is aware of the unofficial forward pricing practice for major currencies being used by some commercial banks, which is well over and above the consolidated indicative exchange rates of the Bank of Mauritius? And may I ask him what is being done by Government to put an end to such extortionate practices?

The Prime Minister: I did mention, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the measures that the Bank of Mauritius are taking. For example: there is a regular arbitrage between the Financial Services Commission and the Bank of Mauritius, regarding the purchase and the sale of FX by Treasury management companies. They are looking into this constantly, daily.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware, this time, of accusations of serious holding of foreign currency by some companies, and whether, with a view to addressing this problem, Government is envisaging introducing legislation?

The Prime Minister: We are introducing legislation. In fact, today, to make sure that we can track what is happening in financial crimes, this is what we are doing. But if the hon. Leader of the Opposition can be specific, I will take note of it.

Mr Lesjongard: Your answer is not related to the question I have asked you, hon. Prime Minister.

With regard to inflation, can the hon. Prime Minister at least provide a forecast of the inflation rate until the end of this year to the House?

The Prime Minister: I can forecast, but the economy is not a stable thing that you can forecast exactly. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can tell the hon. Leader of the Opposition that three things have created this problem.

First of all, the budget deficit has been allowed to grow. The borrowing requirement is practically 10% of GDP, which is terrible at the time. And, also, this massive trade deficit which is 30% of GDP. That is why we have forecasted that the inflation rate will be around 4%, perhaps less, by the end of this year.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to the Bank of Mauritius latest figures, real estate contribution amounted to 32 billion of gross foreign direct investment in

2024 through IRS, RES, PDS, and Smart City Scheme. Yet, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is body of evidence that some or most of the Forex gain...

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question!

Mr Lesjongard: ... are kept offshore. Has Government considered introducing the necessary measures or legislations that require villa prices to be quoted – because it is quoted in foreign currency – in Mauritian rupees so that prospective buyers would need to convert...

The Deputy Speaker: Question! Question!

Mr Lesjongard: ... foreign currency into rupees to pay for their property?

The Prime Minister: In fact, these measures were encouraged by the previous government. I can't understand why the hon. Leader of the Opposition does not seem to realise. They were given every kind of tax relief that you can think of.

Mr Lesjongard: But now you are here.

The Prime Minister: Yes, we have changed. We have changed. In the budget, there is no such tax relief. We have grandfathered the measures, but that's it. There would be no more for the new ones. And, also, they had kept the money abroad, at that time. Now, we have to go by what the Bank of Mauritius is saying.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. A. Duval, you have a question?

Mr A. Duval: Will the hon. Prime Minister concede that despite his pledge to reverse the depreciation of the rupee, the Bank of Mauritius Monetary Policy has fallen short? In fact, upon taking office, the rate was Rs46 and now it is Rs45.41, when the depreciation of the USD has fallen in value ...

An hon. Member: No, it was Rs49.

Mr A. Duval: ... historically fallen since 1973 to 10% of its value.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. Put your question now!

Mr A. Duval: So, historically low. And, ...

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question!

Mr A. Duval: I will ask him therefore: with regard to the lack of supply of US liquidity on the domestic market, can he state what is as at present, the volume which is in demand and

the volume which is being able to be supplied as at present in Mauritius by the Bank of Mauritius?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member does not seem to realise what mess they have made for the past ten years. This what we are correcting, my dear friend.

Mr A. Duval: ... the figures.

The Prime Minister: You can't ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Let him answer! Listen to the answer!

The Prime Minister: What you are saying : *l'honorable membre veut le beurre, l'argent du beurre, la vache, et la femme du fermier aussi.*

(Interruptions)

Mr A. Duval: My question is whether the hon. Prime Minister can give to the House the figures of the volume of demand for the US dollar as at now and the supply which is being provided by the Bank of Mauritius as at today?

The Prime Minister: The volume varies from day-to-day, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I did enumerate the measures that the Bank of Mauritius is taking to clear that mess that they left.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, one last question.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the NLP situation prevailing at the head of the Bank of Mauritius between the Director and one of his deputies concerning the nomination of Mr Bheenick as Chairperson of SBM, which is now public...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Excuse me, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Lesjongard: You will agree, hon. Prime Minister that this...

The Deputy Speaker: This has nothing to do with the PNQ!

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: ... current crisis will definitely affect the credibility of the Bank of Mauritius.

The Deputy Prime Minister: ... *dir zot...*

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: Will the hon. Prime Minister, inform the House, of the measure he intends to take to remedy this situation which is negatively impacting the Central Bank?

The Deputy Speaker: That is far away from the PNQ!

The Prime Minister: As you rightly pointed out, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a different question.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes. No more questions! Then, we go to Questions addressed to the hon. Prime Minister!

Hon. Members, the Table had been advised that PQs B/642 and B/644 have been withdrawn.

Hon. Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière!

GRA – HORSE RACING INTEGRITY DIVISION – RECRUITMENT EXERCISE

(No. B/641) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Horse Racing Integrity Division, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to the names of the successful candidates for all the positions advertised thereat, indicating –

- (a) how the selection exercises were carried out, and
- (b) whether due diligence exercises were carried out in relation thereto and, if so, how and, if not, why not.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the Gambling Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Act, was passed on 04 July 2025, and came into operation on 07 July 2025.

The main aim of this amendment was to do away with the Horse Racing Division and set up instead the Horse Racing Integrity Division, which has now the responsibility to

protect the integrity of horse racing and ensure that horse racing is fair, clean and free from corruption or malpractice.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me remind the House why we came up with the Horse Racing Integrity Division. The defunct Horse Racing Division had developed an incestuous relationship with the gambling don at the time. The people at the Horse Racing Division were working hand-in-hand with the organiser of horse racing, who also had his hand in the whole gambling industry.

This unacceptable state of affairs tarnished the integrity of the whole racing industry. It totally destroyed public confidence in the horse racing industry and led to the oldest stable in Mauritius, the Gujadhur Stable, to actually fold, after more than a century of running horses in Mauritius. And, they said, they will come back only if there is an operation to clean up this corruption.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the government is determined to relaunch the horse racing industry. This was one of the promises made during the electoral campaign and we are sticking to our promise. There have been hurdles, but we are overcoming them, and the horse racing organiser is, I understand, doing his utmost to ensure that horse racing starts at the earliest possible.

We want a racing industry which will promote the welfare and leisure of the race going public and bring back the race goers to the Champ de Mars.

Already, I can say, last Saturday, I have been informed that the racing public had come in numbers, far higher than before, to the Champ de Mars, to watch the first barrier trials of the season. Apparently, there were more people present last Saturday at the racing than... at what happened yesterday, and also at the one organised last year by the defunct People's Turf PLC of the gambling don.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Gambling Regulatory Authority that the recruitment exercise was done in a transparent way and in line with best practices.

The Gambling Regulatory Authority approved, at its special meetings of 21 February 2025 and 11 March 2025, the launching of Expressions of Interest for the various positions within the proposed Horse Racing Integrity Division, in anticipation to a new code; a new structure being codified. Now, the Expressions of Interest were published in three newspapers and on the website of the Gambling Regulatory Authority.

At the Gambling Regulatory Authority Board Meeting on 02 April 2025, the interview panel was constituted for all the posts comprising three Board Members of the Gambling Regulatory Authority.

After the closing date for the submission of Expressions of Interest, an administrative screening exercise was carried out to ascertain that the qualifications and experience criteria were met. The candidates who satisfied these criteria were then called for an interview.

The report of the interview panel for the positions of Chief Stipendiary Steward and the Deputy Chief Stipendiary Steward was approved by the Board on 23 April 2025 and on 11 June of this year for the other posts. Letters of Award and sub-contracts were issued as from 04 July of this year.

I am tabling a list of all those persons who have been successful and have accepted their letters of offer.

As for part (b) of the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that a due diligence was carried out by the AML/CFT Team of the GRA as per its internal procedures, which included a Supreme Court-Check, a Mauritius Revenue Authority-Check, World-Check, Sanctions List, criminal records and media search.

Furthermore, all selected candidates who have accepted the appointment have been given time to produce their Certificate of Character as soon as possible.

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

Mr Quirin: Merci, M. le président. Puisqu'on parle d'intégrité, M. le président, l'honorable Premier ministre, est-il au courant que sur le nouveau *board* des *stipes* se trouve monsieur Y. N., qui avait démissionné comme commissaire à la *MTC* pour avoir accepté un cadeau d'un jockey ? Un délit qu'on peut considérer comme étant grave ! Et aussi un entraîneur monsieur P. M. qui avait été sanctionné pour dopage par le nouveau *Chief Stipe* de la *HRID*. De plus, messieurs A.R. et A.R., deux proches de monsieur J.M.L.S. et de PTP respectivement, sont parmi les nouvelles recrues.

L'honorable Premier ministre peut-il dire s'il est satisfait justement de ce *due diligence process* qui a été effectué ?

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not run the GRA! The GRA has a duty; it went through a procedure, and this is what I explained. These are the people who were selected after this very, very thorough procedure that was made.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, une dernière question ?

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, one last question.

Mr Quirin: Yes!

The Deputy Speaker: A question; not a statement!

Mr Quirin: L'honorable premier ministre peut-il dire à la Chambre quels sont les critères qui ont été pris en compte pour le choix du *Chief Stipe* ? Sait-il que monsieur S.D.C. faisait partie du *Licensing Committee* de la *GRA* avant même sa nomination ? N'est-ce pas un cas flagrant de conflit d'intérêt où un licencié – je termine – de la *GRA* agissait aussi comme décideur pour le régulateur ? Est-ce que cela ne le disqualifie-t-il pas pour ce poste ?

The Prime Minister: As I said, I do not run the GRA. But according to my information, he was never on the Licensing Committee.

The Deputy Speaker: You have one question? Okay, one last one!

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he can confirm that among the stipes who have been freshly nominated, are there members of the Mauritius Turf Club?

The Prime Minister: As far as I understand, they have all taken leave. It is a new paradigm that we are doing. They are not there anymore.

The Deputy Speaker: PQ B/642 has been withdrawn. So, we proceed with PQ B/643.

Hon. First Member for La Caverne and Phoenix!

WEST COAST – DRUGS RELATED ARRESTS – INQUIRIES

(No. B/642) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to drugs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) the number of arrests effected on the West Coast in connection therewith over the past five years, indicating –
 - (i) if the arrested persons are Mauritian or foreign nationals, and
 - (ii) where matters stand as to the inquiries initiated thereinto, and
- (b) whether consideration will be given for the installation of Safe City Surveillance System Cameras on the four entrances of “La Passe”.

(Withdrawn)

POLICE FORCE – REWARD MONEY SYSTEM – DISBURSEMENT MECHANISM

(No. B/643) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether in regard to reward money, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the –

- (a) quantum thereof allocated in each financial year to Police Officers over the past five years;
- (b) procedures followed therefor, and
- (c) check and balance mechanism put in place to prevent abuse and illicit use thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am replying to Parliamentary Questions B/643 and B/646 together.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that reward money is paid to Police Officers who are engaged in the fight against dangerous drugs based on the following factors –

- (i) nature and the circumstances;
- (ii) persons arrested and the number thereof;
- (iii) quantity and value of drugs and exhibits secured;
- (iv) risks involved, and
- (v) reliability and regularity of the informers.

With regard to the quantum allocated to Police Officers in each of the past five years, I am providing this information –

- In 2020-2021, a sum of Rs6,220,000 was budgeted, but Rs1,113,800 was disbursed to informers and Rs225,540 to Police Officers. You can see the big difference. Police Officers were getting less than the informers.
- For 2021-2022, Rs224,000 for Police Officers, but Rs13,269,200 for informers.
- Again, in 2022-2023, Rs229,740 to Police Officers, but Rs74,485,040 for informers.

- I must say in 2023-2024 and in 2024-2025, no money was disbursed to Police Officers at all. But the informers, in 2023-2024, received Rs84,613,750, and for last year, Rs56,014,300.

Let me give the details of the monthly disbursement for the reward of money from July 2024 to December 2024. In July, the total amount disbursed was Rs4,586,450.

In August 2024, it was Rs368,900. But in September 2024, it jumped to Rs11,242,900. In October 2024, it jumped to Rs38,932,450. You will be glad to hear that in November and December of last year, the amount disbursed is nil. Zero!

Now, the House will note – I am sure, seeing their expression – that from September to October 2024, a total amount of Rs50,175,350 was paid as reward money not to Police Officers, only to informers!

Ms Anquetil: Incroyable!

The Prime Minister: Now, this is two months prior to the general elections. You can guess the reason why this happened.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one disturbing element that comes from that information is that the amount disbursed exceeds by far the amount budgeted.

In other words, as usual, they just give money. Money that is not theirs! This, in itself, raises several questions as to the manner in which that money was disbursed. It is worth mentioning that in 2014, it was decided to put an end to the practice of giving reward money as there was strong, very suspicion of abuse. This is when we left government.

However, in 2016, the practice was restored. Now, in 2020, soon after his appointment, the then Commissioner of Police, Mr Servansing, tried to rationalise – because he was not allowed to change it – the procedure through an amendment to Police Standing Order 122.

Subsequently, in 2021, the then Mr Servansing was gone. The new Commissioner of Police, Mr Anil Kumar Dip, again, amended Police Standing Order 122, which allowed payment to reward money to informers although the case may not have been disposed by the court. Even before, he was giving the money! Also, simply from obtaining a report from the forensic lab certifying that the exhibits were secured as dangerous drugs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is it a coincidence that as from 2022, we noted a fundamental increase to the amount disbursed, as I said, to informers with hardly any money given to

Police Officers? Even a cursory look at some of the information provided suggests that those at the helm of the Police were wallowing in muck of malfeasance and corruption, with a deeply entrenched complicity throughout the whole procedure put in place.

In fact, the whole procedure was put in place for them to be able to it. It also begs the question as to what exactly was the role of the Manager Financial Operations and the internal control play in the management of finance of the Police Force. This is being enquired into. What was their role? What were they there for?

An hon. Member: *Voler!*

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the Financial Crimes Commission is inquiring into the whole issue of reward money, and we are amending the Financial Crimes Commission Act precisely this afternoon so that there can be a joint enquiry whenever the need arises.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the high risk of abuse and illicit use of the reward money within the Police Force and to establish a transparent and accountable system to prevent such corrupt practices, the FCC, as an independent institution and as mandated under section 6 (2)(g) of the Financial Commission Act, is reviewing the practices and procedures regarding the disbursement of reward money to Police Officers and to informers.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Lobine!

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

May I ask the hon. Prime Minister, in view of the opacity surrounding the procedures with regard to disbursement of those reward money which amount to a big scandal with regard to the sum being paid, is it not a fit and proper case under the new Public Inquiries Act 2025 to set up an inquiry with regard to procedures and disbursement of money from 2015 up to that date, with regard to those big sums of money? We are talking as per reports in the press, more than Rs200 million with regard to reward money. Is it not a fit and proper case for a public inquiry?

The Prime Minister: The case is in court actually. It is exactly for the amount of the reward money. Mr Lilram Deal, for example, who was an Assistant Commissioner of Police, was arrested – this is precisely one of the things he was arrested for. He appeared in front of the District Court of Port Louis with a provisional charge and, again, all these are being investigated.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Hon. Prime Minister, can we have an idea of the amount of drugs seized for the period September/October 2024 where Rs50 million...

The Deputy Speaker: We are talking about reward money. We are not talking about drugs. I do not think the hon. Prime Minister will have this answer. Come with a proper question!

There is a question. Relevant to this question?

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister, whether he has recommended or he has been made aware by the Commissioner of Police if a departmental inquiry within the Police has been set up in regard to reward money and if that can be extended to the defunct unit of the Police, namely the SST which itself has been in the limelight for uncouth practices, particularly with regard to the declared amount seized against amount what was really seized? Thank you.

The Prime Minister: Precisely, this inquiry is ongoing within the Police department.

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

COVID-19 (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 2020 – PROSECUTIONS – CONVICTIONS & FINES

(No. B/644) Mr R. Beechhook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the COVID-19 (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of individuals prosecuted thereunder, indicating the –

- (a) number of convictions secured, and
- (b) total value of the fines imposed and collected in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

SAFE CITY PROJECT – CAMERAS INSTALLED – CONTRACT COST

(No. B/645) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister

of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Safe City Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the –

- (a) number of cameras initially planned for installation, indicating the number thereof –
 - (i) actually installed, and
 - (ii) currently damaged, defective and non-operational, and
- (b) initial contractual cost and actual cost thereof, including maintenance costs, indicating if consideration will be given to invoke the ‘Refresh’ clause in the contract and, if so, provide justifications for any additional investments therein.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to PQ I B/51 on 17 December 2024 where I had provided details of the main components of the Safe City Project.

With regard to part (a) (i) and (ii) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the project was initially planned for the installation of 4,000 intelligent video surveillance cameras and 300 intelligent traffic surveillance cameras. There has been no change in the number of cameras to be installed.

All the intelligent video surveillance cameras have been installed – all of them. However, there are four which have been damaged and 24 are being relocated.

Concerning the intelligent traffic surveillance cameras, up to now, only 157 of the cameras have been installed. The remaining 143 will be installed after the completion of civil works scheduled to be completed by the end of September 2025.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the maintenance cost is included in the contract sum. The operation and maintenance costs amount to USD 8.7 million, annually.

As at June 2025, an amount of Rs98,952,549.45 has been paid to Mauritius Telecom. I am further informed that the contracts make provisions for Mauritius Telecom to conduct two planned refreshes with updated technologies every 5 to 7 years which are included in the contract sum.

There is no additional investment in other words. The first refresh will start in December of this year, and the second will be planned for December 2032, I believe.

POLICE – REWARD MONEY SYSTEM – INQUIRY

(No. B/646) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port-Louis South & Port-Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to reward money, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether a –

- (a) departmental inquiry has been initiated following recent alleged misappropriations thereof, and
- (b) new increasingly transparent and accountable system is being envisaged to prevent corruptible practices.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/643)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. First Member for Savanne and Black River!

MAUBANK LTD – ATTORNEYS & BARRISTERS – FEES

(No. B/647) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to Maubank Ltd., he will for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of Attorneys and Barristers in the private practice whose services were retained thereat since 2014 to 2024, indicating the total quantum of fees paid thereto.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that Maubank Ltd. is a subsidiary owned by Maubank Holdings Ltd. The Government of Mauritius is in turn the sole shareholder of Maubank Holdings Ltd. Maubank Ltd. has been incorporated in January 2016 to carry on banking businesses of ex-Mauritius Post and Cooperative Bank.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by Maubank Ltd. that over the period 2016 to 2024, the company has retained the services of 39 Attorneys and Barristers in the private practice, of which 15 are law firms.

The total amount paid to them is Rs40,930,790.

The list is long, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I propose to table the list of Attorneys and Barristers, but let me say among the top earners, there are –

- (i) Ravindra Chetty SC, Chambers was paid an amount of Rs6,289,350.
- (ii) Mardemootoo Solicitors, Rs5,763,322.

I could go on and on, but I think it is preferable to table the list.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question. Hon. First Member for Savanne and Black River!

COCAINE SEIZURE (95 KG) – INTERPOL ASSISTANCE – DRUG STORAGE

(No. B/648) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the 95 kg of cocaine worth Rs 1.4 billion seized in a backhoe loader on 04 July 2019, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand regarding the inquiry initiated thereinto, indicating whether the –

- (a) assistance of Interpol is envisaged in relation thereto, and
- (b) cocaine is in the possession of the Police and, if so, further indicate whether –
 - (i) all the 95 kg is stored and where, and
 - (ii) regular monitoring thereof is carried out.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I again wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to Parliamentary Question B/205 on March of this year where I gave details of the seizure of the 92.5 kg of cocaine in the tractopelle on 10 July 2019. The value was of Rs1.4 billion. *R 1.4 milliards! Pas millions, milliards!*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, as the case has international ramifications, the Police are working in close collaboration with Interpol and other countries in the region for the identification and the arrest of the probable suspects.

The Police have sent the case file together with the report from the Financial Intelligence Unit to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice and, therefore, the course of action will be taken, accordingly.

As for parts (b)(i) and (ii) of the question, I am informed that in accordance with the procedures set out in the Police Standing Orders 138, all the drugs seized are safely kept in police custody and are under 24-hour surveillance.

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

**PUBLIC SECTOR DEBT – LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS – FISCAL
STABILITY & DEBT SERVICING**

(No. B/649) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Public Sector Debt, he will state –

- (a) the level thereof in the year.
 - (i) 2014, and
 - (ii) 2024, respectively, indicating how same compare in nominal and real terms, and
- (b) whether the rise thereof to Rs 642 billion is considered sustainable, indicating the long-term implications thereof for fiscal stability and debt servicing.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, the Public Sector Debt nominal terms amounted to Rs238 billion as at the end of December 2014 and rose to Rs608.2 billion as at the end of December 2024. In other words, from Rs238 billion in December 2014 to Rs608.2 billion in December 2024.

In other words, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if we just make a quick calculation, it has almost doubled over the 10-year period. At the time, we left office in December 2014, the Public Sector Debt to the GDP ratio stood at 59.5% which was below the 60% then in force, which we had put in together with what was being done in Europe – 60% of GDP.

However, the previous government's irresponsible fiscal stewardship resulted in a sharp increase in the debt ratio reaching 87.4% by December 2024. They had themselves extended the ceiling to a statutory ceiling of 80% – from 60% to 80%. They themselves raised that again; it went to 87.4%. The ceiling was raised, precisely in an attempt to conceal the extent of the fiscal mismanagement. That is why it was done.

In real terms, that is, after adjusting for the rise in GDP deflator over the past 10 years, Public Sector Debt stood around Rs382 billion as at the end of December 2024.

Concerning part (b) of the question, it is manifestly evident that the estimated level of public debt of Rs642 billion is unsustainable. We cannot sustain it.

According to the 2025 IMF Article IV Consultation Report, Mauritius is at a high risk of sovereign stress, reflecting mostly a high level of vulnerability in the medium and long term. This is why I said to the people who are supposedly protesting – they have no idea. They have no idea what they are saying. The previous government has burdened this country with an overwhelming level of debt.

In the fiscal year 2024-2025 alone, public sector debt rose by Rs83 billion, which is equivalent to an average daily increase of Rs227 million. We had no options, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We had no options but to act responsibly and come up with a fiscal consolidation plan with concrete measures aimed at reducing both the budget deficit and the public sector debt which the previous government shackled the country with.

Without the implementation of these measures, public sector debt would have spiralled out of control and they would have had severe repercussions on the public finances, also on the broader economy and on the well-being of the population, including – I tell people, ‘You do not realise’ – no pension to anyone in the coming decades if we do not do anything now. Not even at 60, nobody would get pensions. This is what we are facing.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this would have inevitably also led to a downgrade of our credit rating to junk status by Moody’s. Some people do not understand why we should care about Moody’s. There are consequences. Such a downgrade would have had far-reaching implications, including high borrowing costs, adverse effects on the financial services sector. The financial sector would be dead. The depreciation of the rupee would continue; capital flight will increase. Why would people put money in a country which has junk status? Nobody does this. FDI would therefore actually reduce for practical elites and there would be broader negative effects on the economy. It would very seriously jeopardise our long-term fiscal stability.

With respect to debt servicing, interest payments on Government debt, just interest payment, I think many people do not realise – *juste sur les intérêts qu’on doit payer, c’est R 21.8 milliards* for 2024-2025 – just to pay for the interest on the debt. This is the second largest expenditure in the whole Government budget after the Basic Retirement Pension. This

year, due to substantial debt accumulation over the past decade again, interest rates are projected to rise to a staggering Rs26.1 billion. Some people might say: “but you have been in Government” but the debt is there. We have to pay the interest on the debt. It will be Rs26.1 billion. This is a rise of 20% already compared to the precedent year.

It is not our doing; it is the debt that they have accumulated that we have to pay now. Instead of paying Rs26.1 billion as interest on debt, imagine – that amount of money could have been used more effectively. It could have been allocated to different priority sectors such education, health, housing. This money could have gone there. The money could have been used to pay the interest on the debt.

Thus, the opportunity cost of high debt servicing is substantial in diverse resources as I said from the development priorities that could stimulate economic growth and improving living standards. Sustained high level debt, if left unaddressed risks undermining, as I said, the whole country’s growth potential and fiscal resilience.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is why we have made a firm commitment to reclaim the fiscal serenity and gradually bring the public sector debt GDP ratio to a more sustainable level of 60% as it was when we left government in 2014.

The Deputy Speaker: No supplementary? The Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/651, B/652, B/653, B/654, B/655, B/656, B/658, B/659, B/660, B/662 B/663, and B/664.

Now we proceed to questions addressed to hon. Ministers.

Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ B/665 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Hon. Fourth Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue!

DECLINING BIRTH RATE – MEASURES TAKEN

(No. B/665) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the declining birth rate, he will state the measures being taken to address same.

The Minister of Health and Wellness (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to United Nations and World Health Organisation, by 2050, nearly 75% of countries are expected to have fertility rates below replacement level, that is, 2.1 children per

women. In Mauritius, women continue to give birth to fewer children than in the past. The total fertility rate which is an indication of the average number of babies born to a woman during her childbearing period has maintained a general decreasing trend after 2002. In 2023, the fertility rate was 1.35. For the year 2024, the total fertility rate was estimated at 1.41 with 12,088 live births.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, fertility decisions are personal, yet shift by systemic factors such as the economic situation of a person, gender roles and cultural shifts. Moreover, risks of career disruption, child-care stress, social expectations may be a deterrent to pregnancy. The issue of low birth rate is very complex and requires a multisectoral approach. In this context, a multisectoral committee is being set up to look into the issues pertaining to increasing birth rate. The rising prevalence of alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs particularly among young adults of reproductive age, poses a significant yet often overlooked threat to national fertility trends. Alcohol and tobacco disrupt the normal functioning of the reproductive systems of both men and women and contribute to reduced fertility. These substances also unfortunately cause poor pregnancy outcomes such as miscarriages or stillbirths which may discourage couples from planning a pregnancy.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that various measures have been taken by my Ministry which include among others, preconception care clinics have been set up in primary healthcare centres to educate women on the importance of planned pregnancies. A fertility clinic has been established at SSRN Hospital to address fertility issues. The attendance to this clinic was 462 since January 2024. Intrauterine insemination is currently being offered and the clinic has conducted 62 interventions since January 2024 so far.

Maternity leave has been increased from 14 to 16 weeks and paternity leave of four weeks was introduced in the 2024 budget. Community Healthcare Officers conduct extensive canvassing and counselling for women of reproductive age in areas such as family planning, preconception care, premarital counselling and postpartum contraception, boosting antenatal services and providing resources like the maternal and child health handbook to guide parents and track health. Breastfeeding time is being allocated to breastfeeding mothers. Tobacco cessation clinics have been set up in the general hospitals and primary healthcare centres. 12 addiction treatment units, methadone substitution centres, detoxification and rehabilitation centres have been set up to address issues of alcohol and substance abuse in various health

centres across the island – Brown Sequard Mental Healthcare Centre and Montagne Longue Hospital among others.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that there are additional measures and services being provided by other Ministries, private health institutions and NGOs. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare is ensuring that free pre-primary education is provided to children aged between three to five years. The Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations and Employment, through the Workers' Rights Act, in addition to Maternity Protection Schemes encourages flexi-time arrangements. The Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association is continuously creating awareness on declining birthrate in the community through sensitisation campaign, focus groups discussions, awareness among youths.

The Gynaecology and Fertility Centre, which is situated in Rose Hill, is operational since 05 October 2007, provides services such assisted reproductive treatment.

Harley Street Fertility Centre Mauritius Ltd, situated at Floréal, also provides fertility investigations and treatment.

C-Care Fertility Clinic, located at C-Care Welkin, offers comprehensive range of fertility services such as in-vitro fertilization, frozen embryo transfer, intrauterine insemination, etc.

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

Mr A. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the question was addressed to the Minister of Social Security to talk about the measures of Government to address the birth rate which is in decline for years due to an ageing population.

Nonetheless, will the hon. Minister, although he is not the substantive Minister, acknowledge that direct cash transfers are internationally recognised as the most...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister is replying to the question as a substantive Minister.

Mr A. Duval: It does not matter! It was addressed to the Minister of Social Security.

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Lasanble sa ta!*

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no! This is a question to be addressed by him!

Mr A. Duval: I will ask again. Will the hon. Minister acknowledge that direct cash transfers are internationally regarded as the most effective incentive for low-income families, especially? Countries like South Korea even pay Rs35,000 a month per family to encourage same.

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question!

Mr A. Duval: Can the Minister, therefore, explain why this Government has instead chosen to completely phase out by 2028, every existing benefit in Mauritius, namely the CSG Income Allowance, the Child Allowance, the Independent Scheme Allowance...

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, your question!

(Interruptions)

Mr A. Duval: ...the Pregnancy Care Allowance, and the Maternity Care Allowance...

The Deputy Speaker: Your question! Question!

Mr A. Duval: ...even reducing allowances for children with disabilities by 26%!

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhummun: *Pa ler discour la !*

Mr A. Duval: How does he...

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they have looted the country. You have not heard the Prime Minister's answer? They have bled the country white! From where are we going to get billions of rupees to spend? We are doing whatever is possible, whatever is humanly possible. I have given you a comprehensive answer to the question!

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, B/666!

(Interruptions)

I have already called the question!

Mr A. Duval: No, no, no, I have a supplementary.

The Deputy Speaker: I have already called B/666!

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: Do not argue with the Chair!

Mr A. Duval: Last time, you allowed 10 minutes to the PQ on Maradiva! You gave five or six supplementaries.

The Deputy Speaker: The reply...

(Interruptions)

Mr A. Duval: May I exercise my right?

The Deputy Speaker: You can't challenge my ruling!

(Interruptions)

I have said I have already called the other question! B/666, please!

Mr A. Duval: On a point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: B/666!

Mr A. Duval: On what basis are you now giving...

An hon. Member: *Asiz twa!*

The Deputy Speaker: B/666!

Mr Bhagwan: *To pa gagn drwa!*

The Deputy Speaker: If you are not satisfied, you know what to do! You have been a Deputy Speaker, you know what to do if you are not satisfied with my ruling!

Mr A. Duval: No, no, no! Not at all!

The Deputy Speaker: B/666!

Mr A. Duval: This is highly biased!

The Deputy Speaker: B/666!

Mr Bhagwan: *To pa gagn drwa donn lord ta!*

The Deputy Speaker: B/666!

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Rann kas!*

Mr Bhagwan: *Pa gagn drwa donn lord!*

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Rann nou larzan!*

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ms Savabaddy!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order! Order!

Hon. Ms Savabaddy, B/666!

CHILD WITH BEHAVIOURAL CONCERNS – REPORTED CASES

(No. B/666) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to Child Beyond Control, she will state the number of reported cases thereof at the level of her Ministry, indicating the actions taken in relation thereto and, if so, the outcome thereof.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member may wish to note that the legislation no longer provides for Child Beyond Control. If she is referring to Child with Behavioural Concerns, the reply is as follows.

From January to June 2025, the number of cases reported to my Ministry stands at 440, among which, 302 children were having only mild behavioural concerns and 138 children were found to be having serious behavioural concerns.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, cases of children having mild behavioural issues are addressed through psychological support provided to both the child and their parents by my Ministry. Where appropriate, these children are placed under the Child Mentoring Scheme for further guidance and support. From January 2025 to date, 28 children have been placed under the Child Mentoring Scheme.

With regard to children assessed having serious behavioural concerns, they are referred to the Mauritius Probation and Aftercare Service, falling under the purview of the Prime Minister's Office, for parenting support intervention.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, children with serious behavioural concerns should not be treated as children in conflict with the law, but should be handled differently. I wish to inform the House that to comply with this requirement and for a more professional and children's rights-based approach in dealing with cases of CSBC, consultations are being held presently with different stakeholders, including the PMO, the Ombudsperson for Children, the Probation and Aftercare Service, and my Ministry to come up with a proposal. The redesigning of the Rehabilitation Youth Centre (RYC) is also envisaged.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Second Member for Savanne and Black River!

HEC-QAA(UK) AGREEMENT – ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

(No. B/667) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research whether, in regard to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Quality Assurance Agency of the United Kingdom and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the HEC, information as to the date of signature thereof and the list of academic programmes/courses from British universities which have been approved subsequent thereto.

Dr. Sukon: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the MoU between QA UK and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) was signed on 19 May 2025.

I am informed by the HEC that following the signing of the MoU and further to applications received from four accreditation of programmes involving UK awarding bodies, the Commission has been engaging in discussions with QA UK on two fronts –

- (i) HEC is sharing information regarding UK universities that are already established while simultaneously holding discussions with institutions concerning the future programme offering, with a view to streamlining the accreditation process under the MoU.

Since the signature of the MoU between HEC and QA UK, the HEC has processed accreditation applications for programmes awarded by UK universities, including Swansea University, Kingston University and Middlesex University.

- (ii) The HEC is responding to expressions of interest already received from the new UK universities willing to offer their programmes in Mauritius, including King's College London, University College London, London South Bank University, which seek to deliver their programmes in Mauritius.

The HEC will proceed with the accreditation of these programmes under the MoU framework following receipt of review reports from QA UK.

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

Mr Jugurnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the Minister inform the House as to how many accreditation criteria are being used by the Higher Education Commission to accredit the programme?

Dr. Sukon: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, currently, we are using 14 criteria to accredit programmes. Following the announcement in the Budget to review the HEC Act, we are going to further streamline the procedure.

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

RODRIGUES POST OFFICES – CONDITION & AIR SHIPMENT SUSPENSION

(No. B/668) Mr F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the Mauritius

Post Offices in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to –

- (a) the present state thereof and any corrective measures taken in relation thereto, and
- (b) whether the suspension of air shipment of packets and parcels to Rodrigues has been waived.

The Minister of Education and Human Resource (Dr. M. Gungapersad): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will answer this PQ on behalf of the substantive Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation.

I am informed by the Mauritius Post Ltd. that there are at present five post offices in Rodrigues, situated at Port Mathurin, Rivière Coco, La Ferme, Grande Montagne and Mont Lubin.

I am further informed that the following issues in respect of the post offices have been reported –

- (i) At Port Mathurin Post Office, waterproofing is required.
- (ii) At Rivière Coco Post Office, servicing of CCTV and alarm system, dislodging of toilet and electrical repairs.
- (iii) At La Ferme Post Office, Rodrigues Regional Assembly has been requested to do needful to repair a water pump serving the whole building.

As regard post offices at Grande Montagne and Mont Lubin, no issues have been reported.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerning Port Mathurin Post Office, a proposal to launch a tender exercise in 2020 for a renovation as well as waterproofing works could not be carried out due to financial constraints. In 2024, a tender exercise was launched for waterproofing works, but was not approved by the then management. However, the Mauritius Post Office Ltd. is at present exploring options to address these issues by allocating funds in its 2025-2026 Budget for renovation of post offices.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that following a meeting held in September 2024 between Air Mauritius Ltd and Mauritius Post Office Ltd, the latter issued a notice dated 18 October 2024 to inform members of the public that due to the substantial increase in the volume of air parcels and packets destined to

Rodrigues and the limited cargo space on Air Mauritius flights to Rodrigues, the regular despatch has been temporarily suspended.

However, the Mauritius Post Office Ltd continued to send and is still sending non-voluminous packets of approximately 500g by air. As for packages for above 500g, the Mauritius Post Office Ltd was sending same by sea. By end of January 2025, with the declining postage of parcels in Rodrigues, the Mauritius Post Office Ltd resumed sending parcels up to 2kg by air. Nevertheless, in May 2025, Air Mauritius Ltd informed Mauritius Post Office Ltd that due to weight restrictions, cargo and mail to Rodrigues could not be uplifted on its flights and was not accepting new bookings in order to prioritise clearance or pending despatches.

Consequently, the Mauritius Post Office Ltd has indicated that the suspension of voluminous packages above 500g by air is being maintained.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question!

Hon. Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka!

SPEED CAMERAS – OPERATIONALITY – MAINTENANCE COST & SUPPLIERS

(No. B/669) Mr P. Venkatasami (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the speed cameras, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, information as to the number of spots where same are installed, indicating –

- (a) if they are operational;
- (b) the maintenance cost thereof;
- (c) the name of the suppliers thereof, and
- (d) if a survey was recently carried out to identify new spots for the installation thereof and, if so, when, giving details thereof and, if not, why not.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit that the Photographic Enforcement Device Project implemented between 2012 and 2014 consists of a network of 63 fixed speed cameras

installed by Proguard Ltd on public roads across the island to detect and record vehicles exceeding the posted speed limits of 40km per hour, 60km per hour and 80km per hour and also 110km per hour, respectively.

The photographs captured by these cameras are transmitted to the back office located at Samlo Tower, Port Louis, the seat of the TMRSU. The Photographic Enforcement Device Unit, operated by the Police, processes these offences and the Photographic Enforcement Device Notices which is also called PEDNs are sent by post to the traffic offenders for payment of the appropriate fines at the court.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerning part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that out of 63 speed cameras, 4 which are located at St Julien Village, Calebasses on Motorway M2, Brisée Verdière and Case Noyale are currently not operational. These cameras have developed defects and were therefore sent to the manufacturer Truvelo (UK) Ltd for diagnosis and repairs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the maintenance services for the fixed speed camera system is currently being provided by the same company Proguard Ltd at an annual cost of approximately Rs27.85 million excluding VAT as Proguard Ltd is the sole representative of both the manufacturer Truvelo (UK) Ltd, for speed camera, and the developer Fisher Ltd, for the software in Mauritius. The contract also caters for a yearly provisional sum of Rs3 million excluding VAT which is used for repairs, new spare parts and relocation of speed cameras to new sites so that makes it a total of Rs30.85 million per year excluding VAT which is spent on these speed cameras.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regard part (c) of the question, I wish to inform the House that a contract for the design, supply, installation, commissioning and initial operation of automatic speed enforcement cameras was awarded to Proguard Ltd in 2012.

Regarding part (d) of the question, I am informed that the TMRSU has carried out recent surveys for the installation of speed cameras along the following hazardous locations, namely –

- Valetta by-pass B6;
- D'Epinay along old Flacq Road B20, and
- Melrose along the main Road B27.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as announced in the Budget exercise 2025-2026 with regards to the use of Safe City Cameras for detection of traffic offences, the TMRSU of my Ministry will initiate consultations with the Mauritius Police Force and Mauritius Telecom with a view to implementing this budgetary measure that seeks to enhance road safety in Mauritius. As a matter of fact, a first meeting is scheduled for tomorrow 16 June 2025, I am informed.

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

**PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLE (TAXI) LICENCE – TRANSFERABILITY –
PART-TIME TAXI DRIVER PASS**

(No. B/670) **Mr R. Beehook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil)** asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the Public Service Vehicle (Taxi) Licence, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to whether holders thereof have submitted thereto their concerns regarding the

—

- (a) transferability thereof to persons other than the legal heirs and
- (b) issuance of part-time taxi driver "pass" and, if so, indicate the measures taken in relation thereto, if any.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the National Land Transport Authority that it has not received any representation regarding the transferability of Public Service Vehicle (Taxi) License to a person other than a legal heir.

However, I am also given to understand that the criteria laid down by the previous management of the NLTA to consider application for transfer of taxi licenses to persons other than a legal heir are very restrictive and may have to be reviewed. Therefore, the new management at the NLTA will work out a new set of criteria to make it easier for licenses to be transferred between two unrelated parties, subject to some reasonable conditions being satisfied, such as the proposed transferee having worked in the car for which a license is being transferred continuously for a period of time as full-time or part-time driver and the proposed transferee having a clean Certificate of Character, obviously.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regard part (b) of the question, there was indeed a delay in issuing the full-time or part-time driver certificate as such applications were dealt within more than 12 months by the NLTA under the previous management, therefore, penalising both the taxi operators as well as the applicants for full-time or part-time driving certificate. However, as soon as the new management of the NLTA was appointed, I have requested the new team to look into the streamlining of procedures for the services it was offering and one of them was to look into the possibility to issue a provisional certificate to applicants for part-time and full-time drivers. Being given that such applications are now being processed diligently in about two months instead of twelve months, the hon. Member will surely conquer that there is now perhaps no need to issue a provisional certificate at this point in time. With additional officers posted at the Inspectorate Section of the NLTA, this time period will be even shorter, given time.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is to be noted that during the month of June 2025, that is, in one month's time, 241 files pending since year 2021 have been cleared in respect of applications for transfer of PSV, contract car, contract bus, road service licenses as well as part-time and full-time drivers' certificate which did not happened at the NLTA for a decade.

The Deputy Speaker: One supplementary!

Mr Beechook: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I thank the hon. Minister and the taxi community is certainly appreciating the way the demand for part-time passes is being dealt. However, will the hon. Minister consider a reform in the system because currently, one part-time driver can apply for a pass but for only one vehicle. So, whether this can be reform so that pass allows him to work not only in one taxi but in multiple taxis, this will create further job opportunities for part-time and even full-time drivers?

Mr Osman Mahomed: I am not too sure what are the implications. I can discuss with the officers at the NLTA with a view to giving as requested due consideration to the proposal.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Second Member for Rodrigues!

NEW SPORTS BILL & NEW ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK — CONSULTATIONS – RODRIGUES SPORT COMMUNITIES

(No. B/671) **Mr F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of a new administrative framework and a new Sports Bill, he will state where matters stand, indicating if –

- (a) prior consultations have been or will be held with Rodrigues sports communities, and
- (b) Government is agreeable to the setting up of a special committee to make recommendations on the setting up and missions of a Comité Régional Olympique et Sportif (CROS) for Rodrigues and, if so, when.

The Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare (Ms A. Navarre-Marie): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the absence of the substantive Minister, I am replying to this question.

I am informed that drafting instructions have been transmitted to the Attorney General's Office for a draft Sports Bill. Indeed, I am informed that the Ministry of Youth and Sports has invited the public to submit their views and suggestions via a press communiqué for a comprehensive new Sports Bill instead of piecemeal amendments to the existing legislation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerning part (a) of the question, I am informed that submissions have been received from the Rodrigues Commissions for Sports.

Additionally, my colleague, the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports, personally, headed a mission to Rodrigues from 06 to 10 April 2025. There, he had the opportunity to have a first-hand understanding *des réalités du terrain* through meetings with the Commissioner for Sports and his officers as well as representatives of Rodriguan Regional Sports Committees.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that during his mission to Rodrigues, my colleague, the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports, did receive representations regarding the setting up of a *Comité Régional Olympique et Sportif*, also known as CROS.

Specific provisions have been made in the new Sports Bill in respect of Rodrigues and therefore, the question of setting up a special committee does not arise.

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

TRANSITION UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT – APPLICATIONS – PROCESSING TIME

(No. B/672) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to the payment of the Transition Unemployment Benefit, he will, for each of the years since 2020 to 2024, state the number of applications received therefor, indicating the –

- (a) number thereof approved, and
- (b) average processing time prior to disbursement, calculated from the date of registration of a worker.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, section 84 of the Workers' Rights Act stipulates that –

“A worker shall be entitled to a transition unemployment benefit where [his employment is terminated by his employer] for a period of not less than one month nor more than 12 months.”

The rate of the Transition Unemployment Benefit payable is subject to a ceiling of Rs25,475, as follows –

- First three months 90% of the basic wage;
- Fourth to sixth month 60% of the basic wage;
- Seventh to twelfth month 30% of the basic wage.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, the number of applications received and approved from 2020 to 2024, are as follows –

- For 2020 – 16,170 applications were received out of which 13,326 applications had been approved;
- For 2021 – 11,264 applications were received out of which 8,930 were approved;
- For 2022 – 8,145 applications were received and 5,578 were approved;
- For 2023 – 7,264 applications were received and 4,880 were approved, and
- 2024 – 8,543 applications were received and 5,992 were approved.

As regards part (b) of the question, section 84, sub-section 5 provides that –

“Where a worker has made a claim for the payment of the transition unemployment benefit and the supervising officer [of my Ministry] is satisfied that the [case] is *bona fide*, the supervising officer shall, within 7 days of the date of the claim, notify the Ministry [of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity] to effect payment.”

The latter has up to 10 days from receipt of claim of my Ministry to effect payment to the laid-off workers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that based on statistics retrieved from the computerised Workfare Programme system, the average time taken to process application from the date of registration of the worker on the Workfare Programme to the day the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity is notified to effect payment is as follows –

- For 2020 – 78 days;
- For 2021 – 59 days;
- For 2022 – 58 days;
- For 2023 – 70 days, and
- For 2024 – 61 days.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there are several reasons for the delay to process the application within the statutory delay of seven days. Most of the delays are due to delay to secure documents of information from uncooperative employers, delay from the workers to submit the required documents, shortage of staff but the main reason remain, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that before the Supervising Officer approves the transfer, he must be satisfied that the claim is *bona fide* and unfortunately, he undergoes a series of consultations with the worker and the employer and that takes time.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that for the disbursement to be made to the beneficiaries on average, the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity, takes an additional two weeks from the date the notification is made. The time to process the application, therefore, is up to ten times more than the statutory requirement of seven days. Ten times!

While the application is being processed, the worker does not receive any payment and the delay in processing the application defeats the purpose of the act which is to provide the laid-off worker with immediate relief.

In order to bring improvement to Workfare Programme and to make it more efficient, at the level of the Ministry, I have set up a technical committee. The committee also comprises representatives of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity.

I am informed that the committee has met on eight occasions and has held consultations with Business Mauritius, with various trade-unions and other stakeholders and is presently finalising its recommendations.

The Deputy Speaker: Do you have a supplementary?

Mr Beejan: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister inform the House what mechanisms or facilities are provided to officers to ensure secure and efficient files' transportation from regional offices around the island to the Head Office?

Mr Uteem: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what I have done when I came to office, was to eliminate the duplicity that occurred because previously whenever a worker made a complaint, he had to report to the Labour Office closer to his place of employment but when he was laid-off, subsequently, he had to go to the Labour Officer where he is residing.

So, there was duplicity and there was transfer of files and this was taking a lot of delay. So, now, I have given instructions that it is the same Labour Office that has registered the complaint of the worker that is now going to process the application for Workfare Programme. We don't have a new inquiry starting in with the place of residence.

The Deputy Speaker: I suspend the Sitting for one and a half hour.

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

On resuming at 2.31 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Please be seated!

Hon. First Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart!

COTTAGE-POUDRE D'OR HAMLET ROAD – ROAD SAFETY MEASURES

(No. B/673) Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the road from Cottage to Poudre d'Or Hamlet, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to where matters stand regarding the implementation of road safety measures thereat, including road widening works –

- (a) through compulsory acquisition, installation of pavements and handrails to ensure pedestrian security, and
- (b) of the narrow and impracticable Cottage and Goodlands Branch Road, especially, at the stretch where a bus recently went off-road.

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Road Development Authority that the Forbach B42 Road connects the village of Cottage to Poudre d'Or Hamlet over a length of 3 kms. The road width varies between 6 and 7 meters and is in general good condition. Footpath has been provided along inhabited stretches wherever space and road reserves are available, namely over an approximate length of 1 km along the road.

In addition, a works order has been issued by the RDA to construct an additional 100m of footpath and drain from the Shell Filling Station towards Poudre d'Or Hamlet. Excavation works have started and the works are expected to be completed by the end of August 2025.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the RDA will carry out a cadastral survey to identify available spaces for future construction of footpath. However, given the narrowness of the road and space constraints due to existing buildup areas, it is not advised to acquire land compulsorily from numerous private owners to widen the road. Footpath and handrails will accordingly be implemented wherever possible.

I am also informed by the RDA that a joint site visit has been proposed with the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit to consider implementation of immediate road safety measures, pending the implementation of footpath and rails. Such measures will include provision of road markings, traffic signs and cat's-eyes.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regard part (b) of the question, I am informed that the branch road connecting Cottage near traffic lights to Goodlands at the level of Super U, commonly known as Beau Plateau Road, is not classified, and hence, falls under the purview of the District Council of Rivère du Rempart. I am informed by the latter that it does not have the required funding for the said project and has transmitted the request for enlargement and tarring of Beau Plateau Road to the National Development Unit of my Ministry for consideration.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House may note that this Government is also coming up with the construction of the Motorway M4 which will start from Forbach on the Motorway M2. It will join the Beau Plateau Road B43 at Mapou near Vergers de Labourdonnais and will pass through the villages of Poudre d'Or Hamlet and l'Espérance Trébuchet intersecting with the Forbach Road B42 through a roundabout.

This motorway will provide a safe and alternative route for road users. Thus, lessening the traffic along the Forbach B42 and Beau Plateau B43 roads and improving their overall safety within the villages of Cottage and Poudre d'Or Hamlet.

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

OPSG – MALPRACTISE INVESTIGATIONS (2020-2025)

(No. B/674) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning whether, in regard to the Office of Public Sector Governance, she will –

- (a) state new approach adopted, if any, regarding the functioning thereof, and
- (b) for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of reports and investigation carried out over the past five financial years on public sector malpractice, indicating the remedial measures taken in relation thereto.

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Office of Public Sector Governance (OPSG) plays a very important role in fostering good governance across the public sector, including Ministries, Departments, State Owned Enterprises and local authorities.

Its mandate includes providing management consultancy services, conducting in-depth financial, organisational and governance reviews, and monitoring the performance of audit committees within public sector institutions mainly to ensure effective implementation of the recommendations of the National Audit Office, the Public Accounts Committee and the Internal Control Unit.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, the OPSG is currently reorientating its strategic approach to better align with evolving public expectations and institutional integrity standards.

A key initiative being implemented during the current Financial Year 2025-2026 is the development of a comprehensive Code of Good Governance for the public sector. This framework will serve as a unifying standard across public sector institutions with the objective of enhancing transparency and accountability, reinforcing ethical conduct and compliance, and elevating the overall effectiveness of service delivery in public sector organisations.

The Code is expected to strengthen systematic safeguards, instil a culture of responsibility, and restore public trust in the leadership and management of the public sector.

With regard to part (b) of the question, over the last five financial years, the OPSG has completed a total of 46 reviews covering areas such as finance, procurement, human resources and governance as follows –

- 2020-2021: 7 reports.
- 2021-2022: 10 reports.
- 2022-2023: 14 reports.
- 2023-2024: 10 reports.

For the Financial Year 2024-2025, five reports have been completed and issued, and four are in process of being finalised. It is to be noted that the five reviews that have been completed for the Financial Year 2024-2025, the OPSG undertook assignments which were of a more complex nature and with wider scope, requiring more time to complete.

In addition, during the same financial year, the OPSG has been conducting governance surveys in 34 statutory bodies to assess compliance with the eight principles enshrined in the National Code of Corporate Governance for Mauritius. So far, 14 statutory bodies have been issued and assessed, and a governance report has been issued to them.

As regards to remedial measures, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the OPSG analyses and examines the issues, the shortcomings of the organisations reviewed, and subsequently, proposes workable recommendations for improvement with respect to governance lapses, inefficiencies and potential malpractices in public institutions.

The responsibility to effectively implement the recommendations rests with the organisations, the Ministries, the departments for which OPSG conducted the reviews, and the implementation of these measures are monitored by the respective audit committees set up at the level of the Ministries or departments.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the OPSG operates on a demand-driven basis and its report is submitted exclusively to the requesting authority. Nevertheless, I wish to assure the House that where deficiencies are identified, OPSG recommendations are aimed at systematic rectification and capacity building. These typically include strengthening of internal controls, the revision of governance framework, and the clarification of reporting lines, including enhanced monitoring mechanism. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Minister, with regard to the annual report of the Office of Public Sector Governance, can she confirm to the House that as at date, we only have the annual report of 2016-2017 that is available for the public to consult?

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Thank you for the additional question. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I have been informed that this department was previously called the Management Audit Office and they used to publish their annual reports as an entity.

Since 2019, they have been transferred to as a department under the Ministry, and since then, the report of the Ministry includes the affairs of the OPSG. Since 2019, they are included in the annual report of the Ministry.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE!

BEL AIR RIVIÈRE SÈCHE – PUBLIC TOILET PROJECT

(No. B/675) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Village of Bel Air Rivière Sèche, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bel Air Rivière Sèche Village Council operating under the aegis of the Flacq District Council, information as to whether there is a project for the setting up of public toilet.

Mr Woochit: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that there is currently no public toilet block operated by the Council in the centre of Bel Air Rivière Sèche. However, a public toilet block managed by the Council is available at the new Bel Air market fair which is situated on the outskirts of the village.

I am informed that there are private toilets facilities within the commercial complex housing the Save Mart supermarket which is centrally located in the village. These however, are not under the jurisdiction of the Council and are intended for customers of the commercial premises.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following numerous requests from the public and in recognition of the inconvenience caused by the absence of a public toilet block in the centre of the village, I wish to inform the House that the St Esprit Parish has agreed in principle to the proposal. Discussions are currently ongoing and the Council has given its commitment to set up a toilet facility on the Church premises subject to the final agreement with the Parish authority.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Third Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU HOSPITAL – CARDIAC EMERGENCIES – SAMU

(No. B/676) Mr C. Lukeeram (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)

asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to Acute Cardiac Emergencies, he will state the number of patients referred from the SAMU of the Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital to the Cardiac Catheterisation Laboratory of Victoria Hospital in relation thereto over the past five years, indicating the number thereof who were refused emergency intervention thereat and the reasons given to the SAMU by the doctors thereat, in each case.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Acute Cardiac Emergencies are second life-threatening conditions that require immediate medical attention and if not treated promptly, these emergencies can lead to severe complications. In this respect the *Service d'Aide Medicale Urgente* (SAMU) provide on-site free medical treatment and stabilises critical and vital emergency during transport aligning with the golden hour concept which is the quickest timeframe to transfer patients to hospitals.

The SAMU also handles secondary inter-hospital transfers for CT-scans, MRIs and primarily, rescue percutaneous coronary intervention, a minimally invasive procedure used to open blocked or narrowed coronary arteries which improves blood flow to the heart.

The SAMU 24/7 control room at Victoria Hospital currently manages approximately 2000 calls daily, utilising an efficient triage and logistics system and vital emergencies including myocardial infarction in all five regional hospitals. Myocardial infarction is caused by decreased or complete cessation of blood flow to the portion of the muscle of the heart.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry is making provision for setting up of a trauma unit headed by emergency physicians in all regional hospitals to handle severe injuries and life-threatening emergencies.

These units will provide immediate comprehensive care to patients having critical injuries from accidents and other traumatic incidents. I am informed that over the past five years, SAMU services based at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital, Rose Belle, has referred 170 patients of which 41 patients were accepted for urgent primary percutaneous coronary intervention to the Cardiac Catheterisation Laboratory of Victoria Hospital.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that for period 2021 to date, 129 cases which were supposed to be undertaken have presently been given the appropriate

treatment of thrombolysis with tenecteplase in the SAMU ambulance itself. This medication dissolve blood clots for such cases. The patients were then admitted for appropriate follow-up treatment and care.

I wish to inform the House that since Government took office, necessary has been made for a Cath-lab at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital and same will be operational within one month time. During the last 10 years, there has been no increase in the number of ambulances and I am informed that currently 8 ambulances and 6 SAMU are awaiting repairs.

Therefore, I wish to inform the House that this Government is taking strong initiatives to renew these ambulances and SAMU vehicles and as such six new vehicles are expected to upgrade the services.

Moreover, I wish to inform the House that much efforts are being made to streamline the coordination between the SAMU services and the cardiac units so as to minimise delays and improve outcome for cardiac emergency cases for the benefits of the population.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. Prayag!

Dr. Prayag: Thank you, hon. Minister. 41 cases have been catered for out of 170 cases, which is not adequate in cases of emergency percutaneous coronary interventions. Maybe later the Minister could provide the House with information about the number that have been refused, and also the reasons for the refusal of interventions? Thank you.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have mentioned that 170 patients were referred out of which 41 patients were accepted for urgent primary percutaneous coronary intervention to the Cardiac Catheterisation Laboratory. The remaining 129, have been taken urgently and were given appropriate treatment – they were not rejected – of thrombolysis. I am not a doctor myself but, I am made to understand that our ICU units, SAMU, they are themselves, moving ICUs throughout the country. They undertake all urgent actions that need to be taken, that were taken and care was given to those patients.

I have also mentioned that we are going to acquire more SAMU vans so that we can cater for the needs of more patients.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. First Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE!

**BEL AIR RIVIÈRE SÈCHE, ST MICHELLE & ERNEST FLORENT –
FOOTBALL PITCHES – REINSTATEMENT**

(No. B/677) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the football pitches in the Villages of Bel Air Rivière Sèche, St Michelle and Ernest Florent, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether consideration will be given for the reinstatement thereof and for provision of lighting facilities thereat.

Mr Woochit: I wish to provide a detailed update regarding the status of football ground under the purview of Flacq District Council. The Bel Air Rivière Sèche football ground which covers an area of 6400 m² was cleared on Friday, 11 July 2025. I am pleased to report that the lighting system and this ground is currently fully operational.

However, it is important to note that the perimeter fencing has been damaged and the cost estimate for the necessary repairs is around Rs1.8 million and the Council is in the process of securing financial clearance to proceed with these works.

With regard to the St Michelle football ground which spans 7650 m², maintenance works were undertaken on Friday, 11 July 2025. Unfortunately, the lighting system at this ground was vandalised during March and April 2025. The required accessories and materials for repairs have already been procured and the repairs works are expected to be completed by 28 July 2025. To mitigate future act of vandalism, the installation of overhead wiring for the lighting system is under consideration.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding the Ernest Florent football ground which has an area of 6656 m², clearing works were also completed on the 11 July 2025.

At present, 6 out of the 12 floodlights are not functional. The District Council of Flacq has informed that repair works will be carried out using in-house labour with completion scheduled for 07 August 2025. Routine maintenance of all football grounds is conducted on a monthly basis by the Council to ensure the facilities remain in good condition.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it has come to my attention that certain local authorities tend to act swiftly on maintenance and upgrading works only after a Parliamentary Question have been submitted regarding their jurisdictions. This reactive approach raises serious concerns regarding the commitment to proactive services delivery.

Regrettably, over the recent years, the quality of governance and public service within some local authorities have declined. This situation is largely attributed to a culture of comprehensive and a lack of accountability on the part of a few officers. The legacy of neglect and the indifference under the previous administration has undermined public trust and service standards, and its consequences are still being felt today.

As previously stated in my PQ B/382 on 15 April 2025, disciplinary proceedings will be initiated against officers of Local Authorities who have failed to carry out their duties responsibly. The Government remains fully committed to restoring discipline, professionalism and accountability within the public service and will not tolerate negligence of duty by any public officer entrusted to serve the public.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka!

FUTSAL - SYNTHETIC FOOTBALL PITCHES – CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE COSTS

(No. B/678) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the synthetic football pitches, also known as “futsal”, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof constructed and operational island-wide, indicating –

- (a) the number thereof falling under the purview of his Ministry and/or under that of other public entities, further indicating the construction and maintenance costs of the ones constructed since 2015 to 2024;
- (b) the reported number of cases of severe physical injuries sustained by players using same, and
- (c) if consideration will be given for the replacement of synthetic football pitches by natural football pitches for safety reasons.

The Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare (Mrs A. Navarre-Marie): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there is a significant difference between pitches used to play futsal and other variations of football. Futsal is usually played indoors on a hard court, typically wooden or synthetic. On the other hand, synthetic pitches designed to mimic natural grass, offering an environment friendly space for running and tackling, are utilised to play other variations of football such as normal or small-sided games.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of Youth and Sports is not a licensing nor a regulatory authority for such infrastructures. Therefore, the Ministry does not keep data on the number of synthetic football pitches or futsal which have been constructed and that are operational around the island. Nevertheless, the Ministry has sought information from Local Authorities as construction permits are issued by them. Information is being compiled and will be tabled later.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that the St François Xavier Stadium in Port Louis which falls under the purview of the Ministry of Youth and Sports is equipped with synthetic grass and managed by the Mauritius Sports Council. I am further informed that the Mauritius Sports Council operates and maintains ten multiuse games area, commonly known as MUGA which was constructed by the Mauritius Telecom Foundation. These facilities include small synthetic football pitches. The costs of the construction and maintenance of the facilities are also being compiled. Maintaining a synthetic football pitch involves regular cleaning, infill maintenance and periodic deep cleaning to ensure optimal playing conditions and longevity. This includes removing debris and weeds if any, brushing the turf, checking and replenishing infill levels and addressing any wear and tear.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to synthetic football pitches falling under the purview of public entities, as already indicated, the Ministry of Youth and Sports has sought the necessary information from Local Authorities.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Mauritius Sports Council that there are no reported cases of physical injuries sustained by users of the ten MUGAs or at St François Xavier Stadium.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the Ministry of Youth and Sports does not intend to replace its existing synthetic pitch at St François Xavier Stadium with a natural one.

The Deputy Speaker: Just for the record, hon. Minister, you are the Ag. Minister of Sports?

Ms Navarre-Marie: Yes.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, you replied to the question. No supplementary. The hon. Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue!

**PORT LOUIS MUNICIPAL COUNCIL – GREEN SPACES, CHILDREN’S
PLAYGROUNDS & PUBLIC GARDENS – ENHANCEMENT & SPONSORSHIP**

(No. B/679) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port-Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to green spaces, children’s playgrounds and public gardens falling under the aegis of the Municipal City Council of Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, the list thereof presently being maintained and embellished by private companies and, if not, if consideration will be given to seek sponsors from private companies therefor.

Mr Woochit: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal City Council of Port Louis that there are currently 79 green spaces, 9 public gardens and 44 children’s playground under its jurisdiction. These sites are maintained and embellished by the Council’s in-house workforce. For the information of the House, I am tabling the list of these amenities.

The proposal made by the hon. Member to seek sponsorship for the upkeep and enhancement of these public spaces is most welcomed. Over the past two years, the Council has benefited from private sponsorship; notably in August 2023, Livestock Feed Ltd provided four litter bins and four benches for the green space opposite Pailles SSS at a cost of Rs64,000. In June 2025, the Rotary Club of Montebello Pailles funded the renovation of play equipment at the Montebello Children’s Playground amounting to Rs67,000. So far, the City Clinic has positively responded to a request from my Ministry and has also sent a proposal for the embellishment and maintenance of the Plaine Verte Garden.

Furthermore, I am informed that in principle, the Council has no objection to private sponsorship for the maintenance and embellishment of green spaces, public gardens and children’s playgrounds, provided such initiatives are submitted for formal approval at the Council’s meeting.

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

PALMA DISPENSARY – RENOVATION/RELOCATION DETAILS

(No. B/680) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the dispensary at Palma, he will state if consideration will be given for the renovation or relocation thereof and, if so, indicate when, giving details thereof and, if not, why not.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Palma Community Health Centre stands on a plot of land of 15 perches which was donated by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes in the year 1988. My Ministry initiated action for the renovation of Palma Community Health Centre and following a bidding exercise, the contract for renovation and extension works was awarded to a contractor on 4 September 2023. However, in October 2023, the Ministry of National Infrastructure informed my Ministry not to proceed with the handing over of the site to the contractor as the Road Development Authority was envisaging the realignment of the road passing very close to the existing Community Health Centre building. This would severely affect the usage of the existing building and render it non-functional. Consequently, in view of major roadworks in that area, construction works on the new proposed design of the community health centre could not be implemented.

In order to provide a modern state-of-the-art facility to the inhabitants of Palma region, my Ministry is liaising with the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the Ministry of National Infrastructure and the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit for either the acquisition or vesting of a new plot of land in that area for the construction of a new community health centre. In the meantime, I can assure the hon. Member that all mitigating measures will be undertaken to see to it that the place is safe for those who will come there.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, your question?

Ms Anquetil: *Je vous remercie, M. le président. Je remercie le ministre pour sa réponse.* Pending completion of procedures related to the land, will the Minister inform the House whether, urgent works could be undertaken such as installing *main courantes* on the front step of the dispensary and the toilet? Furthermore, if a solution can be considered to separate the pharmacy from patient consultations currently taking place in the same room? Thank you.

Mr Bachoo: I have already mentioned that mitigating measures will be undertaken and I can assure the hon. Member that by next week, we can have a site visit so that we can have a proper look at the building and take whatever decision needs to be taken.

Ms Anquetil: Thank you!

The Deputy Speaker: Do let me know when you intend to go to the site visit.

The Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka!

TUNA FISHING INDUSTRY – REVENUE OBTAINED – 2019-2024

(No. B/681) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the tuna fishing industry, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the revenue obtained by the Mauritius Government therefrom over the period 2019 to 2024, giving details thereof and indicating in which forms same is received.

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

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the first part of the question, the total revenue obtained by the government in respect of the tuna fishing industry for the period 2019-2024 amounts to Rs537,516,875. The revenue derived is from payment of the following –

- Licence fees of Rs382 million by 780 registered fishing vessels, and
- Tonnage fee of Rs156 million by foreign-owned Mauritian flag fishing vessels exporting tuna and tuna-like fish species.

I am informed that the 780 licences were issued to the following categories of fishing vessels –

- (i) 294 licences to fishing vessels under the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement with the European Union;
- (ii) 105 licences to fishing vessels under the Mauritius-Seychelles Reciprocal Fishing Agreement;
- (iii) 311 licences to fishing vessels not under any fishing agreement, and
- (iv) 70 licences to Mauritians semi-industrial fishing vessels.

The tonnage fee was paid by foreign-owned Mauritian flag vessels operating in industrial tuna fishery, exporting tuna and tuna-like fish species.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am tabling detailed information on the 780 fishing licences issued to fishing vessels and revenue derived therefrom as well as the applicable tonnage fee for the period 2019-2024.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the second part of the question, the form in which the revenue was obtained in respect of the tuna fishing industry is mostly through bank transfer.

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

MINOR B.C.G.A.L. – INVALID BASIC PENSION – DISCONTINUATION CAUSE

(No. B/682) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to minor B. C. G. A. L., he will state the reasons why the Invalid's Basic Pension to which he was entitled was discontinued when he proceeded for overseas treatment.

Mr Subron: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that in accordance with Section 8 National Pensions Act 1976, the criteria for someone to benefit from an Invalid's Basic Pension is that the person should suffer from a disability of at least 60% which is likely to last for a period of at least 12 months, and he should be under the age of 60 years.

First, let me inform my colleague of the Constituency Port Louis North and Montagne Longue that it would be inexact to state that the Invalid's Basic Pension to which the minor, B.C.G.A.L., was entitled was discontinued when he proceeded for overseas treatment.

As a matter of fact, I am informed that a claim for Invalid's Basic Pension in favour of the minor was made on 23 May 2024. He was convened for medical assessment on 04 July 2024, 04 September 2024 and 05 November 2024, but he did not attend the Medical Board. Consequently, he was reconvened for medical assessment by the Medical Board on 16 December 2024.

On 27 January 2025, he was recommended for the Invalid's Basic Pension for one year with effect from May 2024, date of application, to April 2025. The first payment of Rs169,000 was made by cheque on 03 February 2025, representing payment from May 2024 to February 2025.

I am further informed that the minor was reboarded for renewal of the Invalid's Basic Pension on 14 May 2025 and same has not been recommended by the Medical Board. Following a disallowance notice issued to the minor, an appeal was filed on 16 June 2025 and the Medical Appeal Tribunal hearing has been scheduled for 23 July 2025.

As a matter of fact, I am also informed by the Ministry of Health that the first overseas treatment of the minor to Chennai was on 21 June 2024 and the second overseas treatment was from 21 February 2025 to 08 March 2025. All the cost of the treatment was covered by the Government.

From the above chronology, it is clear that despite the fact that the minor had his overseas treatment on 21 June 2024, he was paid his Invalid's Basic Pension for one year with effect from May 2024. In addition, while he was abroad from 21 February 2025 to 08 March 2025, he was also paid his BIP for this period.

Let me add that I have paid two visits to the mother, the minor and the family, to verify the facts stated above, and to extend this Government's compassion to the minor and the family. In parallel, myself and activists in the region have ensured solidarity actions to help the minor and his family.

Furthermore, given that this case is considered a hardship case by the National Empowerment Foundation, it has been decided to allocate a proper NHDC housing to the family and the minor.

My dear hon. colleague can rest assured that I, as a caring Member of the National Assembly, representing Constituency No.4, and as a caring Minister of a caring and responsible Government, we will always display kindness and humanism and assume our responsibility towards our fellow citizens' wellbeing and dignity.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

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

Ms Savabaddy: Merci, M. le président. Merci à mon collègue ministre pour la réponse. Comme vous le savez, c'est un cas très déchirant. Le ministre et son personnel, comme il vient de le dire, ont attendu que je dépose cette interpellation parlementaire pour visiter cette enfant.

Je pose la question tout de suite. L'honorable ministre conviendra-t-il avec moi que ce cas n'est qu'un des nombreux cas où le personnel de son ministère fait preuve d'un manque de compassion et d'humanité ? Que fera-t-il pour que les personnes en détresse n'aient pas à subir une telle humiliation dans l'avenir, tout comme le cas du bébé B.C.G.A.L. ? Merci.

Mr Subron: I refer my colleague to the Statement I made to the National Assembly at the last session to address the various issues that prevailed during the last 10 years and to address them with deep and profound reforms that this Government will be bringing to the law in regulating and determining invalid's pensions and benefits. The change will come.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Second Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre D'or!

BLUE WORLD EXPLORER LTD. – DIVING ACCIDENT – INQUIRY & REMEDIAL ACTIONS

(No. B/683) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the recent accident that occurred in a diving centre in the north of the island, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) whether an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof,
- (b) remedial actions taken, if any, in relation to the suspected cause thereof, and
- (c) the measures taken, if any, to accompany family members of the victim thereof.

The Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr P. Assirvaden): M. le président, avec votre permission, je vais répondre à cette question.

Je suis informé que *Blue World Explorer Ltd.* est le centre de plongée où s'est produit le 20 mars 2025 le malheureux incident au cours duquel Monsieur B.D. a perdu la vie.

Le centre de plongée a obtenu une licence d'entreprise touristique le 23 décembre 2024 pour exercer ses activités de plongée sous-marine à l'hôtel Le Méridien après avoir rempli les conditions suivantes –

- (a) autorisation de la *Mauritius Scuba Diving Association* ;
- (b) conformité aux normes établies par la MSDA pour une telle activité ;

- (c) validité de permis de plaisance attachés au centre de plongée, et
- (d) couverture d'assurance pour tous les employés travaillant pour la société.

M. le président, immédiatement après avoir été informé de l'incident, deux agents de l'office du tourisme se sont rendus sur place pour établir un rapport préliminaire. Ils ont indiqué que Monsieur B.D. était décédé suite à de multiples blessures après l'explosion. Son décès a été confirmé par un médecin de la Clinique du Nord. La police a ouvert une enquête.

Les responsables de l'autorité du tourisme ont également indiqué que la licence du centre de plongée était valable jusqu'au 23 décembre 2025, tandis que celle du bateau de plaisance était valable jusqu'au 27 août 2025. Les activités se déroulaient conformément aux protocoles établis. De plus, tous les employés du centre de plongée étaient couverts par une police d'assurance. Néanmoins, compte tenu du décès signalé à la suite de l'accident, les activités du centre de plongée de l'hôtel Le Méridien et le permis de navigation de plaisance ont été suspendus en attendant la conclusion de l'enquête policière.

En réponse à la partie (a) de la question, je suis informé que, s'agissant d'un accident survenu sur un lieu de travail, le ministère du Travail et des relations industrielles a ouvert une enquête afin d'identifier les causes profondes. Je crois savoir que l'enquête est en cours.

Le ministère, M. le président, attend les résultats de l'enquête de la police et du ministère du Travail pour prendre des mesures appropriées concernant la licence du centre de plongée.

M. le président, en ce qui concerne la partie (b) de la question, afin d'éviter que de tels incidents malheureux se reproduisent, le ministère, entre autres, a mis en place une *squad* –

- pour conduire des visites surprises pour les opérateurs disposant d'une licence d'entreprise touristique auprès de l'autorité du tourisme pour les centres de plongée ;
- identifier si les opérateurs adhèrent aux normes établies et s'assurer que leurs équipements complémentaires sont en bon état de fonctionnement.

M. le président, des instructions ont été également données au Tourism Authority d'appliquer strictement les dispositions des lois et réglementations existantes, et d'assurer une suivie étroite de tous les titulaires de permis.

M. le président, enfin, en réponse à la partie (c) de la question, je dois dire que l'autorité du Tourisme suit de près cette affaire et avec la compagnie d'assurance du centre de plongée et la conclusion de l'enquête policière, le nécessaire sera fait.

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

**QUARTIER MILITAIRE – ST MARTIN DAM LEISURE PARK PROJECT –
CONTRACTOR & FUNDS**

(No. B/684) Mr P. Venkatasami (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the St Martin Dam Leisure Park project in Quartier Militaire, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the District Council of Moka, information as to –

- (a) the names of the contractor/s involved therein, indicating the quantum of funds paid to each in respect of works carried out;
- (b) if the Council supplied materials therefor and, if so, give details thereof, and
- (c) the expected completion date thereof.

Mr Woochit: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as highlighted in my previous reply to Parliamentary Question B/489 on 13 May 2025, the St Martin Dam Leisure Park project at Quartier Militaire was approved during the Financial Year 2017-2018 under the previous administration.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this project has been marked by poor planning, fragmented execution strategy and questionable procurement practices by the former government. Instead of adopting a streamline and transparent design and build model, which would have ensured better coordination, timely delivery and cost control, the previous administration split the project into multiple components. These were awarded to various contractors through different procurement methods including sales quotations, restricted bidding, direct procurement and open advertised bidding. This fragmented approach has compromised efficiency, escalated cost unnecessarily, and caused prolonged delays as the former administration kept on increasing the scope of work with

Time, and the project has still not yet been completed despite it started eight years ago.

I have been informed that a preliminary assessment conducted by the District Council of Moka on 19 May 2025 revealed several defects and discrepancies in the completed infrastructural works and incomplete landscaping. In response, the District Council has initiated actions against defaulting contractors, including forfeiting retention money, conducting performance reviews and initiating procedures to suspend or debar those who have not met satisfactory standards.

As regards to part (a) of the question, I am tabling the list of all contractors involved and the payments made to each of them.

Also, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am apprised that the contractors were provided with materials for implementing the works. I am also tabling the list of materials supplied by the District Council of Moka to the contractors.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regard to part (c) of the question, I wish to assure the House that the District Council of Moka has been instructed to complete its survey on all outstanding works and that the project be completed before the end of this year.

Thank you.

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

MAURITIUS DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS OVERSEAS – REMUNERATIONS & ALLOWANCES – ANNUAL OPERATION COSTS

(No. B/685) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to Mauritius Diplomatic Missions Overseas, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof currently in operation, indicating the names of the heads thereof, giving details as to the remunerations and allowances paid thereto, whether in cash or in kind;
- (b) the annual operation costs incurred in respect of each such mission over the past financial year, including rental charges and other staff-related expenses, and

- (c) whether any reduction in the number thereof is being envisaged, and, if not, why not.

The Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries (Dr. A. Boolell): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am standing for the substantive Minister for Foreign Affairs on overseas mission.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Republic of Mauritius is represented world-wide through a network of nineteen diplomatic missions, one consulate general and one consulate. These overseas missions are an integral part of the Ministry and are headed by an Ambassador/High Commissioner or a Counsel.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am hereby tabling the information on the number of missions currently in operation with the names of the heads. There are currently three Ambassadors in post and the other missions are being headed by diplomats acting as *Chargé d'affaire*. With regard to details of the remuneration and allowances paid, they are governed by the PRB Report.

With respect to part (b) of the question, I am tabling the annual operation cost incurred in respect of each mission over the past financial year including rental charges and other staff related expenses.

With regard to part (c) of the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Government does not envisage to have any reduction in the number of missions. With the current geopolitical situation, Government is focussing on enhancing its bilateral relations worldwide and use of our diplomatic missions to explore further trade, investment and investment opportunities, technology transfer and capacity building in line with our Government Programme and the parameters of our Budget.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, rather than reducing the number of missions, we are maximising efficiency, reducing unnecessary expenditure and making optimal use of resources.

Mr A. Duval: May I ask the hon. Minister, although he is not the substantive Minister, but speaking of efficiency, whether a study has been made recently or is available with regards to certain minor embassies such as those in terms of activity, whether these embassies, these missions are efficient and whether their model of functioning should be

review? These are, amongst others, Berlin, Moscow, Kuala Lumpur and Maputo. So, is there such a study on the efficiency of those four embassies including maybe others as well?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, size doesn't mean that they are not efficient. In fact, they are delivering and delivering to the best of abilities to serve the interest of our nation.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Second Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien!

**MARE D'ALBERT, RÉSIDENCE HORTENSIA – UNOCCUPIED NHDC
HOUSING UNITS – MAINTENANCE**

(No. B/686) Mr G. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Résidence Hortensia at Mare d'Albert, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., information as to –

- (a) the number of unoccupied housing units thereat and
- (b) who is responsible for the maintenance thereof in the absence of a syndic.

Mr Mohamed: Thank you. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the NHDC Housing Estate at Mare d'Albert known as Résidence Hortensia was completed in April 2024 and delivered to the eligible beneficiaries as from the end of May 2024. The housing estate comprises 203 units of ground plus one in a row type configuration.

With regards to part (a), I am informed by the NHDC that to date, out of the 203 housing units, 181 are occupied, 2 housing units have not yet been allocated as the initial beneficiaries have declined the offer and 20 beneficiaries are currently carrying out fit out and external improvement works prior to moving into their houses.

As regards part (b), given that the housing units at Résidence Hortensia are individually owned, the housing estate is not governed by a *règlement de copropriété* and thus, there is no syndic. The residents are responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of their property.

The NHDC has in March 2025 requested the District Council of Grand Port to take over the Multipurpose Hall and the commercial space at Résidence Hortensia. The previous government had not made any preparations whatsoever with regards to those particular issues. A reply is now awaited from the relevant District Council and my good friend, the Minister of Local Government, has been made aware of same. In the meantime, the NHDC is

ensuring the maintenance of the green spaces, children's playground and the other shared facilities and amenities.

Allow me to add, however, that this is the way that things were planned by the previous regime. However, I am of the view that it is the responsibility and it should be the responsibility of the Local Authority to maintain the children's playground as well as the other facilities there, but it is also the responsibility, once the internal roads of any such estate is declared public, that it is and should be the responsibility of the Local Authority to maintain the roads and to clean the places because there are too many places that are not being maintained by the Local Authorities. The reason being so is that the previous regime has tried to remove them from the ambit of the responsibility of the Local Authorities. So, if we are to work together as a team, we will be able to manage all those problems.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Apollon!

Mr Apollon: Yes, thank you to my colleague the Minister. As there is a Social Welfare Hall in this residence which has never been opened for the inhabitants, can the hon. Minister see if needful can be done so that these people can have social community activities?

Mr Mohamed: The whole idea of that particular Multipurpose Hall is precisely for the residents to use. There is therefore, in my humble view, even though the previous government had decided that there shall be no syndic within such a property, I am of the view and logic dictates that there should be a syndic. If there is no syndic, who will maintain the Multipurpose Hall? Because it is only for access to the residents of that place.

So, there should be a syndic and the syndic and all, and I take advantage of this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to pass a very important message, is that not only are we trying to revamp and reform the whole idea of managing and maintaining those residential estates, NHDC, NSLD but we have to continue with the new scheme that we are coming up with, mentioned in the budget. But people with a syndic, have to take the responsibility of contributing. A majority of them does but it is important to everyone; if they will get good service, they will surely pay.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question. Hon. Third Member for Port-Louis North and Montagne Longue.

KOREK! MOBILE APP – FEATURES AND SERVICES AVAILABLE

(No. B/687) **Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the new Government Mobile App KOREK!, he will state the Government services and documents that will be available through same, indicating if the said services will also be available on a dedicated portal for each user on the website.

The Minister of Education and Human Resources (Dr. M. Gungapersad): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to this PQ on behalf of my colleague, the substantive Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation.

I thank the hon. Member for showing such enthusiasm regarding the Mobile App KOREK! Let me inform the House that this new app is still at its conception stage. Consultations are ongoing regarding both the features of KOREK! and the services that will be available thereon.

At this stage, only the name, logo and tagline of the mobile app have been reserved with the Industrial Property Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade. Once this app KOREK! is ready, it is only then that it will be correct for the Ministry to provide ample information about same.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, you have a question?

Mr Caserne: May I ask the hon. Minister whether there are measures that are being considered to encourage the members of society to get registered with the new application?

Dr. Gungapersad: Yes. I think the substantive Minister will take charge of that.

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

PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS – FOREIGN STUDENTS' ENROLMENT

(No. B/688) **Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research whether, in regard to public higher education institutions, he will state the –

- (a) number of overseas students enrolled therein in each case since 2015 to 2024, indicating the number thereof currently enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and their countries of origin, and
- (b) measures being implemented by his Ministry with a view to attracting more students.

Dr. Sukon: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard part (a) of the question, which requires detailed statistical information, I am proposing, with your permission, to table this part of the answer.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that in line with government's vision as stated in Government Programme 2025-2029, which positions Mauritius as a globally competitive and vibrant higher education hub, my Ministry, in collaboration with the various institutions operating under its aegis, has initiated focused actions to develop appropriate strategies for promoting Mauritius as a destination of choice for higher education.

My Ministry has established three national committees which are tasked with formulating recommendation and implementable actions to attract more international students to Mauritius. The committees are namely, Internationalisation of Higher Education, Branding and Marketing of Higher Education, and Study in Mauritius Platform.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these committees, following extensive consultations with various stakeholders, presented their findings and recommendations at the Higher Education Summit which was organised by my Ministry from 04 to 06 June 2025. The recommendations are presently being translated into an action plan under the 'Study in Mauritius' banner and as an immediate step to develop a roadmap for attracting international students from key regions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a holistic approach is being adopted to promote the Study in Mauritius and Internationalisation initiatives and these comprise among others –

- facilitations regarding visa and work permit policies;
- simplification of application processes and the introduction of post study work visa framework to retain talents;
- language support, cultural adaptation, access to health services, student orientation and housing standards tailored to international needs, and

- promoting transnational education through joint-degrees, academic exchanges and virtual mobility programmes.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. Prayag!

Dr. Prayag: I thank the hon. Minister for such an elaborated reply. Can the hon. Minister also inform the House which countries are being targeted by the Study in Mauritius campaign? Thank you.

Dr. Sukon: Initially, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are targeting countries like Zimbabwe where we already have a large number of students coming to Mauritius, Zimbabwe, Botswana in Africa. And in Asia, we are targeting Nepal and Indonesia.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Hon. First Member for Port-Louis North and Montagne Longue.

CRÈVE COEUR – PROPOSED INCINERATOR PROJECT – STATUS

(No. B/689) Mrs A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the proposed setting up of an incinerator at Crève Coeur, he will state where matters stand, giving details thereof and indicating the expected start and completion dates thereof.

Mr Woochit: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House about the setting up of an incinerator at Crève Coeur, a plot of land measuring 1200 m² was acquired by the District Council of Pamplemousses from Terre-Agri on 29 September 2022 for a token sum of Rs1.

The proposed project involves the construction of a concrete building to accommodate an LPG fire human-incinerator along with a toilet block and other associated amenities. The initial estimated cost of the project is Rs26 million.

The District Council of Pamplemousses launched an open national bidding exercise on 19 February 2025 with a closing date of 03 March 2025. A total of five bids were received and opened on 04 March 2025. The evaluation exercise was conducted at the level of the Council. The lowest evaluated substantially responsive bid was submitted by R1 Enterprises Ltd for a total amount of Rs26, 97,812.50 inclusive of VAT. As this amount slightly exceeded the initial project estimate, an additional sum of Rs97,812.50 was requested from my Ministry.

Approval for the additional funding was granted and formally conveyed on 26 June 2025. In line with section 40 part (3) of the Public Procurement Act, notification letters were issued to both the selectors and unsuccessful bidders on 03 July 2025. As no challenge was received within the prescribed delay period, the contract will be awarded to the lowest evaluator responsive bidder by 18 July 2025.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following the signing of the contract, the contractor will have 14 days to take possession of the site. Works are expected to begin by the end of August 2025 and will be completed within a period of 12 months, that is, by August 2026.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Hon. First Member Piton and Rivière du Rempart.

SMALL SUGARCANE PLANTERS – LABOUR SHORTAGE – MECHANISED SOLUTIONS& FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

(No. B/690) Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the small sugarcane planters, he will state the measures being taken to secure –

- (a) adequate labour availability for the cultivation and harvesting of the fields thereof;
- (b) availability thereto of mechanized solutions to address labour shortage;
- (c) improved targeted financial assistance, subsidies or credit schemes to support mechanization and improve overall productivity and viability thereof, and
- (d) importation of labour with other ministries.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much hon. Member for putting the question. Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, I will seek your indulgence, but the reply is so long that I might as well circulate it.

The Deputy Speaker: Circulate it. Thank you.

Do you have a supplementary? No.

Hon. Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière.

NEW CANCER CENTRE – PET SCAN – ONGOING CANCER TREATMENTS

(No. B/691) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the New Cancer Centre, he will state –

- (a) the number of patients undergoing treatment thereat, indicating the types of cancer being treated, and
- (b) if it is equipped with a fully functional Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Scan and, if not, why not.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the National Cancer Centre, currently manages approximately 21,000 active cancer cases. According to the latest National Cancer Registry which is published annually, a total of 2,841 new cancer cases were diagnosed in Mauritius during the year 2023 comprising 1,205 cases among males and 1,636 cases among females.

The primary focus for treatment at the National Cancer Centre includes blood cancers and solid tumours or abnormal tissue masses that develop in organs or tissues.

The NCC in Mauritius provides comprehensive treatment for the most common cancer diagnosed in the country. Among males, the Centre treats cancers that are prostate, colorectal regions, lungs, stomach, ENT, head and neck.

For females, the NCC offers specialised care for breast, colorectal, endometrial, ovarian and cervical cancers, which represent the main cancer type affecting women in Mauritius. A total of 295 cancer patients have received treatment at the Radiotherapy Department of NCC. Major modalities of treatment include chemotherapy and surgical oncology.

I am informed that chemo sessions are predominantly conducted at NCC with 1,200 sessions per month and 1,500 chemotherapy sessions delivered monthly across the island in all regional hospitals.

Since Government took office, I took note that all equipment were lying idle. Consumables and medicines had expired, and no surgery was being carried out. Over and above the introduction of a second linear accelerator in December 2024, more patients have received radiotherapy at the centre. A full-fledged surgical Oncology Unit is operational at NCC since February of this year whereby 175 cancer patients have undergone surgery with technical assistance from foreign teams in certain cases.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the National Cancer Centre has successfully completed the installation, commissioning and licensing of its state-of-the-art PET CT scanner, SPECT-CT scan, DEXA scan and HDR Brachytherapy, marking a significant milestone in the enhancement of hybrid diagnostic imaging in Mauritius.

I wish to inform the House that the operational license has already been granted on 07 July 2025. As at date, 15 PET scan studies have already been carried out on a pilot basis. This number will increase in the coming weeks so as to allow more patients to benefit from this advanced diagnostic equipment.

In addition, my Ministry is having consultation with the Republic of India for acquiring the services of an Oncosurgeon to carry out onco surgeries at the New Cancer Centre on a regular basis, thus sustaining the oncosurgery programme.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Third Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien!

CAMP CAROL & KENYA – STATE LAND REGULARISATION

(No. B/692) Mr C. Lukeeram (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the plots of State land at Camp Carol and Kenya, he will state the mechanism, if any, put in place for the regularisation thereof.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Housing and Lands, can you please follow?

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: It was an exchange of national importance. Issues were at stake, but we managed to sort it out. So, thank you very much.

I am informed that in 1983, Government acquired from Mon Trésor Mon Désert, now Omnicane, at the nominal price of Rs10 a plot of land of an extent of 11 acres (65 perches) at Camp Carol, commonly referred to as Kenya, located near Le Bouchon, in view of regularising the situation of the families who have been occupying these plots of lands since the aftermath of *cyclone* Carol.

In 1985, part of the site was parcelled out whereby some 75 residential leases were granted. Subsequently, some 60 pre-July 2015 squatters, over the remaining part of the State land, were each granted a lease for residential purpose.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that following subdivision of some of the plots of land, there are at present a total of 149 plots at Camp Carol as follows –

- 145 residential plots;
- One plot on which stands a village hall;
- One plot occupied by the Arya Samaj;
- One plot leased to *forces vives* of Camp Carol, and
- One vacant plot.

My Ministry, in accordance with the provisions of Section 5(5) of the State Lands Act, also proceeded with the sale of State land to the families holding a building site lease for residential purposes. I am informed that 72 notarial deeds witnessing the sale of the land have already been registered. 37 cases are currently being processed, and 34 cases will be processed once pending issues relating to expiry of leases, dispute among heirs, and site occupation are resolved.

The remaining two cases pertain to suspected squatting that have not yet been regularised as further investigation is required. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Third Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien!

PLACE D'ARMES-NORTH EXIT – ROAD DIVERSION REVERSAL

(No. B/693) Mr C. Lukeeram (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the current diversion of the exit road from Place d'Armes to the North through the Royal Street or SSR Street, he will state if consideration will be given for the reverting of same through the motorway, back to how it was prior to the construction of the Metro Line.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that in 2015, the Road Development Authority (RDA) commissioned a traffic study with a view to reviewing traffic scheme in Port Louis so as to alleviate the current severe traffic condition along the motorway.

It was observed that one of the main bottlenecks was at the Place d'Armes intersection which serves as the main entry and exit point for both Northbound and Southbound traffic.

Further to the recommendation of the study, the Decaen Flyover Project was implemented in 2018 which connects Motorway M1 to A1 Road in front of Line Barracks to provide for a second entry point to the city centre for traffic coming from the South.

Various traffic schemes have been implemented by the RDA as an integral part of the Decaen Flyover to alleviate traffic congestion as follows –

- 1) Reconfiguration of the junction at Place d'Armes by eliminating the right turning movement to the North. This movement towards the North via M2 was prohibited to ensure a better traffic fluidity for the main stream traffic along the motorway for the Northbound and Southbound traffic;
- 2) Following the aforementioned traffic restraint, traffic are now using alternative routes to exit the city centre to proceed towards the North via M2 as follows –
 - (i) Left turning exit at Place d'Armes on Motorway M1. The U-turn at Caudan roundabout to the North (turning to the left roundabout then going to the North).
 - (ii) Royal Street-Nicolay Road-Military Road (the connection) to eventually join Motorway M2 through new Quay D interchange.
 - (iii) Brown Sequard Street via Orlean Street and Deschartres Street via Caudan roundabout and slip lane towards Motorway M2;
 - (iv) Brown Sequard Street-Orlean Street-d'Entrecasteaux Street - A1 Road-Colonel Sandapa Street-Caudan Roundabout and then the slip lane towards Motorway M2.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, prior to the implementation of the Decaen Project and the extension of the metro line to the Place d'Armes Metro station, there were five lanes in the Northbound direction with three through-lanes towards the North and two right turning lanes towards the city centre. There were two lanes in the Southbound direction. With this consideration, the capacity of the motorway at this particularly junction was adequate to cater for high traffic volume during peak hours for both through and turning movements.

Currently, there are only two through-lanes for movement towards the North and only one right turning lane towards the city centre, while the lane configuration towards the South has remained unchanged. This is because of the Metro Express Project. It has consumed space on the motorway. This has decreased, therefore, the capacity for moving traffic from five lanes to three lanes along the Northbound carriageway.

With this reduction in lane configuration from five lanes to three lanes, there has been a considerable decrease in the overall junction capacity, for both through and right turning movements.

From a traffic management point of view, the new road configuration has reduced capacity and restoring the right turning movement towards the North will critically impact upon the performance of Place d'Armes junction, resulting in longer traffic queues and considerable traffic delays for traffic along M1 and M2.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, therefore, from the foregoing, reverting to the old configuration is now not feasible.

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

FREE TRANSPORT SCHEME – BUS OPERATORS PAYMENT

(No. B/694) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the free transport allocation paid to bus operators in respect of students and beneficiaries of the Basic Retirement Pension, he will state –

- (a) the quantum thereof paid to bus companies and private bus owners in Financial Year 2024-2025, and
- (b) if consideration will be given for a review of the formula for the payment thereof.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am tabling the requested information which was obtained from the National Land Transport Authority (NLTA).

As regards part (b), I am informed that the regulator has already started working on the proposals to review the existing methodology used for the calculation and payment of the Free Travel Subsidy. I am made to understand that the current formula, which dates back to the introduction of the Free Travel Scheme in 2005, is primarily based on fixed amounts for different routes and the estimated fleet utilisation for each operator.

As such, payments to the bus operators are made as follows –

| Bus Company | Estimated Rate of Utilisation |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| NTC | 78% |
| UBS | 77% |
| TBS | 88% |
| RHT | 77% |
| MBT | 90% |
| Individual Bus Operators including Rodrigues | 90% |

The monthly free travel compensation per bus for Individual Bus Operators for the different routes including Rodrigues, range from Rs35,750 to Rs71,500 monthly.

However, with the forthcoming implementation of the Fleet Management System (FMS) which will enable real-time monitoring of bus operations including number of trips performed and distance travelled, the NLTA will be able to effect the payment of the free travel compensation more rationally, fairly and judiciously since such payments would be on a trip basis.

As such, Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Fleet Management System will undoubtedly allow for subsidy calculation based on the actual number of trips completed, thereby ensuring greater accountability, transparency, and alignment with level service delivery and therefore, better value to money to taxpayers.

Thus, the revised payment formula along with the support of the FSM will soon put a full stop to the current state of chaotic affairs – it is quite chaotic, hon. Members will know – which has perpetuated and worsened over the last decade. Here, I would like to emphasise on statistics which showcase that –

- (i) there has been an increase of 51% in our vehicular fleet since 2015 to date with vehicles which registered at the NLTA – it was 486,000 plus, now it is 736,000 plus. Therefore, one would expect more people to use vehicles than buses. So, therefore, nothing has been done during the past 10 years and I am questioning that now;
- (ii) the number of buses licensed with Road Service Licences has decreased by over 100 buses in the last 10 years, and
- (iii) the metro express has been introduced since 2020 and it commutes some 40,000 passengers per day. So, one will expect less people travelling by the bus.

Despite the aforementioned figures, the payment mechanism and quantum for free travel compensation have remained almost unchanged and I condemn this irresponsible disbursement of funds over the last 10 years.

This is why Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I maintained that the Fleet Management System will be a “Gamechanger”. A sum of Rs70 million, for the first time ever has been catered for this current budget exercise. The Consultant has finalised the document and same expected to be launched soon.

Furthermore, a consultation exercise has been fixed for Thursday 24 July 2025 wherein all concerned stakeholders including bus operators mostly will be briefed on the Fleet Management System, the forthcoming Bus Services Bill as well as an introduction on the Cashless Ticketing System which is also in the list of projects in the pipeline for my Ministry.

The above will undeniably bring a paradigm shift in the quest for the modernisation of the land transport, as provided for in the Government Programme 2025-2029.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Member!

Mr Quirin : Merci, M. le président. Par rapport à la décision du gouvernement de repousser la pension de vieillesse à 65 ans, l’honorable ministre peut-il nous dire comment il compte s’y prendre en ce qui concerne les personnes du troisième âge, justement, qui voyagent gratuitement par autobus, il y aura-t-il des changements à ce niveau ?

Mr Osman Mahomed: In so far as this is concerned, I think there is no need for concern on this. There is no change.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. First Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE!

BUS ROUTES 16, 80, 113 & 113A – TRANSPORT SERVICES – REMEDIAL MEASURES

(No. B/695) **Mr C. Baboolall (First Member Montagne Blanche & GRSE)** asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to bus routes 16, 80, 113 and 113a, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to the remedial measures undertaken to ensure regular and reliable public transport services, especially in the morning regarding the students.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the National Land Transport Authority (NLTA)...

The Deputy Speaker: If your answer is long, you can circulate it. It looks very long.

Mr Osman Mahomed: It is quite long. Can I read the essential parts then?

The Deputy Speaker: No, you can circulate it. My friend will...

Mr Osman Mahomed: Okay, thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Do you have supplementary questions?

The hon. Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka!

SUPPLY TEACHERS – WORK CONTRACTS – ENHANCING CAREER PROGRESSION

(No. B/696) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the current practice of enlistment of supply teachers in Mauritius, he will state if an assessment of the adverse impacts thereof on employee retention and motivation, in view of the precarity thereof, has been carried out and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the outcome thereof, and
- (b) if consideration will be given for the replacement thereof with a practice consisting of secured work contracts for enhanced career progression of the teachers and quality-driven long-term teaching for the students.

Dr. Gungapersad: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me at the outset convey my gratitude to all supply teachers who have helped my Ministry to palliate the shortages of academic staffs and ensure that classes are not let unattended and students are not penalised.

In fact, it has been the practice for my Ministry to have recourse under delegated power to enlist the services of supply teachers in primary and secondary schools as a contingency measure to cater for the shortage of educators who have proceeded on maternity leave, long vacation leave, leave without pay and study leave. The availability of the pool of supply teachers is also crucial where the gaps occur in the recruitment exercise of permanent educators, for instance, with the introduction of new subjects arising due to curriculum reforms.

It is also known that supply teachers do not benefit from the same compensation or other privileges as compared to holders of permanent post as educators, thus, impacting on their motivation and resulting in low retention capacity. To this effect, consultations have been held between my Ministry and the Ministry of Public Service on the modalities towards devising a more attractive scheme of service for supply teachers of primary and secondary schools with a view to improving their working conditions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, these consultations have resulted in the identification by my Ministry of a number of additional benefits that may be granted to supply teachers and these have been transmitted to the Ministry of Public Service. My Ministry has been informed by the Ministry of Public Service that the recommendations have already been made on the basis of our consultations to the Pay Research Bureau for consideration in the next report.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, a view of the fact that recommendations have already been made to the PRB, it is advisable at this stage that we await the outcome thereof, and hope for an enhanced career progression of teachers and quality driven long-term teaching for the students.

Moreover, after, *les Assises de l'Éducation* held in April this year, we are going to hold the validation workshops prior to finalising the blueprint for the education sector. I will personally ensure that the issue related to supply teachers is given due consideration.

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

CONSTITUENCY NO. 14 – PET CREMATION/BURIAL – ALLOCATION OF STATE LAND

(No. B/697) **Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the disposal of pet carcasses, he will state if consideration will be given either for the allocation of a plot of State land for burial thereof or for the identification of a designated site for pet cremation with the collaboration of the local authority in Constituency No. 14, Savanne and Black River.

Mr Woochit: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in accordance with section 50 of the Local Government Act 2011 as subsequently amended, the responsibility of the removal and safe disposal of dead animals from public roads and other locations rest with local authorities.

The burial of animal carcasses is regulated under the Animal Disease Act of 1925. At present, I am informed that there is no officially designated burial ground for dead animals under the purview of local authorities. In practice, scavenging teams collect animal carcasses from roadsides or other locations either upon complaints or during routine inspection. These carcasses are treated with lime, seal in plastic bags and transported to transfer stations for appropriate disposals.

I am further informed that in 2022, a motion was made by the hon. Member who was then serving as District Councillor, to identify a burial site for diseased animal within the

Surinam Cemetery or of the suitable location in the Savanne region. This proposal is still under consideration.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regard the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries, I am advised that no State land has yet been specifically allocated for the burial of pets.

Nonetheless, a formal request for this purpose was submitted by the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries to the Ministry of Housing and Lands during the first week of July.

Furthermore, the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare (MSAW) operating under the aegis of Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries provide disposal services for the carcasses of dogs, cats and other small animals. These services are provided upon payment typically ranging from Rs1500 to Rs3000 and include both the collection and cremation of carcasses at the incinerator located at Bassin Requin, Belle Mare. This facility operates under the Division of Veterinary Services of the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries and is open from Monday to Saturday.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of Health and Wellness plays an important role in ensuring that any animal burial site complies with public health standards. I am informed that should there be any disposal or need to bury pets in existing cemeteries where land is available, prior approval from the Ministry of Health and Wellness is mandatory to ensure that all sanitary and public health requirements are strictly observed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, environmental considerations also play an important role. The Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, through its Solid Waste Management Division, is tasked with ensuring that burial sites do not pose any risk of environmental contamination. In particular, any proposed pet cemetery must be located at least 30 metres away from the water resources, drains or similar features to prevent contamination and to address potential impacts related to climate change. The proposal to construct a new incinerator for dead animals at Saint Martin has been proposed in 2025-2026 budgetary framework. However, the establishment of such a facility or pet burial site would necessitate a comprehensive feasibility study and significant public investment. In addition to initial capital expenditure, ongoing costs such as staffing, equipment maintenance and utilities must also be considered.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, given the complexity of this issue, including consideration of public health environment protection, land use and financial implication, I am proposing the

establishment of a technical committee and this committee will comprise relatively of the Ministry of Agro-Industry, MSAW, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Health and Wellness and my Ministry. Its mandate will be to develop a comprehensive project proposal addressing the burial and disposal of deceased animals. I am personally liaising with the hon. Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries to advance in this initiative.

Thank you.

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

**TERRE ROUGE/VERDUN LINK ROAD – COST & DURATION –
REPAIRS/REHABILITATION WORKS**

(No. B/698) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the Terre Rouge/Verdun Link Road, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to the –

- (a) total construction –
 - (i) cost, and
 - (ii) duration of the initial project, and
- (b) major repairs/rehabilitation works carried out over the past ten years, indicating the outstanding works, if any, further indicating the –
 - (i) expected completion, complete rehabilitation and coming into operation dates thereof and
 - (ii) total variation costs incurred, if any.

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Road Development Authority that the Terre Rouge/Verdun Link Road now known as the Motorway M3 Road was initiated by the RDA on 18 February 2010 and the project was completed on 30 November 2013. The cost of the initial project comprising a total of 15.7 kilometres of dual carriageway was Rs2.162 billion inclusive of VAT. The final price was Rs2.896 billion inclusive of VAT, taking into consideration additional works, dispute settlement costs, remedial works, prolongation costs and price adjustments. The contractor on the project was Colas (Maurice), Colas (Madagascar) Terre Rouge/Verdun/Trianon Link Road Joint-Venture. Consultancy fees paid to the consultant Egis BCEOM International stands at Rs121 million inclusive of VAT.

I am informed that during the implementation of the project, several landslides occurred during the period 2010 to 2013 in four specific zones of cuts which prevented the completion of the project over a length of about 2.7 kilometres along the southbound carriageway towards Ripailles. I am informed that several attempts were made to reprofile the slopes at that time but given the complexity of the terrain, unusual geotechnical conditions and the high-water table, the works in hand could not be completed successfully. Hence, the decision of the RDA to allocate a separate contract for the treatment of the landslides in the best interest of the works. The contract was accordingly awarded to SinoHydro Corporation Limited for initial amount of Rs762 million inclusive of VAT. The commencement date was 3 October 2014 and the contract period was 457 calendar days, that is, up to 2 January 2016. Additional works were carried out for an increase in the scope of works due to redesign of slopes, installation of rock nets, extension of time with cost and repair of landslide, bringing the contract amount to Rs924 million inclusive of VAT. Consultancy fees paid to the consultant Gates on the project stands at Rs9.8 million inclusive of VAT.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that after the expiry of the defects liability period, on 19 January 2015, cracks reappeared on the finished road level of the Terre Rouge/Verdun Link Road near Valton roundabout. The transverse cracks propagated very swiftly and the road eventually subsided due to a failure of the embankment. Several consultants were appointed by the RDA to determine the cause of the failure and to propose adequate solutions and provide assistance during supervision of the works, namely –

- (i) ARQ Consulting Engineers South Africa for an amount of Rs4.1 million inclusive of VAT;
- (ii) Korea Expressway Corporation for an amount of Rs2.7 million inclusive of VAT, and
- (iii) Water Research Contractor for the boreholes drilling for an amount of Rs4.3 million inclusive of VAT.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been made aware that at that specific time, the professional indemnity insurance of the consultant Egis BCEOM International was still valid till December 2015. Despite that, for some obscure reasons, at that material time, the then Government did not explore any avenue legal or otherwise to recoup the cost of repairs from the consultant or the contractor. It should be highlighted that with a view to maintaining traffic on the Terre Rouge/Verdun Link Road at that point in time, a bypass road of 485 metres had to be constructed to avoid the damaged section. The works were allocated to

Gamma Construction Limited on 02 March 2015 for an amount of Rs18.3 million inclusive of VAT. The works started on 03 March 2015 and were completed on 06 April 2015.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, based on the solution proposed by KEC, namely a horizontal replacement method, the RDA awarded a contract for repair to embankment on Motorway M3 at Ripailles, project through Transinvest Construction, previously known as Colas, one of the parties to whom the initial contract was awarded as a joint-venture for Rs326.1 million inclusive of VAT. However, during the period mid-December 2017 to mid-January 2018, after frequent rainfall events, there were major cracks and slope movements, landslides on the mountain side which affected the ongoing works. Subsequently, the contractor based on the advice of a leading expert in geotechnical engineering, proposed to undertake pile stabilisation to prevent the sliding as an additional measure.

A consultancy contract was then awarded to CEREMA from France for an amount of Rs3.2 million inclusive of VAT which is specialised in such type of works, to undertake the reinforcement designs and provide assistance during supervision of the works. The piling works were awarded in September 2018 to SinoHydro Corporation Limited for the sum of Rs142.4 million inclusive of VAT plus a provisional sum of Rs11.5 million inclusive of VAT for unforeseen condition. The order to commence was issued on 22 October 2018 and all piling works were completed on 18 February 2019. The whole repair works were substantially completed on 19 July 2019. It is also worth to note that in January 2018, there was a collapse on the left-hand side northbound, approximately 475 metres from the Ripailles roundabout opposite one of the previously affected sections. In order to stabilise this section, a contract for the Design and Build Turnkey was awarded to SinoHydro Corporation for the sum of Rs133.4 million inclusive of VAT. The works started on 18 February 2019 and were completed on 16 September 2019.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a project which initially started on 18 February 2010 to be completed on 30 November 2013 for a sum of Rs2.283 billion has ended up to be completed in September 2019 for a total sum of Rs5.238 billion, more than twice its projected initial cost, depicting the vulnerable condition arising out of climatic change but at the same time, highlighting the weaknesses of non-timely actions which could have been taken in 2015.

As regards part (b)(i) and (ii), the question does not arise.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. Time is over!

The Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn – B/700, B/702, B/703, B/704, B/706, B/707, B/708.

Motion!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

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

Dr. Boolell rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: I suspend the Sitting for half an hour.

At 4.03 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 4.32 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Please be seated!

Hon. Prime Minister!

PUBLIC BILL

First reading

On motion made and seconded, the Financial Crimes Commission (Amendment) Bill (No. XVI of 2025) was read a first time.

Second Reading

THE FINANCIAL CRIMES COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL (NO. XVI OF 2025)

Order for Second Reading read.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move that the Financial Crimes Commission (Amendment) Bill (No. XVI of 2025) be read a second time.

Let me start, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, by reminding the House that, as stated in the Government Programme of 2025-2029, because of the serious challenges to rule of law and the role of the enforcement agencies, Government said that we will take measures to deal more effectively with crimes generally, but also including financial crimes.

This Government has repeatedly pledged that we shall leave no stone unturned in our commitment to strengthening the Mauritius investigating capabilities, particularly against financial crimes.

Before I come to the provisions of the Bill, I want to say a few words by way of introduction. After ten years of connivance by the previous government, when the scourge of drug trafficking was allowed to seep deep into the fabric of our society, the need for our law enforcement agencies to work more effectively together has never been greater.

Yet, the whole nation knows why was the Financial Crimes Commission Act passed. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it was not passed to intensify the combat against the money launderers, the fraudsters, the corrupt or the gangsters who have infected public life in our country. It was passed to protect or pursue those whom the last government ordained. Some people were completely protected; some people were harassed. That is why this Financial Crimes Commission Act was passed.

A good example is why else would they exclude the vital role of the constitutionally independent Director of Public Prosecutions, an offence against which the last government shamefully mounted, attack after attack after attack!

The Financial Crimes Commission was not created to work hand in hand with the other agencies, but to be controlled by one political party in its own interest. That is why it was passed.

Contrary to them, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we, in this Government, are introducing new legislation to rebuild the capacity of our law enforcement agencies to act effectively, independently and objectively. As the President's Speech has already foreshadowed, we intend to establish a new Mauritius National Crime Agency.

As we embark upon this essential amendment today, it is critical to remember its overarching aim, which is empowering our legislative authorities and eventually transitioning

towards establishing a comprehensive national crime agency, which would be modelled on the international best practices, notably in the United Kingdom.

In this regard, Mauritius has already started to work closely with the British authorities. This is provided in our strategic partnership framework established earlier this year in the context of the Chagos Treaty. This is already there. The United Kingdom has indicated its willingness to provide substantial support for the establishment of our National Crime Agency, including providing expert, technical and strategic advice, legislative guidance and organisational expertise. This collaboration will significantly enhance our capabilities to effectively tackle financial crimes and also other civil crimes.

The possibility of joint investigations, as outlined in the newly introduced Section 58A of the Financial Crimes Commission Act, marks a significant step towards this vision. This joint endeavour is being advised by a team of international expert investigators, embedded with the Police, who are helping to bring new techniques and approaches and sharper focus, urgency and coherence to important investigations.

Experience has shown, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that it is not always desirable or efficient to separate responsibility for the investigation of offences artificially. It is often the case that offences for investigation, of which the Police are responsible, are also closely connected to financial crimes, which at the moment, fall under the responsibility of the Financial Crimes Commission. So, these offences are being investigated separately; the FCC on one side and the Police on the other.

In such cases, it is obviously desirable and common sense that the two agencies, the Mauritius Police Force and the Financial Crimes Commission, should work closely together, and in certain circumstances, should have the capability of mounting a joint investigation into particular suspects or criminal groups.

These criminals, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, do not look at the statute. They do not see which compartments are going to affect them. The fragmented approach between the Financial Crimes Commission and the Police has often resulted in unnecessary duplication. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when there are duplications, you will find that there are leakages as well. Somebody has spoken to somebody else. Unnecessary duplication, but more importantly, delays in investigations and ultimately prosecutions.

At this stage, we urgently need to reinforce the capabilities of the Police and the FCC to provide a workable framework in order not to jeopardise enquiries which are ongoing or become necessary.

Criminal networks exploit these procedural gaps and this leads to the undermining of public trust and confidence in our system.

With the proposed amendments, we will ensure clearer, structured cooperation in three distinct and practical scenarios –

- (i) In the course of an ongoing police investigation, should evidence arise indicating financial crimes, which often does, that normally would fall within the remits of the Financial Crimes Commission.

So, you can see, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, two separate investigations are started. The Police now has a clear mandate not only to inform the Commission but also to directly collaborate with them. This will ensure a swift and coordinated response from the very beginning, maximising the potential for successful prosecutions.

- (ii) In the instances where the Financial Crimes Commission is already investigating an offense and the Police, in the meantime, uncover related criminal activities, joint operations can now be promptly initiated upon request.

This coordinated approach ensures a comprehensive, consistent, and unified investigative efforts across the different law enforcement bodies.

- (iii) The third scenario provides, what we can call, flexibility. Should both the Police and the Financial Crimes Commission agree that a joint investigation would be beneficial, they will be empowered to initiate a coordinated effort, pooling resources, pooling intelligence and special skills.

Such fluid cooperation will greatly enhance the effectiveness, speed and depth of investigative processes, leaving no space for the criminals to evade justice.

These interim measures, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, pending the fully-fledged NCA Bill do not in any way impede the work of the FCC or the work of the Police. They create a possible collaboration to ensure a more efficient process, given the ramification that can exist in large scale enquiries. Not only has the Commissioner of Police the obligation to inform the Commission but then the onus is squarely on the two investigative agencies to work together.

This amendment is intended to do just that. It is carefully designed to promote cooperation and where necessary joint investigations between the Police and the Financial Crimes Commission while respecting the current statutory independence of each agency.

And, I must explain some of the technical details of the Bill, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for example, clause 4 introduces a new section 58A (1) – I will move for an amendment later on – into the Financial Crimes Commission Act.

Clause 2 makes section 56 of the Act which gives exclusive power to the Financial Crimes Commission to investigate all money laundering, fraud and corruption be subject to the new section 58A, in other words, for the collaboration between the two. It envisages three possible separate situations –

- (i) Clause 58A (1) deals with the situation in which the Police are investigating or they intend to investigate an offense under the general Criminal Code or the Penal Provisions. While they are doing this, they may become aware that the offense they are investigating or intend to investigate, is connected to an offense of fraud or corruption under the Financial Crimes Commission which is not already under investigation by the FCC.
- (ii) The new section 58A (2) requires the Police to keep the FCC fully informed of the progress of the investigation and provides that the FCC may require the Police to investigate the fraud and corruption offense jointly. However, clause 58A also provides that the Police must serve notice – he cannot just do so – on the FCC that they are doing this.

The new section 58A (2) requires the Police to keep the FCC fully informed of the progress of the investigation and provides that the FCC may require the Police to investigate jointly with them the offense of fraud or corruption.

Nothing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in section 58A (2) prevents the FCC from doing so at any time during the Police investigation. That is deliberate because there may well be cases in which the FCC only becomes aware at some later stage that circumstances are there that make it desirable that it should also be involved because they are cases of financial crimes.

- (iii) Section 58A (3) provides for the second situation, that is, the Police are investigating or intend to investigate an offence which appears to them to be

related to an offence of fraud or corruption under the FCC Act which is already under investigation by the FCC. In those circumstances, the Commissioner of Police may require the FCC to investigate the fraud or corruption offence jointly with the Police.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in each of these two cases, the amendment gives both the Police and the FCC the right to opt for a joint investigation without the need for actual consent. They can do so if they feel there is a need for it. This reflects the fact that in each of these two cases, both law enforcement agencies will have a direct and substantial interest in the investigation. It might justifiably be that they will be impeded in their statutory functions, obviously, if related enquiries were to be pursued separately.

However, as I said earlier, they are not obliged to require such a joint investigation. The proposed amendments will open the possibility that they may choose to ensure appropriate coordination between the enquiries by informal consultation and cooperation under the new section 58 (5) and they agree for a joint investigation.

As I say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is only if either agency believes that from its perspective a joint investigation will be necessary and advantageous, and if the other disagree, that it would be necessary to exercise the statutory options the new section 58A (1) and (4) create. Whether or not the Police or the FCC reach that conclusion will depend, obviously, on the circumstances and individual facts of the relevant enquiries.

However, if one or the other agencies believes strongly that only closed and detailed joint planning and decision-making implied by a joint investigation will successfully lead to a resolution of the enquiry, it could then insist, only then, that a joint investigation be undertaken.

In those circumstances, clause 58A (4) requires each to put in place suitable arrangements for the efficient joint conduct on the investigation. This reflects the fact that in each of those cases, both law enforcement agencies will have a direct and substantial interest in the investigation which are very often, not only serious but very complex enquiries. However, they are not obliged, as I said earlier, for a joint investigation. The proposed amendments leave open that possibility, as I explained.

Finally, as I already intimated, clause 58A (5) provides for the first situation. It gives to the Commissioner of Police and the Financial Crimes Commission the legal basis to agree for joint investigations when it is plainly of mutual benefit and for the public interest.

At present, there is no expressed legal basis for formal joint investigation between the Police and the FCC. The Government believes it is desirable that the law in such important matter should be expressed and unambiguous. Indeed, it is reasonably to be expected and very much to be hoped that the new section 58A (5) will be the normal route to which joint investigations are established.

This Bill, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is intended to promote greater and more efficient collaboration and ensure the close and cooperative functioning of the two most important law enforcement and investigative agencies in Mauritius. This will be an important preparatory step for the formation of the Mauritius National Crime Agency and I cannot emphasise the seminal importance for Mauritius of making a success for that new institution.

In conclusion, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these amendments are fundamental to our unwavering commitment to transparent government, efficient administration of justice and securing a safe and prosperous future for Mauritius. They formed, in fact, the very bed rock upon which we will build our future National Crime Agency, ensuring Mauritius remains vigilant and resilient against financial and organised crime.

For the time being, it enhances cooperation between the two investigative agencies which will eventually report to the Director of Public Prosecutions, without in any way hindering or sidelining one or the other agency. It is, in fact, the DPP who will decide whether to prosecute or not to prosecute.

For these reasons, I strongly commend the Bill to the House.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(4.52 p.m.)

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

M. le président, j'ai entre mes mains la liste des orateurs et l'ordre des intervenants pour le *FCC Bill*. Je constate, malheureusement, qu'on déroge d'une des traditions établies pour les débats dans cette Chambre.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition...

Mr Lesjongard: C'est-à-dire, ...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, please, let me.

Your name is on the list to address the Bill before the House. I have before me the list of those who are going to intervene. And we are going to go according to that list. It has always been the tradition of this House for the Chair to go according to the list which is submitted to him/her. The Chair does not go behind the scene to see how this list is prepared or how we have come to that list. We will go according to that list. I will not allow any intervention or any remark made to that list. If you have any queries, you know, you are a seasoned politician, you have been Deputy Speaker, your colleague has been Speaker and you know what to do.

So, we will proceed with the list.

Mr A. Duval: May I please, raise to the attention of the Chair, on a point of order ...

The Deputy Speaker: Which order, which point of order?

Mr A. Duval: Yes, the point of order concerns the rules of debate, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to ...

The Deputy Speaker: Which point of order?

Mr A. Duval: On the rules of debate. Look at ...

The Deputy Speaker: Which point of order?

Mr A. Duval: You have to check the rules of debate.

The Deputy Speaker: No! No!

Mr A. Duval: The point of order is as follows, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No! No!

Hon. A. Duval, please! I have already said...

Mr A. Duval: May I please raise the attention ...

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, the rules of debates, I have to catch the eye. I know the rules of debate.

Mr A. Duval: I am glad you know it!

The Deputy Speaker: Sit down, please!

Mr A. Duval: May I raise...

The Deputy Speaker: Can I...

I am on my feet now!

(Interruptions)

Please sit down!

Hon. Members: Sit down!

An hon. Member: *Asize do. Malelve!*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Malelve!*

The Deputy Speaker: The rules of debate is about catching the eyes of an intervener
...

(Interruptions)

Mr A. Duval: *Ey ale do ta! Kisenla to pe fer per isi twa?*

The Deputy Speaker: The rules of debate is about catching the eyes of an intervener.

Mr A. Duval: *Apart to lavwa narien pa marser ar twa!*

The Deputy Speaker: You have been here; I have been here for more than 25 years now. It has always been the tradition that a list is submitted to the Chair and we go according to the list. We have a Chief Whip from the Government and we have a Whip for the Opposition. It is for you to take your responsibility. The list is before me and we are going to go according to that list. Thank you.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you have ...

Mr A. Duval: May I raise a Point of Order, please?

The Deputy Speaker: No! I am not going ...

Mr A. Duval: Can I, please...

(Interruptions)

May I ...

The Deputy Speaker: I am on my feet.

(Interruptions)

I am on my feet.

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Malelve!*

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Met li dehor!*

(Interruptions)

Mr A. Duval: I wish to ...

The Deputy Speaker: I am on my feet! Let me say...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members: Sit down!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Sit down!

Mr A. Duval: *Eta ale do ta!*

The Deputy Speaker: I am on my feet.

(Interruptions)

Order! Order!

We are ...

Mr A. Duval: *Al to lakaz do ta! To vinn isi pou fou dezord ! Sa mem to travay!*

(Interruption)

The Deputy Speaker: No, cross talking, please. I am on my feet!

We are going to address the Bill before the House as per the list submitted to me. I am not going to entertain any Standing Order or any remarks ...

Mr A. Duval: But you are being arbitrary!

The Deputy Speaker: ... or any remarks made on the list.

If you feel I am arbitrary, you know what to do. You have been a Speaker, if you want to challenge my ruling, you know what to do. Okay?

(Interruptions)

Now, let's go back to the Bill. Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you have the floor!

Mr A. Duval: I will raise it when I will speak.

Mr Lesjongard: M. le président, je voulais faire le point, parce que dois-je comprendre que c'est mon collègue...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition...

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: Laissez-moi terminer. Dois-je comprendre que c'est mon collègue, l'honorable Adrien Duval, qui aura à réfuter les arguments du leader de l'opposition...

The Deputy Speaker: I don't know what he is going to ...

Mr Lesjongard: ... à l'intérieur de cette Chambre ?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: He does not have to refute; he has to address on the Bill.

(Interruptions)

If he wants to address on the Bill, he addresses on the Bill, and you are being invited now, hon. Leader of the Opposition...

Mr Lesjongard: C'est pourquoi, je dis qu'on déroge d'une des traditions les plus importantes lors des débats à l'intérieur de cette Chambre, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, let's come to the Bill.

(Interruptions)

Order! Order! Let's listen to the Bill.

Mr Mohamed: *Tras traser Joe! Tras traser!*

Mr A. Duval : *Wai ! Mari approfondissement demokrasi!*

(Interruptions)

Mo pou al explike la!

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all, allow me to begin my intervention by referring and the hon. Prime Minister made reference to paragraph 10 of the Government Programme 2025-2029 and I quote –

“In view of the recent serious challenges to the rule of law and the role of enforcement agencies, Government will take immediate measures to ensure that they operate in a totally independent and transparent manner.”

It goes on –

“Government will repeal the Financial Crimes Commission (FCC) Act and will set up a national crime agency which will be better equipped to deal more effectively with financial and other serious crimes. The agency will not impinge on the prosecutorial powers of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) but will ensure that an investigation is carried out independently, objectively and effectively.”

M. le président, sept mois après, le Financial Crimes Commission Act, est toujours vivant et rien à l’horizon concernant cette nouvelle agence, c’est-à-dire, le National Crime Agency, alors que dans le discours programme, le gouvernement parlait des *immediate measures*, mais non-seulement des *immediate measures* mais aussi *that investigations are carried out independently and objectively*.

M. le président, avec cet amendement à l’ordre du jour, l’indépendance de la *Financial Crimes Commission* est grandement remise en question à travers l’ingérence de la police et le pouvoir du Commissaire de police sur les affaires de la *FCC*.

Mr Mohamed: *To pe badiner la?*

Mr Lesjongard: Ce n’est plus la FCC qui décidera...

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: *To kone ki to pe dir la?*

Mr Lesjongard: ... s'il faut ouvrir une enquête ou pas, ce sera à la police.

Mr Mohamed: *Pravind kin dire twa sa?*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order ! Order!. Let's listen to him.

Mr Lesjongard: Et pas plus tard, M. le président, que le 19 juin, le Premier ministre en répondant à une PNQ élaborée sur les mesures qui sont mises en place par le gouvernement pour réduire les problèmes liés à la situation de *law and order* dans le pays et il a affirmé ceci, je cite –

“We have already started implementing those measures.

“We are setting up, as I mentioned – I think I did mention – the National Crime Agency. It is not just an Agency. It will comprise specialist divisions with skilled investigators, including foreign ones. At the same time, the National Prosecution Service would be under the responsibility of the Director of Public Prosecutions.”

Encore une fois, un engagement du Premier ministre, mais rien. L'honorable Premier ministre va plus loin en ce qui concerne la police et le bureau du DPP. Il ajoute qu'il faut éviter le clash entre le Commissaire de police et le DPP. Voilà ce qu'il avait dit, M. le président, –

“You remember the clash between the Commissioner of Police and the DPP. We will stop this. Now, with the prosecution service as it is, it is the DPP who will decide who will be prosecuted. Not the Police! The Police can give their views, but it will be for the DPP to decide who will be prosecuted or not prosecuted.”

Mais aujourd'hui, on nous présente un projet de loi qui va créer, M. le président, une crise institutionnelle entre la police et la FCC.

An hon. Member : *Li pann comprend narien.*

Mr Lesjongard: On a voté il y a quelque temps de cela, le *Public Inquiry Act* et nous savions tous que la Commission d'enquête qui existait avant était indépendante. Mais, aujourd'hui, on nous propose une mainmise de la police sur une autre institution indépendante en l'occurrence la FCC, M. le président.

Mr Jhummun: *Beekarry ti independan ein!*

An. hon. Member: Kan to ti pe rod pran DPP!

Mr Jhummun: *Beekarry ti independan...*

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Lesjongard: Mon deuxième point, M. le président, est par rapport à l'effectif de la FCC et de la police.

Ces derniers temps, il y a eu plusieurs démissions au sein de la FCC. C'est vrai qu'il y a un manque de ressources humaines, mais la police aussi est déjà surmenée par la situation de *law and order* dans le pays. Elle est aussi en manque d'effectifs. Lors d'un *PMQT*, c'est-à-dire le 4 mars dernier, l'honorable Premier ministre avait fait comprendre à la Chambre qu'il existe plus de 3,000 postes vacants au sein de la force policière. Alors, nous nous retrouvons avec des institutions qui ont des problèmes de ressources humaines et on leur donne des responsabilités additionnelles.

Mon autre point, M. le président, est par rapport aux qualifications des agents de police pour entamer des enquêtes liées au blanchiment d'argent ou de fraude.

M. le président, ce projet de loi est le deuxième amendement proposé à la *Financial Crimes Commission Act* sous ce gouvernement. Un certain amateurisme de la part de ce gouvernement, M. le président. De mémoire, je n'ai pas connaissance de deux amendements apportés à une même législation en huit mois. Le comble, M. le président, est qu'au niveau de la FCC, on a toujours un *Officer-in-Charge*.

M. le président, lors des débats sur la *FCC Act* en 2023, c'est-à-dire en décembre 2023, l'actuel *Deputy Prime Minister* avait parlé des décisions fondamentales à être prises pour le bon fonctionnement de cette institution et que la nomination du directeur général de la FCC en faisait partie de ces décisions fondamentales. Il me semble, aujourd'hui, M. le président, que ce n'est plus le cas.

Le présent projet de loi propose tout simplement des enquêtes conjointes entre la FCC et la police. M. le président, c'est du déjà-vu. Comme après les élections de 2005, quand l'actuel Premier ministre avait présenté deux amendements à la *POCA* et avait revu la façon de nommer le directeur de l'ICAC pour avoir une mainmise sur cette institution. Aujourd'hui, 20 ans plus tard, la FCC est amendée dans les mêmes conditions. À travers ces amendements, on nous propose cette fois-ci de permettre au commissaire de police, le bras droit du Premier ministre, de s'immiscer dans les affaires d'une institution indépendante avec pour seule et unique mission de combattre la corruption.

Je dois dire que l'honorable Ritesh Ramful nous avait déjà annoncé la couleur en 2023 lors de son intervention. Je cite ce qu'il avait dit –

« Faites attention. Les rênes de ce monstre sont à présent entre les mains de ce gouvernement. Dieu saura ce qui se passera quand ce monstre changera de maître! »

Maintenant, on sait que le nouveau maître de la FCC sera le commissaire de police. Le commissaire de police, selon la clause 58A (1) de ce projet de loi, aura le privilège, et je pèse mes mots. M. le président, le privilège...

An hon. Member: Démagogie !

Mr Lesjongard: ...le privilège de démarrer une enquête sous la *FCC Act*. Est-ce que vous vous rendez compte de ce que vous êtes en train de faire ?

Donc, M. le président, demain si l'institution censée être indépendante qui est la FCC, qui a trouvé qu'il n'y a pas de lieu d'avoir une enquête sur un cas en particulier parce qu'il ne semble pas y avoir d'offense commise, le commissaire de police, lui, peut démarrer son enquête et procéder à des arrestations et mettre des charges provisoires comme bon lui semble.

Il aura tout simplement qu'à notifier la commission.

Dire que l'honorable Mohamed nous sortait cette perle en 2023, je cite –

"I say that no Labour Party government is entitled to have a law like that! No MMM government, no alliance government should have this despicable Act in their hands! It should be thrown out! It should be kicked out! And we undertake to throw it out!"

Et bien non, M. le président! Qu'est-ce qu'on fait aujourd'hui ? On l'améliore. Maintenant, le comble, c'est que les amendements à la *FCC Act* ouvrent une grande porte sur les dérives. Ne vous fiez pas aux autres sections qui suivent. C'est simplement du *eyewash*. Le plus important, c'est de permettre au commissaire de police de faire ses propres enquêtes sur des cas de corruption alléguée. C'est extrêmement dangereux.

Après le démantèlement, M. le président, de l'État-providence, nous assistons, aujourd'hui, au démantèlement de la lutte contre la corruption et de faire...

(Interruptions)

de la FCC...

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Lesjongard: ...un instrument politique.

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Lesjongard: Maintenant, ...

An hon. Member: *Fer komik!*

Mr Lesjongard: Maintenant, on peut parler de ‘monstre’, l’honorable Uteem.

Ms Anquetil: Tu me déçois !

Mr Lesjongard: Dommage que vous n’alliez pas respecter votre engagement pris dans cette même Assemblée en 2023 pour révoquer cette loi. Vous aviez tous sans exception fait le procès de cette loi.

Ce gouvernement, M. le président, avait même annoncé, je l’ai dit un peu plus tôt, une nouvelle institution. Mais on l’attend venir.

Cette annonce, M. le président, a créé un sentiment d’incertitude à la FCC. Depuis, ils sont plusieurs à avoir démissionné ou pris leur retraite anticipée. Ces officiers sont sous pression. Voilà que désormais, ils auront un nouveau chef en la personne du commissaire de police, l’homme de confiance de l’actuel Premier ministre.

Cet amendement, M. le président, est dangereux. Je ne comprends pas comment certains au sein de l’alliance...

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhummun: *Pann konpran nanye. Nanye to pann konpran!*

Mr Lesjongard: ...gouvernementale vont s’associer à ce projet de loi. Pourquoi un tel amendement, M. le président ? Alors que la FCC va être remplacée par une autre institution. Malheureusement, ce gouvernement prend des décisions catastrophiques et ce projet de loi en fait partie.

J’en ai terminé, M. le président.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Mr Jhummun: Au moins !

The Deputy Speaker: Quiet!

Mr Jhummun: *Bizin reste ziska la fin la.*

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. A. Duval!

(5.08 p.m.)

Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue): Thank you. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all, let me say that it is the first time that a debate is done wherein in Parliament, Members are being requested to speak after one another...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, do not try to...

(Interruptions)

Mr A. Duval: ...when it ought to have been...

The Deputy Speaker: Do not try to have a...

(Interruptions)

Do not try to have a second bite!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: *A size do!*

The Deputy Speaker: Sit down! Sit down!

(Interruptions)

Do not try to come back to that issue. Do not try to have a second bite of the cherry.

I have already given my ruling. If you want to intervene on this Bill, you intervene. If you do not want to, I am going to call the next orator.

Mr Jhummun: *Dir pass.*

The Deputy Speaker: So, you have the floor for the next 15 minutes.

(Interruptions)

Mr A. Duval: Let me say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when it came to voting amendments to the FCC Bill earlier this year, I was then allowed to refute hon. Ministers.

The Deputy Speaker: Address on this Bill!

(Interruptions)

Mr A. Duval: To speak after the ... The second thing.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Come to this Bill! Come to this Bill!

Mr A. Duval: No, I am just saying. I will table it. Same for all the other interventions, The Special Allowance Bill, etc., that was not the practise.

The Deputy Speaker: No!

(Interruptions)

Mr A. Duval: The people...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: You are again coming back to the same issue!

(Interruptions)

Mr A. Duval: The people will draw their conclusion.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. A. Duval!

(Interruptions)

Hon. A. Duval, sit down! Sit down!

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Asize!*

Mr A. Duval: *Eta! Ey ale do ta!*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Asize!*

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members: *Asize!*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Sit down!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order! Order!

Ms J. Bérenger: *Li pena oken respe!*

The Deputy Speaker: I am making a last appeal to you. You stand up and you address the House on this Bill.

Ms J. Bérenger: *Li pa pe respekte...*

The Deputy Speaker: If you do not want to address on this Bill, I have no alternative...

An hon. Member: *Dir pass.*

The Deputy Speaker: ...but I will go to call the next orator according to that list.

Mr A. Duval: Okay, I will take that to other places.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the first issue lies in the manner in which this amendment is being brought...

An hon. Member: *Koz la verite, dir lies.*

Mr A. Duval: ...the manner in which this amendment is being brought. First question, why was the Parliament Committee on the FCC not apprised of these amendments? When we know that the law provides at Section 129 of the FCC Act subsection (1) and Section 131 (1)(e) subsection (iii) that matters pertaining to reforms ought to be brought before the committee.

This was the case when the amendments were brought to introduce the threshold of Rs500,000 or less which are to be now exclusively undertaken by the Commissioner of Police. But that was not the case for these new amendments.

So, the first question – why have we bypassed the Parliamentary Committee? Why have we bypassed the law which provides that it ought to have been brought there first, ought to then have been made by a report, recommendations to this Parliament, to Government to bring legislative amendments. So, we take note that the Parliamentary Committee now has become, well, *chacun tirera leur conclusion de ce que le comité Parlementaire qui régit la FCC est devenu, une farce !*

Deuxièument, why the urgency? Why bring an amendment under a Certificate of Urgency which has only been introduced to Cabinet on Friday, and therefore, has been given to hon. Members a few days ago and we are being asked now to ponder on this urgent matter? An urgent matter – this bring me to the core of the issue – which was not so urgent. Firstly, at the time of the Budget and at the time of bringing the other amendments which I spoke about the introduction of a threshold to unclogged. I will come to it.

The first thing first. The spirit of the law behind the FCC; what was the spirit of the law? It was to have an apex investigative body that had all the means, all the personnel, all the equipment, the surveillance equipment, the special powers under the FCC Act to carry out

surveillance, to gather information, to call in investigative bodies, in fact, to co-opt people on its various boards, co-opt people from outside to have specialised knowledge on, for example, financial crimes. So, it has been given in the law leeway to do whatever needs to be done so that it can maintain its role as the apex investigative authority.

Now this section 58A is now saying, we going to sideline the FCC now. It is no longer going to be an apex because by definition apex sits at the top, and now, we are going to have the FCC which is going to have basically the same, if not a reduced, role to that of the Commissioner of Police who now by default will enquire for cases under Rs500,000 which I understand. This is logical in fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because when you hear the arguments brought, you will understand that the reason why such an amendment was needed, was to unclogged the machine, the investigative machine of the FCC to allow it to focus, of course, on major financial crimes. So then, it was decided and it was a good decision for minor offences to be dealt with by the Police. But then also, comes the Budget 2025/2026 which gives the considerable increase to the budget of the FCC – 38% increase. Of course, so that we allow the FCC to go and recruit personal it needs. In fact, 38% also in staff allowances, staff costs. So, the idea in the Budget was to allow the FCC to make use of all the arsenals it has been given. It was a monster by all means but still on paper, it has all the prowess of being an effective apex investigative body. But we increased the budget to 38% for this financial year.

Therefore, we tell the FCC, we are giving you more money, we are reducing your caseload, we are giving minor offenses to the Commissioner of Police for you to be able to focus on these important investigations that we judge as priorities. But then how do you explain that after all of that, the FCC by the way, with its Rs415 million has, do not forget, in-house counsels and attorneys, specialised investigators that have specialised degrees in investigating financial crimes, that received overseas training sent at the cost of the taxpayer to make them better, more efficient investigators.

This is where the money is supposed to go, where they have surveillance equipment including putting people on surveillance, tapping, etc. The FCC has that power in its legislation and there is, of course, the interagency cooperation where, as the apex body, it can call in whoever it wants under section 58 and hold hearings and people have to attend.

But on the other hand, we have now the Police. The Police who, do not forget, is supposed to prevent, detect and investigate crimes including the CCID but who sees its

budget in terms of human resources capacity being cut by 10% from 9431 officers funded for the last financial year down to 8550 officers. So, on the one hand, we are increasing FCC budget, we are telling them go and recruit. Here we are slashing police staff posted to prevent, detect and investigate, including the CCID, we are slashing among their ranks and we are now saying that section 58A makes sense. How does it make sense? How, when the proliferation of drugs is something which is happening at an unprecedented rate? Violent crime is on the rise. Insecurities are growing concerns in the heart and the mind of every Mauritian in this country. So, therefore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Police ought to have had other priorities, ought to have put their resources better, in places where they ought to have been more efficient.

But let us come to section 58 now, there are other issues in terms of how it works in practice. We know that the FCC, as the apex investigating authority, was not answerable to anyone or be it with the amendments that have been brought by this Government which were good amendments, I intervened on those when I was given a proper ranking to intervene after ministers. I did intervene to say that these amendments were in fact meritorious; to give back the DPP the power to take the decision whether to institute prosecutions or not.

But then, as still the apex investigating authority, it is now being asked to work in tandem with the Police in two manners. First, for existing investigations, the Police may request to step in – fair enough under your amendment. The Police, if you will see under this section 58A(1) where the Commissioner of Police considers it will be in the interest of the efficient conduct of an investigation into any offence under this Act and that the offence is not already under investigation by the Commission, the Police shall investigate into the offence. In fact, I was talking about subsection (3), but this subsection, let me make that point now, where a declaration will now be made at the Police, the CCID for example, if it has been assigned the file, *en tout cas, les Casernes*, will have the authority and the mandate to open the investigation themselves for an offence falling under the Financial Crimes Act. You look at it you will see if the FCC is not investigating it, the Commissioner of Police shall do it.

So, if a declaration is made at les Casernes, it can do it at the outset. It would then be for the FCC to ask the Commissioner of Police to step into the inquiry. Les rôles se sont renversés. Now, for the rest, I was saying where under subsection (5), where the Commission and the Commissioner of Police agree that it is in the interest of efficient conduct of the

investigation into an offence under this Act, they shall jointly investigate into the offence and for that purpose they shall make suitable arrangements.

So, that will concern ongoing investigations, potentially future investigations opened by the FCC but the matter remains that under subsection (1), the police will, from the outset, be eligible, be allowed, be enabled to open the inquiry themselves; it would then be for the FCC, for the Commission to request that they join in. This is how it is going to happen. So, is that not infringing, going against the spirit of the law?

And the questions that are being raised are as follows: will there not be another potential conflict between agencies? I will come to it. But first question, when we are talking of for example where will the interviews be conducted; interviews of accused, of witnesses; will it be at Ebene? Will it be at Casernes? Where will the files be kept? Are there going to be two files? Is there going to be one file? In which office is it going to be kept? At the Casernes or at the FCC? Who will be recording the statements? These are the questions.

And then you know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

The Deputy Speaker: You have got three minutes to go.

Mr A. Duval: ...the potential conflict under the investigation that is under section 58A, actually the FCC has to refer the investigation to the Commission to make a report and then the report is sent to the DPP but then, now that the Commissioner of Police may investigate as well, is he now going to be able to send himself the recommendations for prosecution to the DPP? To send the file to the DPP from the Commissioner of Police's initiatives himself or will it go under section 58A? Nothing provides for this and this brings me to the same conflict that brought this Government to introduce the Bail Act to clarify the powers of the DPP and the Commissioner of Police where there was at one point, institutions fighting amongst one another openly and which was, in fact, a disgrace for our Constitution.

But then, we remember for example, the hon. Ag. Attorney General at the time, my friend hon. Shakeel Mohamed, was then the one who brought the amendment to the House and he said –

“The encroachment blurred the lines between investigation...”

At that time, he was talking of the DPP and the police investigation and prosecution, two distinct functions assigned by the Constitution to test two separate authorities but what he said was more interesting about the police. It led to a toxic situation, one where the police and

the apex prosecuting authority were in open conflict, forced into lawsuits against each other. One where public trust in the justice system eroded as citizens questioned whose orders were the police truly following. One where suspicions of political interference in the detention of citizens were being justified. That was being said for the Bail Act. I will now ask the Government whether, this risk does not arise, where the conflict between the FCC and the Commissioner of Police become another source of open fighting.

So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

The Deputy Speaker: You may conclude now, please.

Mr A. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am concluding now...

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Mr A. Duval: ...to say that it is a shame that not enough time was given to Members of Parliament to look into these amendments, especially since in the past, this manner of doing things had been criticised. Earlier this year, Members of this House came to apologise when a Certificate of Urgency was used on another Bill introduced to Parliament where you were saying 'We apologise, this is not the way of doing things but things are urgent.'

I must say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have not found any compelling argument till now to justify why this amendment is being brought under this Certificate of Urgency, having bypassed the Parliamentary Commission which has been empowered to make recommendations of these sorts to this House.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Minister Uteem!

(5.26 p.m.)

The Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations (Mr R. Uteem): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the country, the nation and the generations to come when reading Hansard will remember that on a 15 July 2025 when this Government brought legislation to render investigations into financial crimes more efficient, more effective, the two Members of the Opposition took position against that law. Why did they take position against that law? Because this law is going to give power to investigate into malversation when they were in Government!

(Interruptions)

That is why they are objecting!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: He is just replying. He is replying...

Mr Uteem: The hon. Leader of the Opposition comes and reads from our Government Programme and says that we had said that we will take immediate measures to ensure that law agencies operate in total independence. What was the first Bill that we brought this year? Was it not a Bill to amend the Financial Crimes Commission precisely to give the independence, to restore independence to the Director of Public Prosecutions? Was that not fast enough? The Leader of the Opposition is telling us that we are taking time to bring the Bill on the National Crime Agency. We have been here for seven months, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. When the Financial Crimes Commission which was voted in 2023, do you know when it was announced by the MSM Government? In 2015! It took you eight

years to come up with the Financial Crimes Commissions and now after eight months, you expect us to come with a new law? And when we are not doing it, you are telling us about *notre procès d'intention*?

This Bill is urgent, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because there are ongoing investigations, there are potential investigations and the Financial Crimes Commission needs the support of the police to resolve some of these inquiries. This is the reason why we are coming here. And why are we coming here? The hon. Member did not say a word about the Financial Taskforce. Hon. Members would remember how under the MSM Government, the reputation of Mauritius as a financial centre, was tainted when the Financial Action Taskforce back on 21 February 2020, placed Mauritius on its grey list as a jurisdiction under increased monitoring. Soon after, the European Commission placed Mauritius on its black list of jurisdictions with strategic deficiencies in AML/CFT regime. There were serious deficiencies in our anti-money laundering and control of terrorist financing.

Why? If you look at the official communiqué issued by the FATF in February 2020, one of the main reasons why Mauritius was placed on the grey list was our inability to demonstrate, and I quote –

“(...) that law enforcement agencies had the capacity to conduct money laundering investigation including parallel financial investigation in complex cases.”

We were unable to carry out financial investigation in complex cases. There was a glaring lack of coordination between our law enforcement agencies. Institutions were operating *in silos*. Critical intelligence was not being shared and investigations were often delayed, compromised due to overlapping mandates and fragmented efforts.

May I remind the hon. Member what recommendation 30 of the FATF provides? I quote –

“At least in all cases related to major proceeds-generating offences, these designated law enforcement authorities should develop a proactive parallel financial investigation when pursuing money laundering, associated predicate offences and terrorist financing.”

This is what we are doing. We are applying what FATF is telling us to do; to allow parallel investigations.

What did the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) state in its report dated July 2018, which was the basis on which we were grey listed? At paragraph 6 of page 7, I read –

“Law enforcement agencies (LEAs) do not conduct parallel financial investigations in a majority of cases, and particularly for offences such as drug trafficking which is a high-risk offence in Mauritius.”

We were criticised precisely because the Police and the ICAC then were not doing parallel investigation. Today, when we are going to allow the Police and the FCC to conduct parallel investigations, you are telling us that we are *en train de démanteler la lutte contre la corruption*?

ESAAMLG, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, noted that the law enforcement agencies, ICAC, now FCC, the CCID, ADSU and MRA as well as the FIU had been working without proper cooperation, coordination and information sharing among themselves. This resulted in lengthy and ineffective investigation and very low number of convictions. *C’est cela le bilan du MSM. 10 ans!* How many persons arrested and convicted for fraud and corruption?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with the proposed amendment, there would be a proper cooperation and coordination between the Police and the FCC. Where the Commissioner of Police agrees that it would be in the interest of the efficient conduct of an investigation into an offence, they may jointly investigate the offence with the FCC. When they do so, both the

FCC and the Police will make suitable arrangements for the effective conduct of a joint investigation.

It would appear that hon. Adrien Duval, who left without listening to what I have to say about the points he raised, seemed to have completely overlooked the amendments that have been circulated.

Mr Jhummun: *Li pann konpran!*

Mr Uteem: The amendment clearly provides now that it is not going to be a monopoly of the Police or the Police taking over the work of the FCC or the Police replacing the FCC as an apex body. No! There will be collaboration. The Police “may”, not the police “shall”. The Police “may.” When the Police decides to conduct the investigation, they still have to inform the FCC. The FCC can say to the Police: ‘Let us work together. We conduct the investigation together. Let us work on a suitable arrangement for the sharing of information.’ It is not that the Police is replacing the FCC. The Police and the FCC will work together where necessary.

Now, why is that important, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? Let us take an investigation being carried out by the Police, ADSU, into a drug trafficking offence. They are investigating. They are collecting intelligence and arresting people. Then, soon they find out that the proceeds of the crime, the money, have been used to buy a yacht, a Raptor or buildings.

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Enn château à Angus Road!*

Mr Uteem: So, during the investigation, the proceeds of the crime are identified. At this point in time, what does the Police do? Under the then Prevention of Corruption Act, Section 45 (2) provided, I quote –

“Where in the course of a Police enquiry –

- (a) it is suspected that an act of corruption or a money laundering offence has been committed; and
- (b) the Commissioner of Police is of the opinion that the matter ought to be investigated by the Commission [ICAC],

the Commissioner of Police may notwithstanding the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2002 (...) refer the matter to the Commission for investigation.”

So, under the Prevention of Corruption Act, which preceded the Financial Crimes Commission, there was this possibility that in the course of investigation, the Police finds that an offence may have been committed under another Act which falls under ICAC. At that point in time, the Police could refer, “may” refer. And the Police could continue doing its investigation.

When the Financial Crimes Commission Act was voted in 2023, Section 56 (3), Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, provides that, I quote –

“Where in the course of a criminal enquiry, the Commissioner of Police suspects that an offence under this Act or the Declaration of Assets Act has been, is being or is likely to be committed, he shall, [Not he may. He ‘shall.’] subject to subsection (4), refer the matter within 72 hours to the Commission [the FCC] for investigation.”

So, here, the word is “shall”. So, as soon as the Police finds out that there is money laundering involved, they do not have any jurisdiction to continue investigation. The two exceptions are where there is an investigation in a fraud matter, the value of which is less than Rs500,000 or an investigation in the financing of drug dealing, the value of which is less than Rs500,000.

Why was that done? That was done purposely, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in 2023, to take away powers from the Police and give it to the FCC. Why? Because under the FCC law, as voted then, the FCC could close the investigation and not refer it to the DPP. That was the reason why the power was withdrawn from the Police and given to the FCC so that they can hide and cover up everything.

Hon. Members: Angus Road!

Mr Uteem: So that people like Franklin and others can be protected.

Now, that we have restored the powers of the DPP, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is only natural that we should restore the power of the Police to conduct an investigation in an offence which falls under the FCC Act, where it would be – that is the main tabloid – in the

interest of the efficient conduct of an investigation. That the Police be allowed to conduct the inquiry either together with the FCC or alone, but in coordination with the FCC.

Why is important? It is important because – hon. Adrien Duval himself said so – the FCC does not have the financial means which the Police has. Complex cases involving cross border transactions, investigations which require technologically sophisticated equipment and tracking devices are involved, the Police are better equipped than the FCC. When there is the need to cooperate with international crimes fighting agencies, again, the Police has treaties that they have signed where it is easier to ask for collaboration for cross border investigations if it is done by the Police. For example, Scotland Yard.

If the Police makes a request to Scotland Yard, there is no problem. But if it is the FCC which does so, then, it has to go through a lot of diplomatic channels before it is able to get the assistance. So, using the Police is not only more efficient, but also timelier. We are not saying that in almost all cases the FCC will now ask the Police for help. But there may be cases where the help of the Police would be important.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, no single agency can tackle financial crime effectively if it acts alone. The FCC, with its mandate to investigate financial offences, brings specialised financial expertise and forensic capacity. However, the Police, on the other hand, has broader investigatory authorities, more operational resources and law enforcement at reach. It is not like competing. Together, they are complementing each other.

We needed to bring this amendment precisely because we did not want any suspect, when going to court, to argue that the police did not have authority to conduct investigation once there was an offence under the Act because as I have alluded previously, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, under section 56 (3), the police does not have a choice, he has to give up the enquiry if there is an offence suspected to have been committed under the Act, the value of which is more than Rs500,000. So, in order to avoid any challenge by any suspect, that the police was not entitled to investigate, that is why we are bringing in this piece of amendment to plug that loophole.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Adrien Duval makes the big meal out of the fact that the Parliamentary Committee had not been consulted. Coming from a lawyer, adviser, I am very disappointed because the powers, the functions, the roles of the Parliamentary Committee is governed by the law, by the Financial Crimes Commission Act and under

section 131 – “Function and powers of the Parliamentary Committee” are there and they don’t have any role in legislative drafting, in suggesting law for joint collaboration. This is beyond their mandate and as primary counsel, let me remind him what was going on when the MSM was in power? There was not even a quorum, even the Members of Government were not attending that Parliamentary Committee. It was never sitting! And now, today, he is telling us, giving us lesson that we ought to have consulted a Parliamentary Committee.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will end by saying that allowing the police to conduct joint investigation with the FCC is in the interest of efficiency. This will send a strong signal to the public, to the international community, to the criminals out there that Mauritius is serious, unlike the Opposition, this Government is serious about fighting financial crimes, and above all, doing what they were unable to do which is securing conviction and recovering ill-gotten assets.

Allowing proactive parallel financial investigation will also reassure FATF and our international partners that we are strengthening our AML/CFT regime and this will enhance our image as a serious, well-regulated financial centre and the image which has been tainted by the MSM government. Never again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, should anyone ever point fingers at our jurisdiction.

I am done. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Attorney General!

(5.45 p.m.)

The Attorney-General (Mr G. Glover, SC): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, each time I rise towards the end of speeches following a proposal to amend a law, I am as astounded as the last occasion by the lack of precision of the Opposition in bringing out the true issues that need to be debated before this House.

The Leader of the Opposition, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has read the paragraph 10 of the Government Programme, he read very well, but that is in contradistinction with his fellow colleague the Whip of the Opposition who seems to have completely forgotten to read the proposed amendments to be moved at Committee Stage which led him to make a bit of a hash of his intervention as already pointed out by the hon. Member who has just spoken before me.

Now, we have been served with expressions like *crise institutionnelle*, *amateurisme*, *bras droit du Premier ministre*, *du déjà-vu*, all this from the Leader of the Opposition, barely is only one thing is that the Leader of the Opposition's reading of these proposed amendments *et* to use the language he likes to use, *une lecture simpliste et biaiser pour des raisons bassement politique*. That the FCC Act is a despicable piece of legislation, is a true statement; that the FCC Act will be repealed is also a truism. What we will do is to bring about a proper legislation, one which reflects our commitment to the rule of law, not what one wants to do in order to take control over things.

And on the matter of control, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Whip of the Opposition is absolutely wrong when he says that there would be a potential conflict between the FCC and the Commissioner of Police. The hon. Prime Minister has very clearly set out the scenarios which are capable of existing under the proposed amendments and let me at this stage go back to what I had planned to say to this House this afternoon.

This Government, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir has repeatedly pledged that we shall leave no stone unturned in our commitment to strengthen our countries, investigative capabilities particularly against financial crimes. In previous debates, I have emphasized that ensuring a functional criminal justice system is a priority of ours. The aim being to reconcile the preservation of liberty and rights, balanced to the imperatives of security and accountability. Today, we revisit these principles through the lens of cooperation between law enforcement entities. Why? Because it is important to remind ourselves that although institutions must operate independently, they must nevertheless act cohesively.

Indeed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we must acknowledge that today's landscape of financial crimes is more complex than ever. As such all criminal offences involving sums of money would at some stage also reveal aspects of money laundering or illicit financial flows. The interconnectedness demands, at the very least, cooperation between the police and the Financial Crimes Commission.

So far, we have witnessed, unfortunately, situations where parallel investigation by these two entities though extensively addressing different offences inevitably encroach upon the same set of facts. I, myself, in my career, have argued a number of cases where the police were prosecuting an accused party under certain offences under the Criminal Code whilst at the same time, before a different Division of the Intermediate Court (Criminal Division) the same accused party, on the same facts, was being prosecuted under FIAMLA. This must stop

and this must be dealt with from the time of investigation. The overlap, as my learned friend the hon. Minister Uteem earlier on said, is obvious in cases of drug trafficking where separate investigations between ADSU and FCC can often lead to different results. A suspect may confess or collaborate with one entity whilst the other is left in the dark and its enquiry goes nowhere.

The situation therefore creates duplicated efforts, wasteful expenditure and ultimately judicial uncertainty. Our courts would only be able to eventually address such overlaps when they are seized of the matters but even then, the procedural delays in determining whether two prosecutions relate to the same facts unnecessarily prolong legal uncertainty. And there is the possibility of contrasting, if not contradictory, judgements where one court would believe the FCC's case but not the case of the police, leading to a situation where the police is convicted of laundering the proceeds of crime but not convicted of the crime itself.

At the same time, some criminal networks exploit those procedural gaps, ultimately undermining public trust and confidence in our justice system.

The necessity, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, of joint and coordinated investigations between the FCC and the police, is also a matter of international compliance. The Financial Action Task Force in its Recommendation 30, calls upon countries to ensure, and I quote –

“... designated law enforcement authorities have responsibility for money laundering and terrorist financing investigations within the framework of national AML/CFT policies.”

It specifically urges that in all cases related to major proceeds-generating offences, authorities should develop and I quote –

“a proactive parallel financial investigation.”

And that this should cover cross border predicate offenses.

Crucially, it also states that countries should use permanent or temporary multidisciplinary groups specialised in financial or asset investigations. In other words, the very structure of our law enforcement must reflect a capacity for institutions such as the FCC and the police to work jointly, swiftly and effectively across jurisdictions and investigative trails. This Bill represents a step towards that alignment.

The proposed joint investigative mechanism stands a practical solution, allowing early-stage collaboration to avoid procedural pitfalls and ensure efficient use of resources. It

respects the distinctive mandate of each entity whilst acknowledging their intersection in the practical reality of complex investigations.

The possibility of joint investigations, as outlined in the newly introduced section 58A of the Financial Crimes Commission Act, before this House today, allows for clearer, structured co-operation in three distinct scenarios. These three scenarios have been clearly spelt out by the hon. Prime Minister in his address. There is no need for me to go over these again. The mechanism provided in the new section 58A is mindful of the inherent independence of the two agencies and not as alleged that one would actually overstep on the authority of the other. Although the default position is the situation when both agencies agree to work together, the law provides for other possible situations. The imperative that can be culled from these amendments is one of efficient collaboration when the circumstances demanded.

To summarise, if both the FCC and police do not see the merit of a joint investigation, there will be none. If both decided one is necessary, they are free to pull their efforts freely but if ever one of them is of the opinion that a joint investigation is needed and the other agency is not so sure, the law will now command co-operation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the importance in urgency of these amendments is reflected in the fact that we are not waiting for the establishment of the new National Crime Agency to include them in our law enforcement arsenal. They reflect, *n'en déplaie à certains*, our broader vision articulated in the Government Programme 2025-2029, which emphasises on modernising and strengthening our justice system, fortifying our investigative frameworks and renewing public trust in our law enforcement institutions.

By embedding structured joint investigations in our law today, we are laying a strong foundation for the establishment of the fully functional National Crime Agency that will comprehensively address not just financial crimes but all forms of serious and organised criminal activities.

Indeed, the UK's National Crime Agency provides a compelling model, showcasing the clear advantages of integrated investigating frameworks, collaborative policing and strategic resource allocation. Our collaboration with the UK government expected to run into 2026, will ensure Mauritius benefits fully from what has worked in the UK and the lessons learned there as well. Drawing from such international experience, our amendments today prepare

Mauritian institutions to seamlessly involve into a similarly powerful and effective entity from the outset.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in our previous legislative amendments, notably to the Bail Act and the Financial Crimes Commission Act itself, we have consistently aimed to resolve ambiguity and clarify roles. Just as we saw to rectify the confusion between prosecutorial and investigative files in the previous amendments to the FCC Act, so too, do we today, aim in reinforcing clarity.

This government remains steadfastly committed to ensuring the rule of law remains the cornerstone of our democracy. Our institutions must be clear in their purpose, independent in their operations and co-operative in their execution.

In conclusion, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these amendments are important to our commitment to securing a safe and prosperous future for Mauritius. They form the bedrock upon which we will build our future National Crime Agency, ensuring Mauritius remains vigilant and resilient against financial and organised crimes for many years to come.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with these words, I commend the Bill to House.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister!

(5.58 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sorry for my voice. I sometimes despair that I have to answer these ridiculous things that they say.

The hon. Minister, Reza Uteem, and just before me, the Attorney General have responded so clearly as to why these amendments are being brought. The Leader of the Opposition asked why in the Programme we said that a new law, the NCA will be passed, and then after seven months, nothing.

Hon. Reza Uteem quite rightly pointed out. They took eight years to do what they said they would do. Eight years! And you are asking me as why in seven months we have not done it! In fact, we explained that there are already people from Scotland Yard who are helping us, police officers, investigative police officers. This is a transitional exercise that we are doing until the NCA is properly vetted and ready to be passed.

The other ridiculous thing was about the Parliamentary Committee. I think hon. Uteem rightly pointed out – since when do we pass legislation after consulting the Parliamentary Committee. It does not. Never! That's never happened.

Ms Anquetil: Incroyable!

Mr A. Duval: Three months ago!

The Prime Minister: It's ridiculous!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Listen! Listen!

The Prime Minister: You should have been here when he spoke, but you were not here. You should have been here. He explained that properly for your benefit.

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *To pa ti la!*

The Prime Minister: Because obviously you are ignorant of all this.

Mr A. Duval: Three months ago!

An hon. Member: Read the law!

Mr A. Duval: Ask the Junior Minister!

An hon. Member: Read the law!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: He told you, read the law.

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Let's listen to the hon. Prime Minister. Come on.

Ms J. Béranger: *Dir li res trankil!*

Dr. Aumeer: *Li ti al promne deor. Li pann tan repons!*

The Prime Minister: I would just repeat what I said anyway. Everybody knows why the FCC was passed; everybody knows, including your father because he objected to it. It was not to intensify the combat against fraud, corruption or crimes, whatever. No, it was to protect those who the last government wanted to protect and to harass those they wanted to harass. That was the reason; that's the only reason.

I will give you an example. You remember the former Director of ICAC? He said one thing and then he went to the usual committee of the Privy Council on MedPoint and said the other thing, contradicting ICAC itself! But what hon. Adrien Duval does not seem to know or has forgotten – Angus Road! You know what the FCC did? We had asked for mutual

assistance. When they came to power, they wrote to the UK authorities to say that they are cancelling the demand for mutual assistance.

An hon. Member: *Bez sa!*

The Prime Minister: They cancelled it for Angus Road so that no investigation is done, because they knew what would have happened. That is what they did.

Mr Mohamed: And you sit next to them!

The Prime Minister: Actually, we cannot believe that this was done! And these are the very people who are now telling us what to do and what not to do! I despair, as I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! *Les rôles sont renversés.*

As the hon. Attorney General said, they are missing the real issues. They are trying to do politics while missing the real issues.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(The Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

THE FINANCIAL CRIMES COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL

(No. XVI of 2025)

Clauses 1 to 3 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 4 (New section 58A inserted in principal Act)

Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill”.

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I move for the following amendment in clause 4

—

In clause 4, in the proposed new section 58A –

- (a) in subsection (1), by deleting the words “investigation into any offence under this Act that the Police should investigate into the offence” and “shall investigate” and replacing them by the words “existing or intended investigation

into any offence that the Police should investigate into an offence under this Act” and “may investigate”, respectively;

- (b) in subsection (3), by deleting the words “is investigating” and “a suspected offence” and replacing them by the words “is investigating or intends to investigate” and “an offence”, respectively;
- (c) in subsection (4), by deleting the words “agree to undertake” and replacing them by the words “makes a request for”.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

The title and enacting clause were agreed to.

The Bill, as amended, was agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: Please be seated!

On the Assembly resuming with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair, the Deputy Speaker reported accordingly.

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Financial Crimes Commission (Amendment) Bill (No. XVI of 2025) was read the third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 22 July 2025 at 11.30 a.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned!

At 6.05 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 22 July 2025 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY – ACCOUNTS – PUBLIC FUNDS MANAGEMENT

(No. B/650) Mr F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Accounts of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, he will state –

- (a) the measures and remedial actions, if any, taken to strengthen the governance and management of public funds for budget transparency, accountability and credibility, and
- (b) whether new guidelines have been issued for the reallocation and virement of funds, as recommended in the Fourth Report of the Public Accounts Committee of the Seventh National Assembly and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, why not.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, the National Audit Office has observed the following shortcomings in the financial statements of Financial Year 2023/24 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA).

First, the financial statements of RRA for Financial Year 2023/24 were prepared on cash basis instead of accrual basis as per the established road map for the adoption of accrual-based International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).

The Ministry of Finance has been providing technical support to the RRA for the preparation of financial statements on accrual-based IPSAS.

Second, the Director of Audit has highlighted that there was no marked improvement in the functioning of the Internal Control Unit at the level of the RRA.

To strengthen the governance at the RRA, measures are being taken to adequately staff the Internal Control Unit.

Third, the National Audit Office has also mentioned that no Audit Committee Charter has been signed between the Accounting Officer of RRA and the Chairpersons of the Audit Committees of Commissions at the RRA. As a result, there was no proper follow up on the recommendations of both the Director of Audit and the Internal Control Unit. In fact, no meetings were held by the Audit Committees for Financial Year 2023/24.

The Ministry of Finance is working with the RRA to address the weaknesses.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the Public Accounts Committee, in its report dated 01 October 2024, noted with concern –

“(...) funds were reallocated by the RRA from one vote item to another in excess of the permitted 2% of a vote item without notifying the Ministry. Such reallocation of funds was not properly monitored at the level of the Ministry resulting in mismanagement of projects and wastage of public funds.”

The Public Accounts Committee has recommended the issuance of new guidelines for reallocation and virement of funds by the RRA.

I wish to inform the House that all financial instructions, including virement, in the Financial Management Kit also apply to Rodrigues, with such modifications and adaptations as may be necessary.

The Chief Commissioner’s Office of the RRA has issued a Circular in June 2025 on Procedures of Reallocation that are not consistent with the Ministry of Finance policy and principles on virement.

I wish to inform the House that the Ministry of Finance will work with the RRA on a revised circular on virement that will ensure consistency with the central government budgetary control and financial governance.

DUBAI EXPO 2020 – MAURITIAN DELEGATION – PARTICIPATION COST

(No. B/651) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand’ Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether in regard to the Dubai Expo 2020, he will state the names of the former Ministers, Parliamentary Private Secretaries and Members of Parliament who attended same, indicating in each case, the total participation cost thereof, giving details as to the –

- (a) duration of stay, and
- (b) per diem or any other allowance drawn.

(Withdrawn)

MRS S.O., ATTORNEY AT LAW – FEES & ALLOWANCES & FRINGE BENEFITS

(No. B/652) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in

regard to Mrs. S.O., Attorney at Law, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the total quantum of fees and allowances paid out thereto, together with the other fringe benefits to which she was entitled over the period 2015 to 2024 in her capacity as legal representative, chairperson, board member and for any other legal services rendered to the different Ministries and parastatal bodies.

(Withdrawn)

MRS. N. D. J. N. – EXCISE DUTY CONCESSION – IMPERSONATION – INQUIRY

(No. B/653) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to Mrs. N. D. J. N., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority and the Commissioner of Police, respectively, information as to whether an alleged case of impersonation on an application form for excise duty concession submitted in her name has been reported and, if so, indicate if inquiries have been initiated thereinto and, if so, where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

CUREPIPE, MALHERBES – 24 SEPT 2024 INCIDENT – INQUIRY STATUS

(No. B/654) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the incident which occurred on or about 24 September 2024 at Malherbes, in Curepipe, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand regarding the inquiry initiated thereinto following the complaint lodged by Mr. G. G.

(Withdrawn)

ROSE BELLE CIVIL STATUS OFFICE – PROPOSED RELOCATION

(No. B/655) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Rose Belle Civil Status Office, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Civil Status Office, information as to whether consideration will be given for the relocation thereof in a premise of good standard and comprising basic amenities and in the vicinity of the Health Office delivering permits for cremation.

(Withdrawn)

FORMER PRIME MINISTER – ADVISERS DETAILS

(No. B/656) Mr C. Lukeeram (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Advisers whose services were retained by the former Prime Minister, he will state the names and pay packages thereof, including the boards on which they equally served over the period 2015 to November 2024.

(Withdrawn)

SOCIAL MEDIA – CYBERBULLYING – REPORTED CASES & MEASURES TAKEN

(No. B/657) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to cyberbullying on social media, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof since January 2025 to date, indicating the –

- (a) number thereof –
 - (i) in which female victims are involved, and
 - (ii) resolved as at to date, and
- (b) measures envisaged to address the severity of the problem on a national level.

Reply: With regard to part (a) (i) and (ii) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since January 2025 to 11 July 2025, 113 cases having a connotation of cyberbullying have been reported, out of which 58 female victims were involved. 1 case has been filed as the accused has remained unknown and the remaining 112 cases are under inquiry.

It should be highlighted that it is only after the inquiry is completed at the level of the Police and after all elements have been ascertained, that the case is formally prosecuted under section 17 of the Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Act 2021 as cyberbullying.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the Police and the Computer Emergency Response Team of Mauritius, (CERT-MU) of the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation have taken several measures to curb the proliferation of cyberbullying as follows –

- (i) The conduct of cyber patrol by Cybercrime and IT Unit to detect any offences;
- (ii) Continuous awareness and sensitization via media and radio programmes for different audiences such as educators and students in educational institutions;
- (iii) the publication of guidelines and informative videos to promote the safe usage of the Internet on the website of the CERT-MU, and
- (iv) the use of alert system by the CERT-MU to the population in case of emerging threats as it was for the case of the OMETV alert which was sent to all the schools and colleges across the island in order to sensitise the students.

I wish to further inform the House that Government is coming up with the establishment of a specialised unit within the Police to deal with issues pertaining to cybersecurity with the assistance from foreign expertise.

FOREIGN WORKERS – JAN 2015-2024 – ILLEGAL STAY – NUMBER & NATIONALITY

(No. B/658) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to foreign workers recruited since January 2015 to November 2024 having overstayed their Occupation Permit and currently illegally staying on the Mauritian territory, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Passport and Immigration Office, information as to the number and nationality thereof.

(Withdrawn)

POLICE OFFICERS – FOOT & BICYCLE PATROLS – EQUIPMENT UPGRADE

(No. B/659) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to Police Officers assigned to foot and bicycle patrols, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the standard equipment currently issued thereto, indicating whether any upgrade thereof is currently being envisaged in line with international norms and, if so, further indicate the –

- (a) equipment being proposed,
- (b) quantity being contemplated, and

- (c) expected timeline for implementation.

(Withdrawn)

SODNAC WELLNESS PARK – OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT – PROPOSED REPLACEMENT

(No. B/660) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Sodnac Wellness Park, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Employees Welfare Fund, information as to whether consideration will be given for the replacement of the outdoor equipment found thereat and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS PORTS AUTHORITY – RODRIGUES MISSION – PURPOSE & DETAILS

(No. B/661) Mr F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the recent mission undertaken by the Chairperson and officers of the Mauritius Ports Authority to Rodrigues, on or about 9 to 13 June 2025, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to the purposes thereof and give details of the outcome thereof and of any action taken for improved service delivery.

Reply: I am informed that the purpose of the visit was to discuss the recommendations of the Port Master Plan as well as taking cognisance of port operational constraints in Rodrigues.

During the visit, the following issues were discussed with the Chief Commissioner and the officials of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly –

- (i) the construction of a new commercial quay at Pointe Monnier;
- (ii) the lack of space at the container depot due to an increasing number of containers being transported, and
- (iii) the use of yard equipment for container/cargo handling.

These issues are now being considered by the relevant authorities.

**SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – ADDITIONAL PARKING SLOTS –
DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE**

(No. B/662) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Airport Terminal Operations Ltd., information as to whether consideration will be given for the provision of –

- (a) additional parking slots, roads and exit gates thereat, and
- (b) adequate directional signage on the parking areas of the old terminal, indicating the current use made thereof and if same will be operational anew and, if so, when, giving details thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**MR P.K.J. & MRS K.J. – IMMOVEABLE PROPERTY ACQUISITION
ALLEGATIONS – INQUIRY**

(No. B/663) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the allegations levelled against Mr P.K.J. and Mrs K.J. in relation to the acquisition of immoveable properties at Angus Road, in Vacoas, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand regarding the inquiry initiated thereinto, indicating the –

- (a) names of the witnesses heard in relation thereto, further indicating if late Mr L.G. and Mr P.K.J. have been heard, and
- (b) if there has been any evidence of attempts to close the inquiry.

(Withdrawn)

**BANK OF MAURITIUS – GOVERNOR & DEPUTY GOVERNORS –
REMUNERATION**

(No. B/664) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External

Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the current Governor and Deputy Governors of the Bank of Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, in each case, obtain information as to the remuneration drawn, including other allowances/benefits received, whether in cash or in kind.

(Withdrawn)

LE MORNE PUBLIC BEACH – BASIC AMENITIES PROVISION

(No. B/700) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the Morne Public Beach, especially, at the stretch between the Riu and St Regis hotels, he will state if consideration will be given for the –

- (a) renovation of the existing toilets and provision of electricity and water thereat, and
- (b) installation of –
 - (i) showers;
 - (ii) shops for beach hawkers selling food and drinks, and
 - (iii) a mess room for the toilet cleaners.

(Withdrawn)

LIQUID PETROLEUM GAS – AUTOGAS DISPENSERS – SAFETY MEASURES

(No. B/702) Mr P. Venkatasami (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the number of vehicles equipped with Autogas kit using Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) as fuel decanted from cooking gas cylinders, he will state if consideration will be given to request local petroleum companies to equip their fuel stations with Autogas dispensers with a view to render the exercise of filling vehicles with LPG safe and, if so, when, indicating the estimated cost per kg/litre thereof and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

MONTAGNE BLANCHE – NEW FIRE STATION – PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/703) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the proposed Construction of a

New Fire Station at Montagne Blanche, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service, information as to where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

PROTECTED SANDALWOOD SPECIES – HARVESTING & TRADE – LICENCES – CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

(No. B/704) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the protected sandalwood species, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) how the harvesting and trade thereof, including on private land, are regulated, indicating the number of licences issued therefor over the past five years and the terms and conditions thereof, and
- (b) whether –
 - (i) any reforestation, monitoring or conservation programmes are being implemented to ensure sustainable growth thereof, and
 - (ii) a toughening of the legal or enforcement measures to address illegal harvesting and/or export thereof is being considered.

(Withdrawn)

CONSTITUENCY NO.13 – INCINERATOR SERVICES

(No. B/706) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to incinerator services in Constituency No.13, Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac, he will state the current status thereof.

(Withdrawn)

WAKASHIO SHIPWRECK – COMMISSION OF INQUIRY – COMPENSATION

(No. B/707) Mr t. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) ask the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the Wakashio Shipwreck, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) where matters stand as to the –
 - (i) inquiry initiated thereinto, and
 - (ii) payment of the compensation due to people of the South East affected therewith, and
- (b) whether the report of the Commission of Inquiry set up to look thereinto will be made public.

(Withdrawn)

**MORCELLEMENT AUREA – VERDUN-TERRE ROUGE ROUNDABOUT –
WIDENING & REINSTATEMENT**

(No. B/708) Mr P. Venkatasami (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the new Belle Rive Hermitage Bypass connecting the Verdun-Terre Rouge-Trianon Link Road through the B48 Road, he will state if consideration will be given for the widening and reinstatement of the B48 Road from Morcellement Aurea to its junction with the Verdun-Terre Rouge roundabout and, if so, indicate the expected start and completion dates thereof.

(Withdrawn)