



EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 07 OCTOBER 2025

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(Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)

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

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

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

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Deputy Speaker	Hon. Vedasingam Vasudevachariar Baloomoody
Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Hon. Mohamed Ehsan Juman
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MAURITIUS

Eighth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 33 of 2025

Sitting of Tuesday 07 October 2025

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

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Office of the President

The Annual Report of the Ombudsperson for Children for the period September 2024 to August 2025.

B. Office of the Speaker

The First Report of the Parliamentary Gender Caucus.

C. Prime Minister's Office

Ministry of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications

Ministry of Finance

Ministry for Rodrigues and Outer Islands

- (i) Certificate of Urgency in respect of the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation Bill (No. XXII of 2025). (In Original)
- (ii) The Income Tax (Amendment) Regulations 2025.(Government Notice No. 61 of 2025)
- (iii) The Financial Statements and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Solidarity Fund for the year ended 30 June 2024.
- (iv) Virement Warrant – 2024-2025 (as at June 2025): Nos. 68, 70 to 166, 168 to 246, 248 to 266 and 268 to 273. (In Original)
- (v) Retrospective Virement Warrant 2024-2025 (as at June 2025) – Nos. 274 to 280. (In Original)
- (vi) Virement (Contingencies) Warrant 2024-2025 (as at June 2025) – Nos. 9 to 14.
(In Original)
- (vii) Virement Certificate 2024-2025 (as at June 2025): Vote/Sub-Head (Certificates Nos.): 1-1(5,10-11), 1-2(16,26), 1-3(009-014), 1-5(9-11,12A,13-17), 1-7(11-16), 1-8(4-5,8), 1-9(4-6), 1-10(5,7), 1-11(9-10), 1-12(4-6), 2-1(14-15), 2-103(11-12,23,28-29), 2-105(21,27), 2-108(4), 2-109(7,9-10), 2-2(4-6), 2-5(11-40), 2-8(25), 2-9(26,32), 2-10(6-11), 3-1(7-17), 3-3(7-10), 4-1(10-15), 4-2(2-3), 5-1(11-12), 5-2(4,5A), 5-4(7-9), 6-1(4-9), 6-102(9-12), 7-1(14-18), 7-3(12,15,18), 7-4(5), 7-5(5-6), 7-6(7-10), 8-1(16,19-22,24,26), 9-1(2-3), 9-2(18-23,25-44), 10-1(7-9), 11-1(3-4), 11-2(6), 12-1(3), 13-1(9-16), 13-2(8-9,12-14), 13-3(5), 13-4(4-6),13-5(5-7), 14-1(6-8,9A,10-13), 15-1(11-25), 15-2(9-12), 16-101(23-24,28-30), 16-102(22,25-27), 17-1(4), 18-1(19-

20), 19-1(12), 19-2(13), 20-2(4-5), 22-1(6-10), 23-1(5-7), 24-101–24-103(16-23, 25-26,28), 24-102(4-6), 24-104(9) and 25-1(7-8,10).

- (viii) Carry-Over Warrant (2024-2025): Nos.1 and 2 of 2025. (In Original)
- (ix) The Civil Aviation (Passenger Service Charge) (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 75 of 2025)
- (x) The Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of the Mauritius Ports Authority for the year ended 30 June 2024.
- (xi) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation for the year ended 30 June 2024.
- (xii) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Independent Police Complaints Commission for the year ended 30 June 2024.
- (xiii) The Customs (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 85 of 2025)
- (xiv) The Excise (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 86 of 2025)
- (xv) The Value Added Tax (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 87 of 2025)
- (xvi) The Excise (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 88 of 2025)
- (xvii) The Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 4) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 89 of 2025)
- (xviii) The Companies (Payment of Fees to Registrar) (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 90 of 2025)
- (xix) The Limited Partnerships (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 91 of 2025)

- (xx) The Limited Liability Partnerships (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 92 of 2025)
- (xxi) The Foundations (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 93 of 2025)
- (xxii) The Land (Duties and Taxes) (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 94 of 2025)
- (xxiii) The Income Tax (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 95 of 2025)

D. Ministry of Housing and Lands

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Town and Country Planning Board for the year ended 30 June 2024.

E. Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change

- (i) The Environment (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 79 of 2025)
- (ii) The Waste Management and Resource Recovery (Registration of Scavenging Contractor) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 82 of 2025)
- (iii) The Environment Protection (Banning of Plastic Bags) (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 96 of 2025)
- (iv) The Environment (Control of Single Use of Plastic Products) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 97 of 2025)

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

- (i) The Mauritius Agricultural Marketing (Controlled Products) Regulations 2025 (Government Notice No. 63 of 2025)
- (ii) The Animal Diseases (Veterinary Laboratories) Regulations 2025 (Government Notice No. 71 of 2025)

G. Ministry of National Infrastructure

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit of the Land Drainage Authority for the year ended 30 June 2024.

H. Ministry of Health and Wellness

- (i) The Medical Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment) Regulations 2025 (Government Notice No. 62 of 2025).
- (ii) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care for the year ended 30 June 2024.

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

- (i) The Social Aid (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 83 of 2025)
- (ii) The Social Aid (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 84 of 2025)

J. Ministry of Financial Services and Economic Planning

- (i) The Financial Services (Administrative Penalties) (Amendment) Rules 2025. (Government Notice No. 73 of 2025)
- (ii) The Insurance (National Insurance Claims Database) Rules 2025. (Government Notice No. 74 of 2025)
- (iii) The Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements to the Recovered Assets Fund for the period 01 July 2023 to 28 March 2024. (In original)
- (iv) The Captive Insurance (Captive Insurance Business) (Amendment) Rules 2025. (Government Notice No. 80 of 2025)
- (v) The Captive Insurance (Returns) Rules 2025. (Government Notice No.81 of 2025)

K. Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities

- (i) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Central Water Authority for the year ended 30 June 2023.
- (ii) The Radiation Safety and Nuclear Security (Occupational Radiation Protection) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 78 of 2025)

L. Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations

The Workers' Rights (Amount of Seed Capital) (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No.70 of 2025)

M. Ministry of Land Transport

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Bus Industry Employees Welfare Fund for year ended 30 June 2024.

N. Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection

- (i) The Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) (Coupons and Gift Vouchers) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 64 of 2025).
- (ii) The Consumer Protection (Importation and Sale of Second-hand Motor Vehicles) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 65 of 2025)
- (iii) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 4) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 66 of 2025)
- (iv) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 67 of 2025)
- (v) The Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 68 of 2025)
- (vi) The Consumer Protection (Consumer Goods) (Maximum Mark-Up) (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 69 of 2025)
- (vii) The Toys (Safety) (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 72 of 2025)
- (viii) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 5) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 76 of 2025)
- (ix) The Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 77 of 2025)

O. Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the University of Technology, Mauritius for the year ended June 2022.

P. Ministry of Education and Human Resource

- (i) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Mauritius Examination Syndicate (MES) for the year ended 30 June 2024.
- (ii) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) for the year ended 30 June 2024.

Q. Ministry of Arts and Culture

The Annual Reports and Reports of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Ramayana Centre for the years ended 30 June, 2023 and 2024.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, your PNQ, please!

BANK OF MAURITIUS – FORMER GOVERNOR & FORMER SECOND DEPUTY GOVERNOR – RESIGNATION – COMPENSATION & *PER DIEM* ALLOWANCES

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 Mr R.S., former Governor and Mr G.S., former second Deputy Governor of the Bank of Mauritius (BoM), he will –

- (a) state the reasons –
 - (i) for the resignation thereof, indicating the actions, if any, taken at the level of his Office to reinstate confidence in the BoM and the financial sector, and
 - (ii) why he asked Mr R.S. to resign as Chairperson of the Financial Services Commission, and
- (b) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –
 - (i) compensation paid thereto, and
 - (ii) total cost of missions undertaken and *per diem* allowances paid thereto.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, let me first point out that as soon as we took power last November, I made it a topmost priority to restore confidence in the Bank of Mauritius, the banking and financial services sector. Therefore, one of my very first decisions was to appoint a new Governor, a new First Deputy Governor and a new Second Deputy Governor, and a new Board comprising top professionals to clean up the mess left behind by the previous management, including the MIC saga and so many other blunders that had accumulated until then.

Madam Speaker, it is upon my request that both Mr Gerard Sanspeur and Dr. Rama Sithanen successively submitted their resignation as Second Deputy Governor and Governor of the Bank of Mauritius. As I indicated in an earlier press conference, the situation of permanent conflict between the two could not be allowed to continue in the interest of the proper functioning of the banking and financial services sector.

As the House will have noted, we have proceeded with the appointment of a new Governor and a new Second Deputy Governor without any delay so as to ensure the

continued efficient functioning of the Bank of Mauritius. I had indicated previously that the departure of the ex-Governor had nothing to do with his professional competence. In fact, the ex-Governor had performed very well with respect to the management of the monetary system, the banking system and the overall financial system. The exchange rate has stabilised. The inflation rate has come down, standing at 3.4 percent in September of this year, and the country's official foreign exchange reserves have increased. When we took office, it was USD 8.4 billion. It has now increased to USD 9.6 billion, that is, USD 1.1 billion more.

Let me stress that we have appointed a new Governor and a Second Deputy Governor who are perfectly suitable for the positions. The Governor is someone with excellent credentials and has extensive international experience having worked for many years at the IMF. The Second Deputy Governor is a career professional who has been at the management level at the Bank of Mauritius for over four decades.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a)(ii) of the question, Dr. Sithanen resigned as Chairperson of the Financial Services Commission because his appointment as Chairperson of the FSC, at that time, was made upon his appointment as Governor of the Bank of Mauritius.

The House may wish to note that Mr Désiré Vencatachellum has been appointed as Chief Executive of the FSC as from the 16 September 2025. Mr Vencatachellum is a seasoned development banker with over 30 years of international experience in finance, including holding multiple senior leadership positions for over two decades at the African Development Bank. I had met him for the first time at the African Union Summit in Ethiopia and I also met the then President of the African Development Bank Group, who agreed to my demand to exceptionally release Mr Vencatachellum at the earliest.

Madam Speaker, we are convinced that, with the appointments at the Bank of Mauritius and the Financial Services Commission, confidence in the banking and financial services sector will continue.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that an amount of Rs5.5 million will be paid to Dr. Sithanen in conformity with the terms and conditions of his contract of appointment.

With regard to Mr Sanspeur, I understand that Rs512,000 will be paid in conformity with the terms and conditions of his contract of appointment.

With regard to part (b)(ii) of the question, let me remind the House that the former Minister of Finance refused to reply to Parliamentary Questions relating to the cost of missions and *per diem* of the previous Governor. Let me quote what he said. He said –

« La banque étant une institution fonctionnant de manière autonome et indépendante, il ne serait pas judicieux de ma part de divulguer les informations demandées. »

Madam Speaker, contrary to him, in line with our policy of accountability and transparency, I am providing the information requested.

I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that the total cost of missions undertaken by the ex-Governor amounted to Rs4.3 million, which includes *per diem* of Rs2.2 million. I wish to emphasise that the *per diem* has been paid at the existing rate.

With respect to Mr Sanspeur, I am informed that no overseas mission has been undertaken by him.

Madam Speaker: Your first supplementary!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr Mohamed: His first lesson!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I refer to the very words used by the hon. Prime Minister when he stated that he appointed those persons to clear the mess at the Bank of Mauritius. Instead of that, they created more mess at the Bank of Mauritius, Madam Speaker...

Madam Speaker: Please, come with your...

Mr Lesjongard: ... which has forced...

Madam Speaker: One moment! No statement, please! Please, come with your question!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Which has forced the hon. Prime Minister to sack the persons I referred to.

Madam Speaker, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister with regard to the First Deputy Governor of the Bank of Mauritius, Mr R. H., who has also been the subject of severe allegations, can he inform the House why the First Deputy Governor is still in post whereas the Governor and the Second Deputy Governor have been asked to resign?

Madam Speaker: Yes, Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Allegations, as you said. Allegations are made against everyone! But we have not found any substance in those allegations.

Madam Speaker: Second!

Mr Lesjongard: Now, if you do not find any substance, there have been allegations on a meeting between the First Deputy Governor and a representative of the Bank of Africa Group.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Question!

Mr Lesjongard: And a letter addressed to the...

Madam Speaker: Leader of the Opposition, please!

Mr Lesjongard: ...First Deputy Governor confirming that meeting has also been made public, in the press.

Madam Speaker: Put it in the form...

Mr Jhummun: Statement!

Mr Lesjongard: Has the hon. Prime Minister...

Madam Speaker: Leader of the Opposition, please!

Mr Lesjongard: ...enquired about this allegation in particular?

An hon. Member: *Zot inn' devaliz labank moris!*

Madam Speaker: One moment, hon. Prime Minister.

Anything you want to say, Leader of the Opposition; you are a seasoned politician, please, put...

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, but I have to introduce my question.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: One moment! Let me do my job!

Mr Lesjongard: Have the rules changed now, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: No, no! All I am asking is the same thing you want to say, put it in the form of a question, alright? Can we do that?

Please, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: As I have just said, there is no substance. Allegations are made against. Even against him, allegations are made. But we must have substantial proof of anything. There is none!

Madam Speaker: Okay. Your third question, if you have one.

Mr Lesjongard: Yes.

Madam Speaker: In the form of a question, please!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes. Madam Speaker, the former Governor of the Bank of Mauritius leaves behind a climate of suspicion and a central bank which has lost all its credibility in the eyes of the public. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether the new management of the BoM has initiated an internal enquiry about all these issues, particularly following possible leakage of information and documents at the BoM? Will he agree that by maintaining – and I come back again to that, Madam Speaker – the First Deputy Governor in post, this will further damage the credibility and reputation of the Central Bank? You will agree...

Mr Jhummun: *Fini reponn sa do !*

Madam Speaker: One moment!

Mr Lesjongard: You will agree, hon. Prime Minister, that the First Deputy is tainted and he should go.

The Prime Minister: No, I do not agree at all. I just said it.

Madam Speaker: There were two questions in one. The first one...

The Prime Minister: I do not agree at all to what you are saying. You are saying, but I do not agree at all!

As for whether investigations are being done, if that was the question, yes, I am told, yes.

Madam Speaker: Do not put two questions at the same time, please! You have got time!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, one of the decisions of the former Governor of the Bank of Mauritius was the suspension of a trade unionist, Mr C. R. Now, that the Governor has been sacked, will the bank consider reviewing that decision in order to dispel – and that is important – the perception of a culture of harassment and bullying at the Bank of Mauritius?

The Prime Minister: This has absolutely nothing to do with the question! But let me remind the Leader of the Opposition; he should know that the Bank of Mauritius has total independence. I am not going to put my nose in whatever the bank is doing.

Mr Lesjongard: I am not sure about that, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: One more question. Yes!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, there have been serious allegations of interference of in the activities and the administration of the Bank of Mauritius by the son of the former Governor. For example, concerning the allocation of tenders – I refer to the IT project –, the recruitment of a canteen operator, and also for the setting up of that meeting with the CEO of the Bank of Africa. Madam Speaker, has the Prime Minister, himself, enquired about these

allegations, and will he guarantee to the House and the population that this was not the case at the Bank of Mauritius?

The Prime Minister: I cannot guarantee anything. An investigation is ongoing. I will let the investigators do their work.

Mr Lesjongard: In the same vein, Madam Speaker, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether Mr T. S. has had access to confidential information and files at the Bank of Mauritius?

Madam Speaker: Are you in a position to say that?

The Prime Minister: Surely, the Leader of the Opposition...

How will I know? But the investigation is being done. That is all I can say.

Mr Lesjongard: But at your level, you have not done anything, hon. Prime Minister?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, there have been recordings of threats between the Directors of Menlo Park and the son of the former Governor of the Bank of Mauritius. Will the Prime Minister consider putting an independent enquiry on all these aspects due to the fact that it may have happened that the documents and statements done may have been controlled – if I put it this way – *par une main invisible en dehors de la Banque de Maurice*?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: As I explained to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, there is an investigation ongoing and everything. I am not going to comment on this to prejudice an investigation that is ongoing.

Mr Bhagwan: *La main invisible avek Lady Macbeth!*

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Yes, Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, Mr G. S., the former Second Deputy Governor, has filed a complaint at the level of the FCC. I trust that the FCC is enquiring. But in the meantime, will the Prime Minister consider conducting a separate enquiry at the level of his Ministry, I am saying, especially on all decisions taken by the previous Governor?

Madam Speaker: Are you saying we should have two separate investigations?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes. That is what I am saying.

Madam Speaker: In parallel?

The Prime Minister: Surely, the Leader of the Opposition is just saying this without thinking because you cannot have two parallel investigations. The FCC is investigating. Let them investigate!

Mr Lesjongard: The FCC is investigating. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House, with regard to the statement made by the Directors of Menlo Park against Mr T. S., why is the Police taking so much time? And why in the case reported by Mr T. S. against the reporter, Mr N. J., the Police acted so rapidly? Did the former Governor or his son intervene for the arrest and search of Mr G. S.?

The Prime Minister: There is a substantial question on this later on.

Madam Speaker: There is a question!

The Prime Minister: There is a substantial question, but I can tell you.

To say that the police acted immediately is not actually true. You will see when I answer the question. The second thing is – everybody is suing everybody. So, let the investigation see what is true and what is not true.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister stated that he, the Deputy Prime Minister, and also the Commissioner of Police were not made aware of the arrest of Mr N. G. and, personally, I do not believe that you, Prime Minister, and hon. Bérenger were not made aware of this case.

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: You are making a statement!

Mr Lesjongard: If you were not made aware, then we have a serious problem in our country.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Leader of the Opposition...

Mr Lesjongard: In the same vein, Madam Speaker, can he, therefore, inform the House why the Commissioner of Police publicly stated the following: *nou finn fer seki bizin?*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Ayo papa!*

Madam Speaker: I am sorry.

Leader of the Opposition, this does not relate to your PNQ.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, a journalist has been arrested.

An hon. Member: There is a PQ!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: You know the first PQ later will be on this issue. Anyway, if you want to say something. Hon. Prime Minister, if you want to reply, please!

The Prime Minister: As you rightly said, Madam Speaker, this has nothing to do with the Bank of Mauritius, your question directly...

Mr Lesjongard: No, it has to do.

The Prime Minister: There is a substantial question later on. If you have the patience to sit and listen later on, you will see the answer.

Mr Lesjongard: You are not replying to my questions, hon. Prime Minister.

My last question, Madam Speaker!

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: Be relevant *do!*

Mr Lesjongard: This scandal shaking the Bank of Mauritius is unprecedented, Madam Speaker. You will agree?

Madam Speaker: You are making... Again...

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: In order to safeguard the reputation of such a crucial institution at international level and to bring confidence back to the financial sector, will the hon. Prime Minister consider setting up a Commission of Inquiry to enquire into the whole saga, Madam Speaker?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: It seems...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Let the Prime Minister speak, please!

The Prime Minister: It seems that the Leader of the Opposition has got a very, very short memory. Let me remind him. The former, the one you appointed...

Mr Lesjongard: ... Commission of Inquiry...

Madam Speaker: Let him reply!

The Prime Minister: Mr Seegolam, do you know that he is facing provisional charges for conspiracy to defraud? He is out on bail following his arrest for an alleged misappropriation of a dubious payout of Rs45 million to Menlo Park Ltd...

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Sa tigit pou zot sa !*

The Prime Minister:... which is detrimental to the MIC. Furthermore, you don't seem to be aware that we have repealed the Commission of Inquiry Act. There is a different commission now.

An hon. Member: Refresh his memory!

Madam Speaker: That was your last question?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, I said last question.

Mr Jhummun: Last irrelevant question!

Madam Speaker: Yes? Alright! Thank you very much.

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

We have been advised that PQ B/834 has been withdrawn.

Hon. First Member for La Caverne and Phoenix!

MR. N. J., JOURNALIST – POLICE QUESTIONING – REASONS

(No. B/814) **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 Mr. N. J. brought by the Police for questioning at the Central CID on 12 September 2025, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the reasons therefor, indicating –
 - (i) whether the constitutional rights of the latter were respected, and
 - (ii) who gave instructions for the house search of Mr N.J., and
- (b) state whether he has been provided with an independent report of the said incident.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 29 August 2025, Mrs K.D.J.H., Officer-in-Charge of the Mauritius Investment Company, made a declaration at the Central CID regarding an article on Scoop.mu. That was on 29 August.

On 11 September of the same year, that is, this year, another declaration was lodged by one Mr T.S., CEO of Elysium Capital, concerning posts against him on the same platform. Both cases were formally recorded for breach of the Information and Communication Technologies Act.

I am further informed by the Police that they attempted to obtain the statement of Mr N. J., the alleged author of these posts, by calling him over the phone several times, but I am informed that he was unreachable. As per the established practice, a case conference was held at the level of the Central CID, comprising senior most officers where it was decided to make an application for a search warrant under breach of Section 46(1)(ga) of the Information and Communication Technologies Act at the Curepipe District Court.

The Commissioner of Police was not informed of the decision taken by the Police Officers.

On 12 September 2025, on the basis of the search warrant, four Central CID Officers in one police vehicle proceeded to the residence of Mr N.J. There was also another vehicle of the Divisional Crime Intelligence Unit on the spot. I am informed that Mr N.J. was told of the purpose of the visit of the Police. He was requested to hand over his communication and IT equipment. I am informed that Mr N.J. grew vexed and threw his two mobile phones on the floor. Subsequently, electronic equipment including the two mobile phones, suspected to have been used in the commission of the alleged offences, was secured for examination.

Mr N.J. voluntarily accompanied Police Officers at the Cybercrime Unit and he admitted being the author of the posts. I am informed by the Police that he was informed of his constitutional rights, including the right to silence and to legal representation, which I am told he exercised. I am also informed that he was provided with communication facilities to contact his lawyer at the Central CID. After examination of the two mobile phones, they were handed over to Mr N.J. and he was later allowed to go after the enquiry. Investigations in both cases are ongoing.

Madam Speaker, ever since the beginning of the mandate of this Government, I made it clear on numerous occasions, that both in this House and during my address to the Nation on 01 January of this year, that I consider respect for human rights and the application of Section 5(1) and Section 5(2) of the Constitution as the bedrock of any civilised society.

Under no circumstances will the Government allow any violation of human rights as we saw under the previous regime. My Government will always uphold the sanctity of human rights and dignity of all our citizens.

Therefore, I asked the Commissioner of Police to carry out an enquiry into the action taken by the Police Officers. Upon the outcome of the enquiry, appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken.

However, pending the outcome of the internal enquiry, six Police Officers have already been transferred to other divisions so as not to jeopardize the exercise.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Prime Minister.

Yes, hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister with regard to the use of Section 46 of the ICTA Act, will Government consider bringing amendments to this particular legislation with a view of it being in conjunction with Section 5 of our Constitution, because there are being abuses of provisional charges and cases lodged under this particular infamous section of the ICTA Act? Will Government consider amending this Act?

The Prime Minister: As we have said when we presented the Government Programme, for example, the provisional charges will go. It is being worked out by the Attorney General at the moment. We will look at all aspects of all that you have just mentioned.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hon. Prime Minister again is confirming that the Commissioner of Police was not made aware of the arrest of that journalist. Did he enquire from the Commissioner of Police why he made the statement: “*nou’nn fer seki bizin fer?*” What does that mean?

The Prime Minister: In fact, I did, and he said he was referring to the fact that the mobile phones were thrown and they were then taken away with the electronic equipment. It is in that sense that he was saying: what had to be done, had to be done.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Mr Beehook!

Mr Beehook: Merci, Madame la présidente. M. le Premier ministre, récemment, il y a eu un jugement de la cour concernant la protection des sources des journalistes. Est-ce que le Premier ministre peut nous assurer que dorénavant s’il y a des cas où les journalistes sont concernés, au moins, qu’il y ait une protection des sources des journalistes et que leurs outils de travail ne soient pas saisis ?

The Prime Minister: I think that is the case. But when there were allegations, they had to check whether it was done or not done.

Madam Speaker: Alright, yes!

Next question, hon. First Member for Savanne and Black River, Mr Babajee!

MAURITIUS METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES – MR R. D., FORMER DIRECTOR – CYCLONE BELAL – INDEPENDENT INQUIRY

(No. B/815) 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 independent inquiry carried out on the advice given to the National Crisis Committee on the evolution of tropical cyclone Belal by Mr R. D., the then Director of the Mauritius Meteorological Services, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether same is now completed and, if so, indicate the findings thereof and actions taken in relation thereto, including regarding Mr R.D.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed that following the passage and damage caused by tropical cyclone Belal in January 2024, the then Ministry of Local

Government and the Disaster Risk Management had approached the then Attorney General's Office for one of its officers, assisted by a Technical Adviser at the Mauritius Meteorological Services, to prepare an Independent Report on whether, the then Director of the Mauritius Meteorological Services had failed to advise the National Crisis Committee on the proper trajectory of the cyclone.

The Report, prepared by an Assistant Solicitor General and a Technical Adviser at the Mauritius Meteorological Services, was submitted to the then Ministry of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management on 20 June 2024. Therein, it was concluded that there had been clear indications that tropical cyclone Belal was dangerously approaching Mauritius over the period of time spanning from 14 January 2024 at 04.00 hours to 15 January 2024 at 22.00 hours, and that the then Director had failed to advise the National Crisis Committee on the proper trajectory of tropical cyclone Belal.

Madam Speaker, I must state that the Government is not satisfied with the findings of the "so-called" independent report on the basis of which Dr. R.D. was made to retire in the interest of the public service as per PSC Regulation 39. He subsequently entered a court case to contest that decision but was encouraged to withdraw the case and he did so on 06 October 2025. In fact, it appears that Dr. R.D. would have been made a scapegoat to cover the previous Government's blunder.

After a thorough assessment of the report, some very disturbing facts have emerged as information to the public about impending torrential rains that had been issued, which had appeared on the Government Portal on the eve of the dramatic events of 15 January 2024. The communiqué was subsequently deleted for unknown reasons. There are also indications that the former Prime Minister had already planned socio-cultural events to attend in the afternoon of 15 January 2024, and that there could very well be a linkage between the occurrences that I mentioned.

Madam Speaker, in the light of the above, further investigation will be conducted to establish the sequence of events and whether there was a deliberate deletion of the flood warnings.

An hon. Member: Criminal!

The Prime Minister: Necessary action will be taken accordingly to ensure that natural justice prevails.

An hon. Member: Tampering with evidence.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, alright?

Yes, hon. Ramdass!

CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMISSION – PROPOSED APPOINTMENT – STATUS

(No B. /816) 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 proposed appointment of a Constitutional Review Commission as announced in the Government Programme 2025–2029, he will state where matters stand.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I will reply to Parliamentary Questions B/816 and B/836 together as they are connected.

As enunciated in the Government Programme 2025-2029, the Government's foremost mission is to revitalise democratic principles, reinforce good governance, and pursue constitutional reforms designed to enhance public confidence in the autonomy of state institutions.

In this endeavour, my Government is committed to set up a Constitutional Review Commission mandated to propose wide-ranging constitutional, electoral and governance reforms which will include but will not be limited to –

- (i) the revision of our Electoral System to better reflect the will of the people;
- (ii) bolstering fundamental rights by introducing new generation rights relating to the environment, technology, health, education, and socio-economic issues as well as rights of nature, and
- (iii) the introduction of a comprehensive legislation on political party funding to ensure transparency and fair elections.

Madam Speaker, constitutional review is a very complex and sensitive matter which requires experts with constitutional acumen and understanding of the specific Mauritian paradigm. In this context, the Attorney General is working on the setting up of the Commission and will submit proposals shortly.

This inclusion of the rights of nature in the Constitution will, therefore, be looked into by the Constitutional Review Commission in a holistic manner together with constitutional amendments.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr Ramdass: Madam Speaker, may we have an indication as to the composition of the Commission, if that has been decided already?

The Prime Minister: As far as I know, the Attorney General is looking into the composition. We would like to have people who know Constitution but also as far as possible, local people.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. Ms Thannoo, your question was answered, right?

It seems to me. Do you want a supplementary question? No.

Yes, Mr Lobine.

Mr Lobine: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister with regard to the timeframe, as to when this Commission will be set up?

The Prime Minister: It will be set up as soon as possible because we want to look at all these aspects including electoral reform. We want to proceed with electoral reform earlier on and not at the end of the mandate. So, this will be starting very soon.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Now, I will call hon. Third Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or, hon. Etwareea.

MAURITIAN ECONOMY – IMF GROWTH PROJECTIONS – GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

(No. B/817) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Mauritian economy, following the revision by the International Monetary Fund of its growth projections upwards for the April 2025 forecast from 2.8% to 3.0% for 2025 and from 3.0% to 3.1% for 2026 in the World Economic Outlook Update July 2025 Report, he will state the economic outlook of Government in terms of growth and inflation for the years 2025 and 2026, indicating the additional measures Government proposes to take to boost same.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, as the hon. Member states in his question, in July 2025, the IMF raised its growth projections for the world economy from 2.8 percent to 3.0 percent for 2025 and from 3.0 percent to 3.1 percent for 2026. The IMF will release its updated forecasts, I believe, next Tuesday.

As for the Mauritian economy, the IMF had, in April 2025, projected a real GDP growth rate of 3.0 percent for both 2025 and 2026. Following the Article IV Consultations, the IMF has, in its Staff Report released in June of this year, maintained the growth forecast for Mauritius for 2025 at 3.0 percent but upgraded the forecast for 2026 from 3.0 percent to 3.4 percent.

Madam Speaker, according to figures released recently by Statistics Mauritius, the real GDP growth rate for Mauritius for 2025 is expected to be slightly higher that is, 3.1 percent. This growth is being driven mainly by the financial services sector and the tourism sector. In fact, we are expecting some 1,425,000 tourist arrivals this year – the first time that we will exceed the pre-pandemic level.

Madam Speaker, as I have announced in the Budget Speech, we are doing away with the inherited consumption-driven approach and adopting a new economic model that will be investment-led, productivity-based and export-driven. This implies a fundamental restructuring of our economy that will be achieved over time.

We are expecting a significant improvement in the outlook for the Mauritian economy, particularly for 2026 and beyond. This is mainly due to the following factors –

- (a) first, we are further diversifying the economy with the development of four keys, what we call “*Pôles de Croissance*”, namely the renewable energy sector, waste-to-wealth initiatives, the blue economy, and the creative industries;
- (b) second, we are in the process of finalising the different incentive schemes announced in the Budget Speech. These will give a significant boost to investment in various sectors of the economy;
- (c) third, we are unlocking some Rs30 billions of investments in the renewable energy sector over the next three years;
- (d) fourth, we are reviewing the role and functions of the Economic Development Board so that it focusses on boosting productive investments and export promotion across all sectors of the economy;

- (e) fifth, the Ministry of Finance is currently working with different Ministries and institutions, including the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council, to give a boost to productivity growth across all sectors of the economy, and
- (f) sixth, the renewal of the AGOA for one year, following our intense diplomatic efforts and negotiations, provide a degree of certainty for our exporters to the US market.

Madam Speaker, we are also harnessing the investment and export opportunities from our trade agreements such as the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement with India and the Free Trade Agreement with China.

Furthermore, with the assistance that we just received from India under the Special Economic Package to the tune of USD 680 million which was secured, as I said during my recent visit, we will implement a number of priority projects in strategic sectors such as port development, road infrastructure, healthcare, and energy.

With regard to inflation, the Bank of Mauritius is projecting an inflation rate of around 4 percent in 2025, which remains firmly anchored around the bank's target range which is 2 to 5 percent.

Latest information from Statistics Mauritius indicates that inflation will remain below 4 percent. Indeed, the CPI Index has decreased by 0.1 and 0.2 points in August and September, respectively.

Madam Speaker, we have taken a number of measures to curb inflationary pressures and to protect the purchasing power of the population. These include –

- (i) raising the policy rate by 50 basis points to 4.5 percent per annum in February of this year;
- (ii) by increasing the supply of forex in the domestic foreign exchange market to prevent a rapid depreciation of the rupee;
- (iii) removal of VAT on a number of basic necessities as announced in the Budget Speech, and
- (iv) the establishment of a Price Stabilisation Fund of Rs10 billion, out of which, we are already providing subsidies on five essential commodities. We are working on a second set of essential commodities.

Madam Speaker, as a responsible Government, we are closely monitoring developments both domestically and on the international front. We will take appropriate measures in order to achieve our objective of a real GDP growth path of 4 to 5 percent by the end of our mandate while keeping inflation within the target range set by the Bank of Mauritius.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

The Prime Minister: Next question.

Madam Speaker: Next question, yes.

Mr Lesjongard: No, I have a supplementary.

Madam Speaker: Yes, supplementary.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will agree that the inflation rate of 4 percent as predicted will be exceeded because of the recent increases in the prices of commodities and also because of the VAT that is being imposed on SMEs? We have seen recently – the prices of *dholl puri*. If I may use that sentence again, *dholl puri monte ho gal ba*, Madam Speaker!

An hon. Member: *Met kestion do!*

The Prime Minister: In fact, as I said, the Leader of Opposition has a short memory. Do you remember what the rate of inflation was when you were in government? We are clearing the mess that you left! At one point, it was nearly 10 percent! Now, we are bringing it down.

And if you had listened, we are saying 4 percent, but the indication might be lesser. It will be slightly lesser than 4 percent.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. First Member for La Caverne and Phoenix!

EASTERN HIGH SECURITY PRISON, MELROSE – 17 JULY 2025 INCIDENTS – NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION REPORT

(No. B/818) **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 incidents which occurred at the Eastern High Security Prison, in Melrose, on 17 July 2025, he will state

whether the National Human Rights Commission has submitted to his office a report in relation thereto and, if so, indicate –

- (a) whether consideration will be given for the tabling thereof, and
- (b) the actions, if any, he proposes to take in relation thereto.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the National Human Rights Commission has already, as I am sure the hon. Member knows, submitted its report on the incidents which occurred at the Eastern High Security Prison at Melrose on 17 July 2025.

As regard to part (a) of the question, I have to inform the House that Government has taken cognizance of the contents of the report, which has been made public for the first time. If you remember, in the previous government, all reports were being hidden in drawers. In line with our policy of transparency and accountability, I will table a copy of the report.

Madam Speaker, I am concerned by the disturbing facts that came out of the report. As I have just stated in the House, I consider that respect for Human Rights and the application of sections 5(1) and 5(2) of the Constitution are the bedrock of any civilised society. My Government will always uphold the sanctity of human rights and dignity of all our citizens. Any trespass will not be tolerated by the Government.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the Commissioner of Police and the Commissioner of Prisons have been requested to take immediate actions, not only for the implementation of the measures recommended, but also the necessary disciplinary actions against the officers concerned, after consultation with the Office of Director of Public Prosecutions.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he would request the Commissioner of Police and the Commissioner of Prisons to consider the use of full body cam by all prison officers who work at such a high security prison so that the truthful events always come to light?

The Prime Minister: It is a very good suggestion, and I will certainly. We are, in fact, looking at this. But this would probably happen at some stage. I must also tell you that I had said at a time, ‘Do not come tell me some cameras were not working. If that happens, everybody will be sacked!’ Fortunately, all cameras were working.

Madam Speaker: Alright.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker!

Madam Speaker: Yes, go ahead!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, I...

Madam Speaker: Question, please!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes. I appreciate that the report has been made public, Madam Speaker, because that was a very...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Ale, koze papa!*

Madam Speaker: Let him speak, please!

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Tirwar? Enba latab!*

Mr Lesjongard: I am being interrupted, Madam Speaker, when I am putting my question. We have to put questions!

Madam Speaker: Carry on! Carry on!

Mr Lesjongard: I said that I appreciate that the report has been made public. But, Madam Speaker, when I compare the reply to the PNQ that I put to the hon. Prime Minister on 22 July on the same issue with the report that has been made public, I note a certain number of discrepancies between the two. I mean the report and the answers that the hon. Prime Minister gave to the House.

Madam Speaker: Put your question!

Mr Lesjongard: Maybe he must have been provided with false information on that day.

Mr Mohamed: What discrepancy? Say!

Mr Lesjongard: My question is direct.

Mr Mohamed: Which discrepancies? You cannot just say there are discrepancies and you do not say what.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will sack the Commissioner of Prisons?

Mr Mohamed: What discrepancy?

Madam Speaker: This is his question.

The Prime Minister: Yes, what can I say? He does not say what discrepancy! But he must realise when the...

Mr Lesjongard: It is what the population is asking!

The Prime Minister: ...realise, unlike you! When you ask a question, I answer the question. I could have said, 'There is going to be an inquiry.' But I gave you whatever I had. After the inquiry, as I said, very disturbing facts came to light. After the inquiry! How can I know before?

Mr Lesjongard: Know what?

The Prime Minister: But how do you expect me to know before the inquiry?

Mr Lesjongard: On the basis of the report that you have provided.

The Prime Minister: Of the report, yes! That is what I have just said. That is why we are publishing; we have published it; we are laying it on the Table of the Assembly. We are not hiding, unlike you! When you were in government, hiding all of these reports! We did not do that.

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Rapor lor dializ!*

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, I am glad the hon. Prime Minister did publish the report. That is commendable. However, the Commissioner of Prisons, soon after the incident, had reacted saying that he is proud of his officers and he is proud of the way they acted, and that he will would take full responsibility. Is the hon. Prime Minister satisfied of the stand taken by the Commissioner of Prisons soon after those incidents, and has he had any discussion with the Commissioner of Prisons with regard to that?

The Prime Minister: As I said, Madam Speaker, now, with the report out, I have asked them to have to have a full investigation. Also, they must contact the DPP. It is not for me to say that. It is for the DPP to decide what action has to be taken.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac!

ROAD RAGE INCIDENTS & VIOLENT/AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR – SAFEGUARD MEASURES

(No. B/819) **Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third 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 rage incidents and violent and aggressive behaviour on the roads, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the –

- (a) number of reported cases thereof over the past three years, indicating the percentage thereof pointing to drivers, respectively as –
 - (i) victims, and
 - (ii) perpetrators, and
- (b) measures being taken to protect road users and the general public and combat dangerous and anti-social behaviour on the roads.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since January 2022 up to 02 October 2025, a total of 237 cases related to rage incidents and violent or aggressive behaviour on the roads have been reported to the Police, involving 394 drivers. Out of these, 200 drivers were classified as victims, representing 51%, while 194 drivers were classified as perpetrators, representing 49%.

I am further informed that in a number of cases, multiple drivers were involved in the same incident, with one or more drivers recorded as victims and one or more as perpetrators, which explains, in fact, the discrepancy between the total number of reported cases and the number of drivers concerned.

As regard to part (b), I wish to inform the House that Government, in collaboration with the Police, has strengthened measures to protect road users and combat such dangerous behaviour. These include –

1. The re-introduction of the new Penalty Points System in January 2026, with severe sanctions against reckless and anti-social practices as well as illegal races;
2. Enhanced patrol presence, Police Officers including riders are now daily deployed at strategic locations to regulate traffic near schools, bus terminals, light rail stations and commercial centres;

3. Awareness campaigns in schools, shopping malls, public transport and also at the light rail stations are being carried out;
4. Optimal use of the Safe City surveillance system for swift intervention is being done, and finally
5. Targeted crackdown operations near night clubs and entertainment venues, with particular focus on drink-and-drive offences.

Madam Speaker, let me assure the House that Government remains fully committed to ensuring the safety of all road users and maintaining order on our roads.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr A. Duval: May I ask the Prime Minister: with regard to the use of unlawful weapons, illicit, *des armes, couteaux, etc.*, does the Prime Minister propose to urgently ensure that there are stops and searches, roadblocks being effected like it used to be, by the SMF, the SSU regularly, especially in areas that are well known to be hotspots.

The Prime Minister: I understand that this is being done but we do not want to give it too much publicity. You know, this is a country that attracts tourists; we do not want to give the impression that it is a Police State, but it is being done.

Madam Speaker: Mr Jhummun, please!

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS LOANS – FEES, CHARGES & COLLATERAL SECURITIES – REGULATION MECHANISM

(No. B/820) 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 fees, charges and collateral securities regarding loans granted by financial institutions, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to the regulation mechanism in place in relation thereto, indicating if consideration will be given for the imposition of limitations on the quantum thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that, in respect of loans provided by financial institutions, the fees, charges and security requirements are determined by these institutions themselves in line with their internal policies and risk assessment.

However, by virtue of Section 6 of the Bank of Mauritius Act 2004, the Bank of Mauritius has the power to regulate the fees and charges in respect of the services provided by these financial institutions and impose such limitation on the quantum of those fees and charges as it may deem appropriate.

In this context, the Bank of Mauritius constantly monitors the fees and charges that these financial institutions are imposing.

In fact, in accordance with Section 57 of the Banking Act 2004, these financial services should at all times display in a conspicuous place in the public part of their principal place of business and in each of their branches or offices, the rates of the fees or charges being imposed.

In addition, with a view to enhancing transparency and enabling the public to make an informed choice, financial institutions are required to upload information on their fees and charges on both their websites and on the website of the Bank of Mauritius.

Furthermore, these financial institutions are required to inform the Bank of Mauritius whenever they change their fees and charges.

Madam Speaker, the Bank of Mauritius thus examines any change in the fees and charges, and may query them on the reasons for such increases and, if need be, to intervene to safeguard the interest of customers and the public in general. But as I said in the beginning, these are determined by the financial institutions themselves and it depends on their internal policies and the risk assessment.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Time is up for the moment. I have been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn – B/821, B/824, B/825, B/828, B/829, B/830, and B/835.

Now we go to questions addressed to hon. Ministers. The hon. First Member for Rodrigues, hon. Ms Collet!

COMPULSORY DOGS' REGISTRATION – PROCEDURES & FEES

(No. B/838) Ms R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the compulsory registration of dogs, effective as from 01 October 2025, he will, for the benefit of the House –

- (a) table a list of the centres designated therefor;
- (b) give details regarding the –
 - (i) procedures and fees applicable;

- (ii) implementation and monitoring thereof by his Ministry, the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly;
 - (iii) budget allocated therefor, and
- (c) state whether consideration will be given for the extension of this exercise to other domestic animals.

Dr. Boolell: Madam Speaker, I will seek your indulgence because the reply is quite lengthy and it will be three in one.

Madam Speaker: You do not want to circulate?

Dr. Boolell: Sorry?

Madam Speaker: You do not want to do partly and then circulate?

Dr. Boolell: No, in the light of concern expressed, in the light of what people want to hear. Let me reply to the question.

Madam Speaker: Alright.

Dr. Boolell: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I will reply to Parliamentary Question B/838, B/845 and B/857 concurrently as they relate to the same subject.

Madam Speaker: The last one was B/857!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you. As a responsible Government and a dog loving country, it is our duty to ensure that animal welfare laws are strengthened to advocate, *inter alia*, for responsible dog ownership and the well-being of the population in view of the risk associated with stray dogs.

The issue of stray dogs is accurate and chronic and remains one of the top priorities of our Ministry. I am informed by the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare that the total owned dog population in Mauritius is estimated at around 246,000 including both dogs that are kept restricted to the owner's properties and those roaming freely.

According to MSAW, nearly 20% of these owned dogs roam outside contributing to a street population estimated at approximately 57,000. But, in my assessment, the number is far higher. A key challenge for street dog welfare is the lack of responsible and informed pet ownership.

On 01 October 2025, Madam Speaker, Section 31(1) and (3) of the Animal Welfare Act have been proclaimed and provide for micro-chipping and registration of dogs only and make it compulsory for the owners to register their dogs. This regulatory framework will enable MSAW to promote sustainable control of dog population enhance responsible pet ownership, reduced animal cruelty and minimise health hazard associated with stray dogs.

The registration process is conducted by MSAW where the owner of the dog is required to fill in an application form for registration. The dogs are being microchip on site and the dog owners will have to produce relevant documents namely the National ID card and proof of address at time of registration.

Subsequently, the MSAW will issue a registration certificate to the owner. The MSAW will also enter into an MoU with private veterinary practices for micro-chipping and registration.

Madam Speaker, in line with the principle of good governance, Government in ensuring a system which is transparent, safe and which will be closely monitored for the micro-chipping and registration of dogs.

In that context, MSAW will launch an expression of interest to enlist services of private vet consultation. The collaboration of NGOs will also be enlisted for micro-chipping and registration during the sterilization campaign and, in the same spirit, MSAW will ensure that the NGOs –

- (a) are registered as proper entity dealing with welfare of animal;
- (b) are registered with the Data Protection Office since they will be dealing personal information of dog owners;
- (c) undertake to provide all information with regard to the pet owner and the dog to the, MSAW;
- (d) enlist the services of a veterinarian, registered with the Vet Council of Mauritius, who is mandated under the Dangerous Drugs Act to administer regulated drugs such as Xylazine and Ketamine which is the second and third schedules, respectively, of course, these are being used in sterilization.

Madam Speaker, with a view to monitoring the registration of dogs, MSAW will keep a database in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act. The onus to inform MSAW of any death or transferred ownership of a dog lies with the owner which can be done by telephone or email.

To widen coverage, micro-chipping and registration are being extended to Municipal Councils, Community Centres and Village Hall up to June 2026. Moreover, the Commissioner of Police has agreed for registration and micro-chipping to be undertaken within the compound of police stations island-wide. A calendar for the exercise has been tentatively worked out from 13 October to 23 December 2025. I will table the list of all dedicated centres and stations.

At this stage, no amendment is being envisaged to the Animal Welfare Act as the decentralisation process island-wide is happening de facto. MSAW has currently two stations dedicated for the microchipping and registration of dogs located in Rose Hill and Plaine Magnien respectively. As at 06 October 2025, a total of 853 dogs has been registered and microchipped. Since October 2025, the MSAW has set the fees for the registration of dogs at the rate of Rs350, that is, a reduction from the actual fees of Rs500 which include registration and veterinary fees as well as microchipping.

Madam Speaker, as a caring Government and our concern for animal lovers, the MSAW is promoting mass sterilisation campaigns whereby dogs are being microchipped, registered and sterilised free of charge given a number of hardship cases that have been observed and a flexible approach is being adopted. The MSAW has scheduled meetings with registered NGOs to encourage grassroot participation through interactive sessions and dialogue for transparency and accountability. Transportation is made available on a case-to-case basis.

With regard to budget allocation, I am informed that an amount of Rs20 million has been provided for the MSAW in the Financial Year 2025-2026 for the implementation of the sterilisation campaign, including microchipping and registration. Hon. Members will appreciate that the extension of the exercise to other domestic animals cannot be contemplated.

Concerning the implementation and monitoring for Rodrigues, I am informed by the MSAW that an MoU was signed with Rodrigues Regional Assembly, represented by the Commission for Agriculture in 2022 for the implementation of the National Sustainable Project for Dog Population Control in Rodrigues. During the last mission of MSAW to Rodrigues in November 2023 regarding the mass sterilisation campaign over the island, officers of the Veterinary Services of Rodrigues were trained on dog registration procedures. The list of designated centres to undertake microchipping and registration in Rodrigues will be determined in coordination with the Commission for Agriculture and the Division of Veterinary Services. In this context, a mission will be undertaken to Rodrigues to ensure smooth implementation of dog registration across the island.

For effective monitoring, Madam Speaker, MSAW will collaborate with Commission for Agriculture to collect relevant information and visits will be conducted by enforcement officers of MSAW to ensure proper implementation and compliance with the legal

framework. The list of officers from MSAW Enforcement Department assigned to ensure compliance is –

- Mr Simanassamiane;
- Mr Pandoo,
- Mrs Kalloo-Lebon, and
- the team is led by Mr Govindasami, Director of MSAW.

Madam Speaker, our interest is to safeguard the welfare of all animals. In that context, my Ministry and MSAW are working in close collaboration with all like-minded stakeholders, registered NGOs, vets and pet owners.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Hon. Ms Collet, do you have a question? Hon. Dr. Prayag? Yes? That was three in one.

Dr. Prayag: Thank you for your reply.

Madam Speaker: We have three in one. So, it is a good thing you are asking.

Dr. Prayag: Exactly. Can the House be made aware about when the MoU will be signed with the private veterinary doctors and secondly, is the Ministry considering to permit new private vehicles for transportation of animals, dogs in the near future because of these changes? Thank you.

Dr. Boolell: I cannot give you the exact date as to when the MoU will be signed but we are going to move the process as fast as possible. As to enlistment of transport services, we will look into it favourably.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Edouard, do you have a question? Thank you very much. Yes, hon. François?

Mr François: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. If you allow me...

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr François: Madam Speaker, we are also talking about microchipping which is compulsory for dog registration. May I seize this opportunity to request the hon. Minister to look into the issue of non-availability of microchipping for live sheep and goat exportation from Rodrigues to Mauritius?

Dr. Boolell: Yes, this issue has been raised by the vets because usually goats and cattle imported from Rodrigues are microchipped but the ears are going to be tagged.

Mr François: Okay, thank you.

Madam Speaker: Okay, one more hon. Dr. Prayag. It is his question.

Dr. Prayag: Is there any proper legislation? Is the Ministry considering to put any legislation to prevent dog breeders/dog owners to tamper with microchips, to remove microchips and to tamper with them?

Dr. Boolell: That's a very good question. Only those who are properly trained will be allowed to microchip the dogs and you need to have people who are trained by specialised vets. And it is a course which is very effective but done by only those who have the acumen to do so.

Madam Speaker: Okay, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hon. Minister is a seasoned politician. This is a case of *apre lamor la tizann*. Can I ask...

Madam Speaker : L'amour ou la mort ?

Mr Lesjongard: *La mort ! Pas l'amour !*

(Interruptions)

Can I ask the hon. Minister whether, he would confirm to the House that the procurement for those microchips was only 15,000 and there are only 1000 microchips available at the MSAW?

Dr. Boolell: This is an exercise for which tender was called for. The moment these microchips are going to be used, there will be fresh tender called for but you know, we proceed in a gradual manner, step by step and we are reaching out for a great outreach, much to your displeasure.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. A. Duval?

Mr A. Duval: Thank you. Madam Speaker, may I ask the hon. Minister given the total chaos which has surrounded the implementation of this measure, may we firstly know when will the offences be implemented by the Police, by his Ministry? And secondly, when does he expect total registration to be completed? And I hope that the imposition of fines and other offences will await *la date butoir* which should be in a much longer term.

Dr. Boolell: Well, the chaos is within the rank and file of the Opposition, Madam Speaker. As far as we are concerned, we are addressing this problem in a very forceful

manner, with a humane and ecological approach and we are getting the results. Why? Because even those who were reluctant to come, are coming forward and you can rest assured, we will deliver.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Do not argue! Do not argue!

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker...

Madam Speaker: Another question?

(Interruptions)

One moment! Yes?

Mr A. Duval: The question was very simple. When will the offences be implemented?

Madam Speaker: Offences cannot be implemented!

Mr A. Duval: When will the Police and his Ministry start application of the offences and...

Madam Speaker: That is better.

Mr A. Duval: ...when does he think that the programme will be fully completed?

Madam Speaker: If you can give us...

Dr. Boolell: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member is acting like a fool. Only fools like him will rush in where there is no need to tread. There is time given and within the space, you know, we are...

Mr Lesjongard: Well, what is that space?

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: There are 120 days during which, we will reach out to as many people as possible and since it is in relation to the offence, it is not going to be applied with a hammer on the table...

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker...

Madam Speaker: He has answered.

Dr. Boolell: Things will be done diligently and in a very humane manner.

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, please...

Madam Speaker: I am giving you but not the same question.

Mr A. Duval: It is not the same question. Madam Speaker, the question is – what happens today? Now that the law *est entrée en vigueur*, what happens if a dog causes an incident? Will the Police be mandated to charge that person for failing to register the dog or not? And until such time, when will the Police be mandated?

Madam Speaker: One moment. It is very simple. The law must be applied once it is the law.

Mr A. Duval: No, he has to answer...

Dr. Boolell: Madam Speaker, as I said, the law will be applied but it will not be applied abruptly and against the rights of individuals.

Madam Speaker: Exactly!

(Interruptions)

Okay, enough on this question.

Dr. Boolell: Madam Speaker, as I have said, the law will be applied, but it will not be applied abruptly and against the rights of individuals.

Madam Speaker: Exactly! Okay, that is enough on this question. We are only on the first question. So, I think, we can move on now.

Hon. Second Member for Savanne and Black River, Mr Jugurnauth!

CHEMIN GRENIER MARKET FAIR PROJECT – DELAYS & OPERATION DATE

(No. B/839) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Chemin Grenier Market Fair Project, he will state the reasons for the delay in the coming into operation thereof.

Madam Speaker: Minister of Local Government, straight-forward answer, please!

Mr Wochit: Yes, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the construction of the new Chemin Grenier Market Fair started on 11 October 2021 and was initially scheduled to be completed by 10 October 2022. Following the approval of the Central Procurement Board, the contract was awarded to RBRB Construction

Ltd on 31 August 2021 for an amount of Rs107.5 million, and this figure includes a contingency sum of Rs5 million, excluding of VAT after a discount of Rs12.5 million. The contractor took possession of the site on 27 September 2021.

Madam Speaker, I am advised that the project faced several unforeseen challenges during implementation, which caused delays. I am tabling a comprehensive report outlining the detailed reasons for the delay in the completion of the Chemin Grenier Market Fair, which includes –

- the adverse climate conditions, including frequent heavy rainfalls and floodings onsite;
- non-performance of the former Project Manager, who was also the appointed architect for the project;
- changes in the scope of the sub-structure due to the topography of the land;
- unavailability of expatriate labour faced by the contractor, resulting from the restrictive policies of the outgoing government;
- additional works allocated to the contractor for the construction drainage system, and
- poor project management by the District Council of Savanne, among other contributing factors.

Madam Speaker, I am informed by the District Council of Savanne that the project will be fully completed within the next two weeks. This will be followed by an expression of interest exercise for the allocation of stalls to vendors. It is expected that the Chemin Grenier Market Fair will become operational by mid-December 2025. Thank you.

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

UNION PARK, BEEMANIQUE & CLUNY REGIONS – HEAVY TRAILERS – ROAD USERS’ SAFETY & ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS

(No. B/840) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the safety and environmental threats caused to road users and inhabitants in the region of Union Park, Beemanick and Cluny by heavy motor vehicles and trailers regularly converging to and from

the Mare Chicose Landfill station, he will, for the benefit of the House, state if consideration will be given for the establishment of an alternative route for the said vehicles.

Mr Gunness: Madam Speaker, waste carriers normally proceed to Mare Chicose Landfill via Cluny Road, B83, starting from its junction with the Phoenix-Plaisance Road, A10, over a length of 8km, with a road width of 3 metres each in both directions. Due to the constant movement of the waste carriers and with the expansion of the landfill, increased pressure is being exerted on Cluny Road, representing road safety hazards along the Cluny Road and at the Nouvelle France roundabout on the motorway M1.

Madam Speaker, in July 2018, the then Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, in collaboration with other concerned Ministries, was requested to undertake a survey on the current traffic of waste carriers to Mare Chicose and thereafter to look for alternative access road bypassing Cluny and other villages in the vicinity.

The Road Development Authority was accordingly requested to undertake the survey, and the latter had, in 2019, worked out an alternative alignment of a total length of 5.2 km, consisting of upgrading works along B83 Road over a length of 950 metres and construction of a new road over a length of 4.25 km. The cost estimate for the project amounted to Rs523 million, inclusive of VAT. However, the matter was not pursued further due to the high cost involved.

Madam Speaker, in May 2024, the matter was revived and the RDA was requested to review its proposal for the alternative access to Mare Chicose. In October 2024, the RDA updated the cost estimate from its initial proposal to Rs891 million, inclusive of VAT. The latter additionally submitted a second proposal comprising the construction of a totally new road starting on the motorway M1, from the access road leading to Beemanique Stone Crusher Ltd at Nouvelle France, passing through vegetation areas far away from inhabited zones, over a length of 4.25 km, to end after the village of Cluny onto the Cluny Road, B83. The estimated cost of this second option is approximately Rs850 million, inclusive of VAT.

Madam Speaker, upon assumption of office, I took note of the matter at a management meeting on RDA projects, held on 21 January 2025, during which I expressed concerns regarding the feasibility of implementing the project, should the Mare Chicose Landfill be relocated in the future. It was accordingly decided that the project would be kept in abeyance for the time being as its implementation would depend on the priorities set by Government.

The Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change has apprised that there is currently no project or proposal for the relocation of the Mare Chicose Landfill. Previous attempts to identify an alternative site for landfill development during the years 2015-2016 were unsuccessful. The contract for the vertical expansion of the existing landfill, awarded in June 2024, is expected to extend its operational lifespan by approximately 15 years. A decision will be taken in due course as regards the provision of an alternative access road to Mare Chicose.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Ramdass: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am perfectly aware of the financial constraints, as enumerated by the hon. Minister. However, I do learn as well that a survey has been carried out since as far back as July 2018. There is a bridge at Beemanique which is used by these heavy trailers, which is clearly not adapted for these types of vehicles and the road. As stated by the hon. Minister himself, it is way too narrow for these types of vehicles. So, will the hon. Minister consider this a matter of priority, as it is a matter of concern both from an environmental point of view and in terms of safety for the road users of Beemanique and its surroundings?

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister!

Mr Gunness: With regard to the Beemanique Bridge, it has been worked out and we can probably consider to upgrade it.

Madam Speaker: Okay, next question! Mr Edouard, Fourth Member for Rodrigues!

NURSING STAFF SHORTAGE – REGISTERED NURSES – DIRECT ENLISTMENT

(No. B/841) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the shortage of nursing staff in public healthcare institutions of the Republic including in Rodrigues Island and the limited seats available in the Nursing School, he will state if consideration will be given for the enlisting of nurses duly registered with the Nursing Council after successful completion of training in other schools despite having not been formerly enlisted as Trainee Nurse in the public service.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, at the outset, I wish to reassure the House that Government is fully conscious of the shortage of nursing staff in our health institutions, including Rodrigues.

Madam Speaker, as regards enlistment in the nursing cadre, I am informed that under the present framework the entry grade is Trainee Nurse. Trainee Nurses are presently required to undergo a three-year training programme. The programme comprises theoretical and practical components in all aspects of the work of a nursing officer at approved institutions.

On successful completion of this programme, which includes the passing of an examination leading to the award of the National Diploma Level 6 in Nursing, Trainee Nurses become eligible for registration with Nursing Council of Mauritius. Upon such registration, they may be considered for appointment as Nursing Officers, subject to availability of vacancies.

Those who do not meet the entry criteria for the National Diploma in Nursing at the School of Nursing may opt to pursue training at Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd. These courses are also accredited and awarded by the Mauritius Institute of Health.

Madam Speaker, the current scheme of service does not allow direct enlistment of nurses trained in institutions other than courses run by the Ministry. I am further informed that the current scheme of service is being reviewed so as to make provision for the recruitment of duly registered nurses trained in other institutions in the absence of qualified Trainee Nurses. This proposal is currently being examined by the Public Service Commission.

As you may be aware, it takes a number of years to train a nursing officer. However, the previous government did not recruit adequate number of nurses in order to ensure availability of sufficient number of nurses. It is only this year, in the Budget Speech of 2025-2026 that provision has been made for the enlistment of 1,000 nurses over the next three years. A first batch of 300 Trainee Nurses has already been enlisted since 22 September 2025 and the training will start this month. My Ministry further plans to enlist 500 nurses in the next financial year and 200 in financial year 2027-2028. Thus, in the coming years, we will have sufficient number of trained nurses to cater for our public.

Madam Speaker, moreover as an immediate measure to palliate the shortage of nursing officers, my Ministry has already enlisted the services of 36 nursing officers on a sessional basis. My Ministry is also considering the enlistment of additional 19 nurses. As regards, Rodrigues Island, I am informed that the recruitment of nurses is carried out by Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the courses are dispensed by Polytechnics Mauritius and the School of Nursing. A batch of 166 students presently following courses at the School of Nursing, including 29 students from Rodrigues are expected to complete the diploma in Nursing Course by June 2026.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. First Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart!

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES – EMPLOYMENT – MEASURES

(No. B/842) Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to people with disabilities, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof employed in the public and private sectors, respectively, and
- (b) state the additional measures his Ministry proposes to take to encourage the employment and retention thereof in both sectors.

Mr Subron: Madam Speaker, according to the Housing and Population Census 2022, Mauritius had a total of 86,607 persons with disabilities. Of whom, 82,815 were aged 16 years and above. 42,674 persons were retired, 6,009 were employed while 927 were actively seeking employment. I am herewith tabling the relevant data of the Housing and Population Census 2022.

As regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms that there are 110 persons with disabilities who are employed in the public sector. With regards to data for the private sector, I am informed that the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations keeps no such record at its level. According to the registry of persons with disabilities kept at the level of the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board which is a parastatal body falling under the aegis of my Ministry, there are only 527 persons with disabilities who are registered with the Board, searching for an

employment or training. Only around 900 employers employing more than 35 persons with disabilities are registered with the Board.

At present, the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Act 1996 provides that all employers with the workforce of 35 or more must employ 3% of their staff from among persons with disabilities. The Act also requires the maintenance of registers of persons with disabilities as well as the register of employers, the establishment of a Hearing Committee to review non-compliance and the possibility of requiring non-compliant employers to be fined. Although the above-mentioned framework was progressive for its time, it could not be effectively enforced and implemented due to various reasons, amongst them are lack of staff and associated resources. The number of trainings conducted over the years has systematically declined while reporting and compliance mechanisms have in turn remained weak.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, first, as I previously informed the House in my reply to a Parliamentary Question B/501 at the Sitting of 13 May 2025, my Ministry is currently working on reform initiatives for disability-related pensions and employability element will be included in the new assessment model. Thus, the scope of the new assessment model will include amongst others a job capacity evaluation of the persons with disabilities and the panel will channel all such cases to the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board or eventually to the National Empowerment Authority under the coming new law. We are expecting the first phase of the reform to be enforced very soon. Second, with the coming of the not yet proclaimed the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2024, there will be a reviewed employment quota as well as new monthly contribution will be included for non-compliance employers to the quota system.

Secondly, the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Act among others will be repealed and a single authority namely, the National Empowerment Authority will be set up to take over its functions.

Third, every employer shall provide reasonable accommodation to any employee who is a person with disability unless the employer can prove that the required adjustment would unduly prejudice the operation of the trade or business run by such employer and every employer shall submit an annual report to the authority on the employment of person with disability employed in his organisation not later than the 31 March of every year.

Through these measures, this government is laying the foundation for a more inclusive labour market where persons with disabilities are able to access, retain and progress in employment on an equal basis with others, thereby fulfilling both national commitments and international obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Dr. Prayag, question?

I think it would be the last question.

Hon. First Member for Rodrigues!

RODRIGUES – MINISTER’S VISIT – *JEUX DE LA COMMISSION DE LA JEUNESSE ET DES SPORTS DE L’OCEAN INDIEN*

(No. B/843) Ms M. R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to his recent visit to Rodrigues Island, he will –

- (a) state the –
 - (i) purposes and outcomes thereof;
 - (ii) measures envisaged for the enhancement of sports in terms of infrastructure and development thereat, and
- (b) criteria for the determination of prize money to medal-winning athletes of the recent *Jeux de la Commission de la Jeunesse et des Sports de l’Ocean Indien*, indicating the total sum disbursed.

Mr Nagalingum: Madam Speaker, allow me to take the time of the House to underline once again that Rodrigues is an autonomous island, operating under the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001 and Section 26 (1), thereof provides that Rodrigues Regional Assembly be responsible for the formulation and implementation of policy in respect of matters relating to youth and sports.

However, Madam Speaker, while respecting the autonomy of Rodrigues, I have always considered that it is my duty as Minister of the Republic to ensure that Rodriguan youths and athletes benefit from the same level of attention and support as their counterpart in Mauritius. From the very outset of my mandate, I have given special consideration to Rodrigues,

recognising the immense talent, determination and potential of its young people. In this context, I have already undertaken two visits to Rodrigues. My most recent visit in early September 2025 was particularly significant. Its primary objective was to hold final consultations with the sports community of Rodrigues so that their specific concern and aspiration could be duly reflected in the provision being made for them in the forthcoming Sports Bill. At the same time, I had the distinct honour of personally handing over cash prizes to the Rodriguan athletes who so valiantly won medals at the recent CJSOI Games in Seychelles. In total, an amount of Rs232,000 was disbursed, benefitting 17 Rodriguan athletes and free courses.

Let me emphasise, Madam Speaker, that the CJSOI Games do not normally fall under the cash prize scheme of our Ministry. In fact, in 2022 when the CJSOI Games were held in Mauritius, no cash prize was awarded to our medallists. Yet in light of the remarkable performance of our national team in Seychelles, upon my selection, an exceptional allocation has been granted to our youth medal winners and their coaches in recognition of their efforts and sacrifices. The prizes awarded were as follows –

- Rs15,000 to each gold medallist;
- Rs10,000 to each silver medallist;
- Rs7,000 to each bronze medallist, and
- Rs7,000 to each coach, and
- Rs5,000 to each assistant coach.

Madam Speaker, through these actions, my message is clear, while Rodrigues enjoys autonomy in youth and sports matters, this Government stands firmly by the side of Rodriguan youth, their victory are our victories, their aspirations are our aspirations and their development will always remain a national priority.

Madam Speaker: You have a supplementary? Yes!

Ms Collet: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the hon. Minister undertake to table details of the beneficiaries in Rodrigues?

Mr Nagalingum: I have the list. The list is long. I can table the list if you want.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Yes, Mr François!

Mr François: Madam Speaker, thank you. The hon. Minister mentioned that the Sports Bill is coming. May I ask him whether after he met the representatives of Movement Sportif de Rodrigues, he is agreeable to consider their request and proposal for the setting up of the cross for Rodrigues?

Mr Nagalingum: We are still in discussion with the people concerned and like I said, the Sports Bill is coming very soon and we will get an idea about what we are proposing.

Mr François: Thank you.

Madam Speaker: I think we might stop here for lunch. We have got two minutes. We won't be able to go through another question. So, I raise for one and a half hour. Thank you.

At 12.58 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.28 p.m., with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Please, be seated.

The hon. Third Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle.

FERNEY-DEUX FRÈRES AREA – TRANSPORT SERVICES PROVISION – TAXI LICENCE HOLDERS

(No. B/844) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the provision of transport services to inhabitants of the southeastern coastal area from Ferney to Deux Frères, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to the number of Public Service Vehicle Licence holders operating taxi services along the said area.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the National Land Transport Authority that 69 taxis are licensed to operate from 13 different localities between Ferney and Deux Frères. 13 public service vehicles taxi licences have also been licensed to operate in the nearby village of Quatre-Soeurs.

I am informed that 90% of these taxis operate between Deux Frères and Mahebourg at separate fares, meaning *taxi train* and supplement existing bus service, which is authorised under section 103(4) of the Road Traffic Act.

I am further informed that there has neither been any formal complaint lodged at the level of the NLTA from the inhabitants in regard to transport problems nor has there been any additional request for public service taxi licences at this stage in time.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Ramdass.

Mr Ramdass: In view of the poor service provided to those inhabitants, would the hon. Minister consider the possibility of the advisability of having a survey carried out by the NLTA to determine how many of these PSV licence holders are actually operating?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the NLTA is mandated to do such exercise. We can do it.

The Deputy Speaker: Another supplementary?

Mr Ramdass: Would the hon. Minister also consider the possibility of calling an Expression of Interest for the eventual issue of additional PSV licences?

Mr Osman Mahomed: If the survey warrants more taxis to be operated in the region, we will certainly do that.

COMPULSORY DOGS' REGISTRATION – ANIMAL WELFARE ACT – AMENDMENT

(No. B/845) 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 compulsory microchipping and registration of all dogs with the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare with effect from 01 October 2025, he will state whether consideration will be given for an amendment to the Animal Welfare Act to allow a decentralization of the process island-wide, including a mass dog registration campaign by allowing microchipping and registration with private veterinary surgeons and clinics.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/838)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Fourth Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue.

MAURITIUS QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY – MALIAN DELEGATION VISIT– MOU/AGREEMENT SIGNATURE

(No. B/846) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the visit

of a delegation from the Republic of Mali to the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) from 25 to 29 August 2025, he will state whether the prior approval of the board of the MQA and of his Ministry respectively, were sought and obtained therefor and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the purposes thereof, and
- (b) whether any agreement and/or memorandum of understanding was/were signed in the course thereof and, if so, give details thereof and table copy thereof.

Dr. Gungapersad: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Qualifications Authority that a Malian delegation visited the MQA from 25 to 29 August 2025. My Ministry was informed about the said visit on 22 August 2025.

However, officials from my Ministry asked the MQA to seek the prior approval of its Board first and to submit such request well in advance in order to allow timely procession for approval. My Ministry did this with the view to ensure that there was due diligence as clearance from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also had to be sought as well.

I wish to inform the House that no formal approval was given neither by my Ministry nor by the Board of the MQA prior to the visit of the delegation from Mali.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as for part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the purpose of the visit of the delegation from Mali was a study tour on matters pertaining to certification and implementation of the Mauritian National Qualifications Framework recognition to prior learning and qualifications development in the TVET sector.

As for part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that no formal agreement and no Memorandum of Understanding was signed. I am told that the visit was purely exploratory and merely for sharing of experience. It did not entail any bidding commitments on the part of the MQA.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr A. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it's in fact very serious that the Director of the MQA took it upon himself without consulting neither the Ministry nor the Board nor the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before allowing a delegation from Mali where there was recently *un coup d'état*, to come.

And I understand that the Board also has taken his due.

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question. Let's have your question.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that was statement of fact. He said that the Director of the MQA had taken upon himself to decide. He could ask whether that was the case.

The Deputy Speaker: The Minister never mentioned that the Director took it upon himself. So, ask the question.

Mr A. Duval: The issue being a serious one and the Board having required explanation from the Director, who has still not given it, has the Minister since and in view...

The Deputy Prime Minister: He is making a statement or what?

Mr A. Duval: In view that no explanation had been given, what is the Minister going to do about this?

The Deputy Speaker: What action will the Minister take now?

Dr. Gungapersad: I will definitely leave it to the Board because there was a request by the Board for a written explanation regarding same and I am awaiting the report from the Board. The Board will take whatever action has to be taken.

The Deputy Speaker: Question!

Mr A. Duval: Once the Board takes its decision, will the hon. Minister make that information available to the House as to the outcome of this matter which is very serious because they have bypassed proper procedure and bypassed the Minister himself?

Dr. Gungapersad: We believe in transparency and needful will be done.

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

QUATRE BORNES – JAWAHARLAL NEHRU ROAD – RESURFACING WORKS

(No. B/847) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the Jawaharlal Nehru Road, also known as Bassin Road, in Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to whether the resurfacing thereof is being considered and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, why not.

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, ex-Route Bassin at Quatre Bornes stretches over 3.9 km and falls under the jurisdiction of the Road Development Authority.

I am informed by the RDA that the Jawaharlal Nehru Road maybe divided into two sections as follows –

- Section 1 from La Louise Quatre Bornes Taxi Stand to the roundabout along Phoenix-Beau Songes Road B130 stretching over 2.6 km, and
- Section 2 from roundabout along Phoenix-Beau Songes Road up to La Vigie-La Brasserie- Beau Songes Link Road Phase 2 over a stretch of 1.3 km.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regard section 1 of Jawaharlal Nehru Road, I am informed by the RDA that as part of its programme of work for road maintenance and minor works for Financial Year 2025-2026, it has included localised resurfacing works along that stretch where severe subsidence has been noted.

I am further informed that for the time being, only localised road repair work is envisaged because the National Development Unit has future drain projects thereon as part of its Land Drainage Masterplan for flood mitigation measures for the regions of Candos and La Louise.

In order to mitigate hazards to road users thereat, the RDA has issued work order for the localised resurfacing works along Jawaharlal Nehru Road under its framework agreement contract. The work order has been awarded to Gamma Construction Ltd for the contract sum of Rs2,513,160.07 and resurfacing works are schedule to start by end of this month and are expected to end in mid-November.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to section 2 of Jawaharlal Nehru Road, I am informed by the RDA that land will have to be acquired to widen the road to 7 metres with 1.5 metre shoulder footpath and drains on both sides of the road. Currently, the width of the road varies from 3.5 to 5 metres. The land acquisition process has been initiated and is currently ongoing.

Moreover, the upgrading work along this section requires the reconstruction of three bridges and two box culverts. The cost estimate for the works is Rs125 million and same will be implemented subject to funds being made available and completing the acquisition of the land required for the project.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, M. le président. Aux noms des habitants de Bassin, je tiens à remercier l'honorable ministre pour sa réponse.

Would the hon. Minister inform the House whether temporary measures will be put in place to ensure the safety of motorists and pedestrians while waiting for resurfacing?

Mr Gunness: Obviously, we will take all measures. I will pass over the message to the RDA to take all necessary measures. In the meantime, the contract work will start this month.

Ms Anquetil: Thank you.

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

PRIVATE HEALTHCARE INSTITUTIONS – TREATMENT COST REGULATION

(No. B/848) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the private healthcare institutions, he will state if consideration will be given for the regulation of the cost of treatment and of services being practiced thereat.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, private health institutions in Mauritius are presently governed by the Private Health Institutions Act 1989 which sets out the basic requirements for licensing in compliance with health and safety standards. However, the Act does not empower my Ministry to regulate the cost of treatment and services being provided by the private operators.

I wish to inform the House that my Ministry is currently working on a new Private Health Institutions Bill with the technical support of a consultant made available by the European Union. The proposed draft bill and its accompanying regulations will modernise the legislation by introducing new provisions on transparency and accountability.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding the cost of treatment and services in private sector is a complex matter which requires careful balancing of patient rights, professional autonomy and investment incentives. The way forward will therefore depend on the outcome of wide consultations that my Ministry will hold with all stakeholders, including patients' associations, healthcare professionals, private operators as well as insurance companies.

This Government is committed to ensure that our citizens refrain from having recourse to the private clinics. That is why it is our policy to continually upgrade and improve our public hospitals by setting up specialised units with cutting edge technology, enhancing capacity of our staff through continuous training and upgrading infrastructure, and providing state of the art equipment. We are also expanding our agreements with overseas hospitals so that Mauritian patients may have access to a specialised treatment abroad whenever required free of charge.

In the same breath, the number of visiting consultants and specialists in our public hospitals has been extended so that more complex cases are treated within our hospitals. It is also the policy of my Ministry to encourage renowned foreign private hospitals to establish themselves in Mauritius with a view to increase competition. Thus, resulting in lowering the cost of treatment in clinics.

I am also informed that health insurance companies play a significant role by ensuring that charges remain within reasonable limits. Let me remind the House that over the last decade, the policy was clearly to weaken our public hospitals through understaffing, insufficient training and schemes such as zero interest loans to push patients towards private treatment. The result has been an erosion of trust in the public sector and greater dependency on costly private care.

This Government has taken a different course. Our objective is to rebuild confidence in the public health system, expand access to quality care free of charge and ensure that patients who turn to the private do so out of choice, not out of necessity. The forthcoming Private Health Institution's Bill will be a milestone in this process. I must emphasise that the question of regulating prices in the private sector remains open, and the decision will be taken after consultation with stakeholders.

Mr A. Duval: Without expressing any views on the public health institution services right now, the fact is thousands of Mauritians go to private clinics.

The Deputy Speaker: Your question, please. Put your question.

Mr A. Duval: I am coming to it! Prices have increased since you have taken office. For example, by 18% in terms of doctors' fees, and clinical and infrastructure fees around 15% in the last year.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister has just mentioned that the Act as it is does not allow him to regulate the fees.

Mr A. Duval: Yes.

The Deputy Speaker: Can you put your question now?

Mr A. Duval: Therefore, does the hon. Minister not see it, in public interest, as an urgent measure, to curb the inflation of private healthcare prices which is unchecked at the moment?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all of us know that if you are going to impose conditions, you are going to fix up the fees. This will be a deterrent for these institutions to invest. Health is a sector where billions of rupees are required. So, instead of doing that, the first concern of our Government is to improve the quality of service in our hospitals which had completely gone down for the last ten years.

Let us try to upgrade it and convince our people to come towards our hospitals. I have hundreds of cases where they go the private clinic and once the money is exhausted, they will turn towards our hospitals. Now, we have the best type of care in our hospitals. My duty is to improve that, but I cannot compel the private clinics to bring down the price.

If you are going to impose it, no new entrants will be there. And unfortunately, nothing new can be done. That is the reason why we believe that imposition of prices – there has been a Minister of Commerce for about 4-5 years, I remember. Thousands of articles were not under the price control at that time. Unfortunately, that led to much problems because no new comers came, the price stayed the same, and there was no new investment. That is the reason why we do not believe too much on price control.

Mr A. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, please!

The Deputy Speaker: Last question.

Mr A. Duval: Yes. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, public perception in public service is something else. I am quite surprised that the hon. Minister does not see it necessary to at least curb the huge increases. Let me just ask if the hon. Minister...

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question! Put your question!

Mr A. Duval: ... is aware that insurance costs, be it health insurance or the indirect effect on car insurance, insurance for public transportation, all of these are following that pattern because of the huge unchecked cost of private health institutions. I will ask again: will the hon. Minister not appoint...

The Deputy Speaker: He has already answered the question!

Mr A. Duval: ...a team to see the options without having to go and regulate, but, at least, to go into proposals on how we are going to control these prices?

The Deputy Speaker: Any other questions? This has already been answered.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can advise and I can encourage. The best that I can do – legally, I do not have the right – is we are bound to improve the conditions of service in our public hospitals. We have to do away with the perception. That was the perception of the previous government, not ours. We are trying to improve as much as we can.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, one last question, hon. Dr. Prayag!

Dr. Prayag: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I agree that it is not the purview of the Ministry of Health to regulate the prices of private health institutions.

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question! Put your question!

Dr. Prayag: It falls under the Ministry of Commerce. I appreciate your answer. Is the Ministry planning to negotiate with foreign Indian hospitals so that at least they can bring down the cost of local prices for Mauritians going abroad?

Mr Bachoo: This is exactly what we are doing. The House will be aware that over a dozen of new international hospitals are coming towards Mauritius and we are having a series of Memorandum of Understanding with them. They are also sending us experts time and again. I can announce in the days to come that we will be having about four top specialists coming to Mauritius from Chennai in order to help us in our hospitals.

Mr A. Duval: The prices are still going up!

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

CONSTITUENCY NO. 10 – RECREATIONAL SPORTS FACILITIES

(No. B/849) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the recreational sports facilities, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Sports Council, information as to the number thereof it operates in Constituency No. 10 Montagne Blanche and Grand River South East, indicating the respective location thereof and activities being provided thereat.

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Sports Council that there is one sports facility in Constituency No. 10 that falls under its purview, namely the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) located at Caroline. The facility accommodates various activities such as –

- mini soccer;
- pétanque;
- Zumba sessions;
- recreational activities for children and senior citizens;
- open air gym;
- training, and
- walking or jogging along its dedicated track.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House may also wish to note that my Ministry has a youth hub which houses a sports hall in Montagne Blanche. The hub which was revamped provides the following activities –

- Taekwondo;
- Table Tennis;
- Badminton;
- Dames;
- Indoor games (Scrabble, Carom), and
- Guitar courses.

Moreover, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry also dispenses the following training in secondary schools and MITD centres of that region –

- Family Life Education;
- National Youth Civic Service, and
- *Jeunes* Enterprises.

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

ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT – QUALIFIED MINISTRY’S OFFICERS

(No. B/850) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to asbestos, he will state the number of officers of his Ministry qualified and trained by accredited institutions in the management thereof, indicating the –

- (a) types of Personal Protective Equipment provided thereto since 2015 and
- (b) number of visits effected by the said officers on the site of housing units containing same requiring dismantling since January 2024 to date.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Enforcement Unit of the Solid Waste Management Division of my Ministry consists of 14 officers who are involved only in the supervision of the dismantling of the housing units containing cemented asbestos sheets for removal and disposal process. Site visits are effected prior to dismantling to assess quantity and state of asbestos sheets and supervise the dismantling process till carting away to the landfill.

With regard to training; from 21 to 25 November 2022, officers of the Enforcement Unit of the Division have received training on HAZWOPER site operations which was conducted by Polyeco Ltd., a Greek company, which has extensive experience in management of hazardous wastes. Moreover, one officer was trained on HAZMAT specialised equipment in August 2025 conducted by consultant of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Centre.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, the technical enforcement officers who carry out visual inspections of dismantling of the housing units cemented asbestos sheets have been provided with Personal Protective Equipment comprising amongst others disposable overall, dust masks and safety boots.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerning part (b) of the question, the number of visits effected by the Division from 2024 to date is 35. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, asbestos houses which are being dismantled by contractors who are hired by the Ministry and there is a constant follow-up of works which have been done by contractors especially with regard to protective equipment.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, you have supplementary question?

Mr Beejan: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Will the hon. Minister inform the House what further training will be provided or any other ongoing Health Surveillance Programme is put in place for the officers potentially exposed to asbestos fibres in the course of their duties? Thank you.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a planned programme which is in shape and will be soon implemented not only by my Ministry but by the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations and the safety division also.

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

CONSTITUENCY NO.13 – BUS TRANSPORT SERVICES – COMPLAINTS & MEASURES

(No. B/851) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the bus routes in Constituency Number 13, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Corporation, information as to whether it is in presence of complaints from commuters along same regarding the transport services being provided and, if so, indicate the measures, if any, taken in relation thereto.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, further to concerns raised by the hon. Member during the Sitting of the House of 10 December 2024 regarding bus services in Constituency No.13, the NLTA was tasked to assess the prevailing situation and to come up with appropriate remedial measures.

I am informed by NLTA that a meeting was held with the NTC and individual operators concerned on 06 March 2025. The bus operators were instructed to improve the level of bus services in those regions and according to the NLTA, improvements have been noted along most of those routes. Several checks subsequently carried out an operation of buses at Souillac, Camp Diable and L’Escalier in the months of June and July 2025.

Coming to the substantive question, I am informed by the NTC that the NTC serves the following 8 routes. I am not going to list all of them but it is route No. 66A, the description is there, if you want, I can give it to.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, you can.

Mr Osman Mahomed: No. 34, No. 61, No. 61A, No. 67, No. 79, No. 133 and No.197. Route 10 which extends over 40 km also plies through Rivière des Galets to

Mahebourg *via* Souillac, Camp Diable and L'Escalier and is served by 35 individual operators at an interval of 15 minutes at peak hours.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the NTC that repeated complaints especially with regard to unavailability of buses along the above routes are being received. For the period of June/July 2025 to September 2025, a total of 50 complaints has been received specifically on account of irregular bus services which is attributable to frequent breakdown of Yutong and Nissan buses deployed on those routes.

I am further made to understand that the NTC is encountering difficulties to procure spare parts in view of the need to abide by directive 47 of the Procurement Policy Office with regard to mandatory use of e-procurement system.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I personally met her Excellency, the Chinese Ambassador during courtesy call recently on 01 September 2025 and I have requested her to facilitate the commercialisation of spare parts of Yutong buses locally and I am given to understand that the Embassy is exploring the possibility of having an MoU between Yutong company and NTC that should theoretically resolve the problem.

In fact, the NTC redeployed one additional bus...

The Deputy Speaker: Is your answer long, hon. Minister? Because the question is simple, what actions are you taking?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, just to complete and to say because since it is Constituency No.13, a massive amount of Rs24.6 million has been injected by the TRMSU for construction of a traffic centre at Rivière des Anguilles. The traffic centre will be operational this week and will be expected to enhance the bus transport services in Constituency No.13.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Member!

Mr Jhummun: Relating to the incident regarding some buses that took fire, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether the fire prevention mechanism systems were in place, if not whether an enquiry will be undertaken?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, yes, there was an issue. I am privy to information which I can give to the hon. Member since it is requested in the question. The former General Manager of the NTC was given a quotation on 29 January 2020 to change what is called the firebombs – from what is written here. It is supposed to explode when there is fire and quench the fire but same were not changed. That was four years ago – so, we have an issue. The new General Manager, when he assumed office in July 2025, immediately asked for a quotation and I am given to understand that same will

be replaced and I have asked him to do so expeditiously. I am told it is going to cost Rs2.44 million.

As regards whether an enquiry will have to be conducted, I can ask the Board of the NLTC to look into this issue.

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

OLD BRIDGES & FOOTBRIDGES – ISLAND-WIDE AUDIT – REPAIRS & REINFORCEMENT

(No. B/852) Dr. Ms. R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the old bridges and footbridges, he will state if, following the collapse of an old bridge at Tranquebar on 21 April 2025, his Ministry has carried out an audit to assess the state thereof island-wide and, if not, whether consideration will be given therefor and repairs and reinforcement thereof be carried out accordingly.

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like to clarify that the incident to which the hon. Member is referring to occurred on 21 April 2025 and not 21 February 2025.

Secondly, I wish to emphasize that bridges and footbridges are constructed throughout the island on both classified and non-classified roads. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regard classified roads, that is, motorways A and B roads. These fall under the responsibility of the Road Development Authority which as the highway authority is responsible for the construction, care, maintenance and improvement of these roads and related structures.

The RDA maintain an inventory of all classified roads and associated structures including vehicular and pedestrian bridges and culverts which form an essential part of national road network.

In order to preserve these assets and ensure their structural safety, the Bridge Management System was set up in 2012. The BMS serves as a comprehensive audit mechanism which enables the RDA to maintain a detailed database of bridges, record the structural defects and formulate a priority list of maintenance and rehabilitation works based on condition indices.

Since the establishment of the BMS, 21 bridges have been rehabilitated or reconstructed on a priority basis. The RDA has recently reassessed the condition of bridges on classified roads island-wide and updated the inventory accordingly. A list of bridges

requiring intervention has been prepared and implementation will be carried out gradually over the coming financial years given the significant investment involved.

At present, the construction of 3 bridges namely, Grand Sable, Beau Champ and Ramdine, Eau Coulée is ongoing and is expected to be completed within this financial year. In addition, contracts for the John Kennedy bridge at Vacoas and the Royal Bridge at Port Louis near hotel Pakistan have been awarded and works will commence shortly while bidding documents for the Haute Rive bridge and Rivière du Rempart have already been launched.

With regard to footbridges, there are presently 20 located along classified roads. In recent years, RDA has undertaken the construction or rehabilitation of six of these and a further three footbridges – Mapou, Pamplemousses, and Calebasses along the M2 are being rehabilitated in the 2025-2026 financial year as part of the RDA's ongoing programme. All these works are carried out with a focus on safe passage for road users and the long-term integrity of our road network.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards non-classified roads which fall under the responsibility of local authorities, I am informed that following the Tranquebar incident, no comprehensive island-wide structural audit has been carried for bridges and footbridges under their purview. This is mainly due to a lack of in-house technical expertise such as structural engineers and the absence of dedicated funds which limit their ability to conduct detailed assessments.

Local authorities across the island have varying capacities to manage their bridges and footbridges. Some, such as those in Vacoas-Phoenix and Quatre Bornes, rely mainly on visual inspections and require external expertise for comprehensive structural assessments. In Curepipe, most bridges are reported as structurally sound although a few require urgent repairs while enlargement works are being undertaken by the National Development Unit.

In Savanne, the Pont Rouge footbridge has been found to be severely damaged, whereas other bridges have already been repaired. In Moka, major reconstruction works have been completed, while in Rivière du Rempart and Grand Port, attention is being given to minor repairs, with major works requiring external support.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry will provide technical guidance and collaboration as and when requested to support local authorities in maintaining bridges and footbridges falling under their purview.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Ms Daureeawo, is there a question?

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: Has the Ministry received any complaints in relation to the current state of our bridges and footbridges?

Mr Gunness: As far as I can see, I have not received any formal complaints, even by the local authorities yet.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Babajee!

Mr Babajee: I will ask the Minister if he has got any complaints in regard to the Tamarin bridge which started yielding...

The Deputy Speaker: He does not have any complaints.

Mr Babajee: ...at the start and as a matter of urgency, it is the only way to go to the West. If so, can we have a look as a matter of urgency?

Mr Gunness: Among the 21 bridges which have rehabilitated and reconstructed on a priority basis, I can see Tamarin bridge is in the list.

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

ISLETS AROUND MAURITIUS – ECOSYSTEM PRESERVATION –TRADE & TOURISM ACTIVITIES REGULATION

(No. B/853) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the islets around Mauritius, he will state the framework being envisaged for the regulation of trade and tourism activities thereat with a view to preserving the inherent ecosystem and biodiversity thereof and preventing further environmental degradation thereat.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the House to my reply to the PNQ of 6 May 2025. The House will recall that I referred to the situation that prevailed in that reply on Ile aux Bénitiers. That islet had witnessed an increase in unregulated commercial activities, including informal food and beverage operations, unauthorised recreational setups and erection of structures that are inconsistent with the land use and environmental planning principles. These activities have raised concerns regarding sanitation, waste management, environmental degradation, negative effects on biodiversity and the ecosystem as well as the preservation of public access and cultural value.

Ever since then, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there have been several meetings under the chairmanship of the Deputy Prime Minister. And I must state that the work was not only about Ile aux Bénitiers but also started work about other islets around Mauritius. As regards the work that has already been initiated on Ile aux Bénitiers, as a pilot case, in order to regulate existing trade and tourism activities while ensuring the protection of the island's fragile ecosystem, we have delimited a temporary recreational zone to accommodate barbecue operators and handicraft sellers. At the same time, a comprehensive masterplan has been elaborated in consultation with all the relevant authorities, with a view to establishing a permanent recreational zone that balances economic activities with the preservation of biodiversity. So, we are going for Ile aux Bénitiers approximately on two thirds for conservation and a third for the rest.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a sum of Rs8 million has been provided in the Financial Year 2025-2026 for the cleaning of islets. Along this line, consideration is being given for the management strategy used for Ile aux Bénitiers to be replicated to other islets around Mauritius. It has been planned – as recommended and suggested by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister – that we would, after Ile aux Bénitiers, also be going to visit some of the islets around Mauritius and we would be starting with some in the North. And the issue therefore, is to promote a balanced approach that encourages responsible tourism and economic opportunities while preserving the natural heritage of our coastal and marine assets.

So, in this perspective, I would like to thank all those who have collaborated in this effort; all relevant stakeholders, obviously starting with the Deputy Prime Minister and also the Minister of Environment, Minister of Agro-Industry and their respective Ministries and the Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Local Government as well and all the other local authorities that have been very helpful in the process.

I must however add that at this juncture, we are reflecting in line with what your question is, on which will be the authority eventually that will be responsible for the management of all the islets. Will it be under the Beach Authority as we had discussed or will it be under a dedicated authority under the Ministry of Environment with all *les acteurs concernés*? But there needs to be an effort and a dedicated effort in order to ensure that whatever we started at Ile aux Bénitiers under the chairmanship of the meeting with hon. Deputy Prime Minister, that we continue it vis-à-vis other islets.

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

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: Yes. Is there any proposed timeline for completion of the works on all our islets?

Mr Mohamed: Well, in actual fact, I looked at the documents that have been given to me and the number of islets that exist around Mauritius, and there are indeed quite a few. And if I was to look at it, there are from memory, approximately 52 and out of the 52, there are two of them that are privately owned. So, we are concerned with about 50 of them. So, going to all of them will take the time that it takes and obviously at this juncture, we rely on the generosity and collaboration of the National Coast Guard to take all officers there. We do not have dedicated vessels to take us to each and every island. So, that is why far from trying to put a timeline on the whole process – what is important here is results and it will take the time that it takes because at the end of the day, we have to give results.

And within this mandate, we hope that we will have replicated the excellent work that has been done for Ile aux Bénitiers on other islets with the collaboration of all my friends in Cabinet and Members of Parliament who are also very helpful in connecting us with other people and those who are operating on these islets.

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

SINGAMANIE VILLAGE, BOIS MARCHAND – SQUATTERS – REGULARISATION

(No. B/854) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to Singamanie Village near Bois Marchand, he will state the number of squatters currently residing thereat, indicating the plan, if any, to regularise the situation thereof and, if not, why not.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank the hon. Member for her question. I am informed that there are some 41 squatters in the area commonly known as Singamanie Village over State land at Bois Marchand, out of which, 23 are pre-July 2015 and 18 are post-July 2015.

Now, the reason why very often we refer in the jargon of the Ministry of Housing and Land to the pre/post-July 2015, is basically there are two treatments that are afforded to those who are pre and those who are post. It is a question of policy that was decided at the level of the Ministry as their settlement is either on the *réserve* of *Rivière des Calebasses* or located close to a sewage treatment plant thereat.

It is unfortunate because of those realities on the ground, we cannot consider regularising them in situ, as I have explained the reason for that. However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to reassure the House that my Ministry is actively looking into various other possibilities to address the situation.

I had stated in my reply to PQ B/754 that my Ministry, in this regard, is also working upon recommendations for regularising the post-2015 squatters because the previous government had decided not to regularise the post-2015 squatters.

I think we have to take that into consideration, and I take advantage of this particular question to give that information. Ever since I came into office, I decided to request the officers of the Ministry to carry out a survey island-wide to know what is the real problem of squatters around Mauritius. We managed to carry out a survey on all State lands. Obviously, there are also squatters on private lands. The residential and non-residential squatters per district –

- in the District of Port Louis, there are 306 squatters;
- in the District of Pamplemousses, there are 80;
- in the District of Rivière du Rempart, there are 52;
- in the District of Flacq, there are 89;
- in the District of Grand Port, there are 35, and
- in the District of Savanne, there are 5.

I say again, that does not include the squatters on private lands.

So, to that 700 or so figure – the total is, in fact, 750 on State lands –, I would have thought that we are close to the figure of almost more than a thousand or slightly more than a thousand. So, yes, there is the need to address the issue – and we are doing that – of all squatters. But I have to also – as I have said in the previous reply – ensure that in the process, we do not go for a policy decision that encourages squatting. Squatting cannot be an easy way to obtain facilities from government and homes. We should try to bring them within the mainstream, which is to register to obtain a proper registration and bring in the effort to get them a place and roof over their heads. But I must say that ever since July 2015 and to date, the figures of squatters have increased tremendously. That is because the previous government did nothing to address the problem of squatters, and we will.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, one question.

Ms Savabaddy: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Thank you to the hon. Minister for his answer. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether his Ministry is taking actions to assist the squatters and if there is any plan for them to live a better life? Thank you.

Mr Mohamed: Once again, I thank the hon. Member for her question. Is there a plan for them to live a better life? It cannot simply be a plan. It has to be a reality. In order to do so, I propose, with regard to the particular issue that the hon. Member has brought up in the National Assembly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, – and I have already said this to the hon. Member – is to organise a meeting in situ, but after we have got a proper survey of the area in order to identify ways and means of finding the solution and give them a better life with a roof over their heads. This does not only apply to the particular situation in that locality. It applies to every single place where there are squatters.

Many issues have been brought to my attention. Members of Parliament from Constituency No.14 – one of them spoke to me many times ever since the last general elections. So, yes, we are confronted with the increased number of squatters. I do not believe that we should make a differentiation between post-July 2015 or pre-July 2015. I believe that we have to accept that we have financial constraints and we also have the difficulty of finding proper land to accommodate those squatters.

I can also add that the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, himself, has brought to my attention the situation of unfortunate squatters on land, commonly known as Carre d’As, in the Black River District. We are trying to find, under his chairmanship as well, other solutions quickly to be able to put them in a better environment and for them to have a roof over their heads that they can call home. So, we are concerned, we are conscious, and we will find the solutions.

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

MEDICAL WORKFORCE SHORTAGE – REMEDIAL MEASURES

(No. B/855) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the public hospitals and public

healthcare institutions, he will state the measures being taken to address the shortage of nursing staff and medical practitioners thereat.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in response to the shortage of nursing staff and medical practitioners in public hospitals and health institutions, my Ministry has put in place a number of short-term, medium-term and long-term measures to ensure that health care services continue to run smoothly and effectively.

With regard to nursing staff, several actions have already been taken. On 23 August 2025, 36 nurses were recruited on sessional basis. These nurses are actively working in helping to support the health system. In addition, a public advertisement was issued on 23 September 2025 to hire 90 more sessional nurses. With a view to building a stronger supply of future nurses, 300 Trainee Nurses have already been enlisted in the financial year 2025-2026 as of 22 September 2025.

As part of our sustained efforts, my Ministry further plans to enlist 500 additional Trainee Nurses in the financial year 2026-2027 and another 200 Trainee Nurses in the financial year 2027-2028. This will help to ensure a steady supply of trained nurses in the years to come.

As regard medical practitioners, it is to be highlighted that there are presently 120 doctors who proceeded on study leave without pay for postgraduate specialisation. My Ministry encourages specialisation in scarcity fields, thereby providing the opportunity for doctors to upgrade their skills and expertise in the medical field, which will eventually benefit our health care services.

To this end, to palliate for the lack of doctors, my Ministry has, on 03 September 2025, recruited 25 Medical and Health Officers/Senior Medical and Health Officers on a yearly contractual basis. My Ministry has also re-advertised for the recruitment of an additional 30 more Medical and Health Officers/Senior Medical and Health Officers on a contractual basis. These doctors will help fill the gap in staffing and reducing the pressure on the current workforce.

As a medium-term measure, my Ministry has requested the Public Service Commission to recruit 111 additional Medical and Health Officers/Senior Medical and Health Officers. In this respect, I am informed that interviews are presently ongoing at the level of PSC.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to further inform the House that for both medical and nursing staff my Ministry is working on a long-term plan. A manpower assessment, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, is currently being carried out. The study will help the Ministry to understand how many doctors and nurses will be needed in future with a view to ensuring effective and efficient planning of human resources in our healthcare system.

In addition, my Ministry is further reviewing the functioning of all our public health institutions. This includes the current shift system of Medical and Health Officers/Senior Medical and Health Officers in the hospitals and the opening hours of mediclinics, area health centres and community health centres. The aim is to improve human resource management and to make services more efficient and accessible to the public at large.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, together, these measures demonstrate my Ministry's strong commitment to improving staffing levels in the public healthcare system, ensuring that patients continue to receive safe and quality health care.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: M. le président, l'honorable ministre peut-il indiquer à la Chambre s'il existe une disposition permettant d'envisager le recrutement sous contrat de médecins et d'infirmiers retraités du secteur public comme du secteur privé, ayant dépassé la limite d'âge ? Bien sûr, s'ils sont jugés aptes à travailler.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in exceptional cases, when the scarcity was felt, we then had recourse to the recruitment of doctors as well as nurses, but it was below 70 years. We were bound to do it as there was a big shortage, and the previous government had done nothing in that field.

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

OPEN UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS – ALLEGED UNFAIRNESS & COMPLAINTS – INQUIRY

(No. B/856) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research whether, in regard

to Open University of Mauritius (OUM), he will state whether he is in presence of any complaint against a member of the teaching staff thereof for the use of unacceptable language and attitudes and for allegations of unfairness and discrimination towards the students and, if so, indicate whether his Ministry has caused an inquiry to be carried out thereinto and/or sought and obtained information from the OUM in relation thereto and the actions taken, if any.

Dr. Sukon: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following posts on social media and articles published in the press, a group of students of the Open University of Mauritius had lodged complaints against a lecturer. According to the students, the allegations were serious –

- (i) the use of irrelevant and inappropriate comments during a lecture held on 22 February 2025 from around 10:30 hrs to 12:30 hrs, and
- (ii) racism and communal bias in the grading of examinations. I am informed that the Open University of Mauritius immediately established an Internal Committee to enquire into these allegations. A preliminary report has been submitted to my Ministry. The Committee reviewed the nearly 1 hour 47 minutes long lecture recordings, saved on the Learning Management System as well as the entire marking process. The Committee has identified potentially compromising elements and has therefore recommended that a thorough investigation be carried out.

I am further informed that an independent full-fledged committee will now be established after legal advice is obtained. My Ministry will exercise direct oversight throughout this process. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, such behaviour, if proven, violates Section 16 of our Constitution, guaranteeing equality and protection from discrimination, the Open University of Mauritius Act, requiring academic integrity. Any conduct undermining equality contradicts the foundational principles upon which our Republic is built.

Let me be absolutely clear on three points –

- First, there will be no cover up. Every allegation will be investigated thoroughly and transparently. The findings would be made available to this House. No one will be shielded. No misconduct will be swept under the carpet. The truth will be established.

- Second, justice will be served without hesitation. If the allegations are substantiated, appropriate action will be taken, including suspension or termination where warranted. No qualification, no tenure, no position will protect anyone found to have engaged in racism, discrimination or harassment.
- Third, this Government adopts zero tolerance. Any recurrence of such misconduct at any tertiary education institution will be dealt with firmly and decisively. We will not allow any act to ignite division, undermine our constitutional values or compromise our education system's integrity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to reassure the hon. Member, the students and parents, no student will suffer academically as a result of these complaints or the investigation. The University has already taken measures to ensure this. Alternative arrangements have been made to ensure that the students have fair assessment, support services and protection from retaliation, if ever there is any. All necessary actions will be taken to preserve academic integrity, ensure justice and maintain public confidence.

Beyond this specific case, my Ministry will strengthen complaint mechanisms across all tertiary education institutions, enhance professional standards, mandatory training on cultural sensitivity and anti-discrimination, improve student welfare system and ensure robust oversight to prevent such incidents. Our students deserve learning environments free from discrimination, fair assessment, based solely on merit, respect and dignity in all interactions and equal treatment regardless of race, religion or any other characteristic.

The investigation will be independent, impartial and legally compliant, urgent and transparent. I will update this House upon its completion. Thank you.

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

RODRIGUES – ANIMAL WELFARE ACT – COMPLIANCE

(No. B/857) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the Animal Welfare Act, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain and table the list of officers designated by his Ministry or the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare to ensure compliance thereof in the Island of Rodrigues.

(Vide reply to PQ B/838)

NLTA – BUS ROUTES 251, 77, 42 & 20C – BUS SERVICES – COMPLAINTS & REMEDIAL MEASURES

(No. B/858) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplémousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to bus routes 251, 77, 42 and 20C, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to whether it is in presence of representations in relation to the state of the bus services along same and, if so, indicate the remedial measures being contemplated in relation thereto.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are four routes being questioned here in a busy conurbation. So, the reply that has been provided to me is six pages long.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, please circulate it!

Mr Osman Mahomed: I am going to circulate it but I shall...

The Deputy Speaker: Briefly you may go through the main points and it will be circulated.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes. I took note of the Facebook page of the hon. Member on 31 August 2025 and NLTA was requested immediately to conduct an enquiry. There are cases where several operators are not providing adequate service; this is for sure as you can more fully read in the reply. I have to stress the fact that the attention of the Disciplinary Committee chaired by Barrister Aratee Prayag will be done and the consequence of this is revocation of licenses, which can understandably be envisaged, if so required.

On a last note, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, last Friday, Cabinet took note of my Ministry giving instruction to the Attorney General's Office to draft the Bus Services Bill and this will make the provision for the use of technology to better enable the NLTA to monitor services. So, such problem will be resolved given time.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, one question?

Mr Rookny: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would be grateful if the hon. Minister could inform the House when could the inhabitants of Baie du Tombeau and Calebasses start seeing improvement in the situation?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Like I said, the Achilles' heel of the NLTA right now is that it does not have enough supervising staff on the field. Like I said before, once we have technology – the Fleet Management System and all – from the office they can monitor

whether the buses are not compliant with their agreed timetables, on which they are actually being paid for. So, please, bear with us for some time. My officers told me that the tender for the Fleet Management System can be floated for the consultancy and for the contractor on 15 October. So, it will take some more time.

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

**GRAND PORT TO BAMBOUS VIRIEUX & GRAND SABLE TO DEUX FRÈRES –
COASTAL ROADS – RESURFACING**

(No. B/859) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the coastal road on the stretches of Grand Port to Bambous Virieux and Grand Sable to Deux Frères, respectively, he will state the proposed timeframe for the resurfacing thereof following the recent completion of water pipe laying works by the Central Water Authority thereat.

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to refer the hon. Member to the replies I made to PQ B/223 on 25 March 2025 and to PQ B/616 on 08 July 2025 wherein I informed the House that the B28 Road had been severely damaged further to the pipe laying works being carried out by the Central Water Authority. I also informed the House that the 13.1 km pipeline renewal project was divided into two phases –

- Phase 1: from Anse Jonchée to Bambous Virieux to Petit Sable, covering a distance of 6.4 km, and
- Phase 2: from Ferney to Anse Jonchée, covering a distance of 6.7 km.

The scope of the works includes the replacement of old ductile iron and reinstatement works which the CWA carries in two stages namely –

- (i) Temporary reinstatement undertaken by the contractor carrying out the pipe laying works which consist of back filing and applying a 30 mm layer of asphaltic concrete along the trenches, and
- (ii) permanent reinstatement to be undertaken by a separate Grade A contractor, following a bidding exercise. This involves asphaltting the damaged road to a thickness of 50 mm.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am now informed by the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities that the CWA has completed the renewal of the distribution network in August 2025

and a separate contract for the permanent road reinstatement works has been prepared for both phases. The bidding exercise was launched on 15 July 2025 and the CWA Board approved the award of the contract on 02 October 2025 to Transinvest Construction Ltd.

The estimated cost for the permanent road reinstatement works from Ferney to Petit Sable which includes the stretch from Vieux Grand Port to Bambous Virieux is to the tune of Rs82 million which has been catered under the current financial year. The tentative start of work is scheduled for the first week of November 2025 with completion expected by February 2026.

As regards the stretch of road from Grand Sable to Deux Frères, I am informed by RDA that pipe laying work is yet to be started. As such the RDA is undertaking patching works thereat. I am further informed that the RDA has not yet issued the wayleave for the excavation works along this stretch and same will be issued only after completion of the resurfacing works from Ferney to Petit Sable.

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to highlight that the RDA has raised concerns over the CWA's failure to comply with the conditions of wayleave namely at L'Escalier, Chemin Grenier, St-Julien d'Hotman and Hermitage where no proper temporary reinstatement works were carried out despite several notices sent.

According to the RDA, the practice of awarding separate contracts for pipelaying and permanent road reinstatement results in significant delays, adversely affecting road users due to insufficient temporary restoration. To address this, the RDA is proposing to have a Memorandum of Understanding with the CWA whereby the RDA will undertake the permanent reinstatement works once pipelaying is fully completely and commissioned. The MoU will clearly define the respective responsibilities of both parties including payment arrangements.

A meeting is scheduled today with the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities, CWA and RDA to discuss the draft MoU.

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

NOUVELLE DECOUVERTE – REGULAR WATER SUPPLY – MEASURES ENVISAGED

(No. B/860) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to Nouvelle Découverte,

he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the measures taken to ensure regular and sufficient water supply to residents thereof.

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, avec votre permission, je répondrai ensemble aux questions B/860 et B/896 car elles portent sur la même question.

M. le président, je suis informé par la *Central Water Authority* que la haute Nouvelle Découverte, et ses régions environnantes sont alimentées principalement par le réservoir d'Alma et le réservoir d'Alma île.

La principale source d'eau provient de la station de traitement des eaux de La Marie et est complétée par deux forages et trois filtres à pression, les CFP. Les horaires d'alimentation dans ces localités sont intermittents. Auparavant, ils étaient biquotidiens de quatre heures à huit heures et de 16 heures à 20 heures, avec une pression réduite. Suite aux plaintes des consommateurs, une étude hydraulique a été menée par la *Central Water Authority*.

Le programme d'alimentation a ensuite été optimisé pour une fois par semaine soit d'une heure à huit heures pour Ripailles et la partie haute de Nouvelle Découverte, de 13 heures à 20 heures pour partie basse de Nouvelle Découverte avec une pression adéquate.

De plus, la CWA a renouvelé environs 1.6 km des tuyaux à Nouvelle Découverte couvrant Roussette Road, Shivala Road, Jokhoo Road l'année dernière, améliorant ainsi le service pour environ 200 abonnés.

M. le président, je tiens à ajouter qu'un nouveau réservoir de service de 3000 m³ à Alma est actuellement en cours de mise en service et devrait être opérationnel à compter de la fin d'octobre de cette année-ci, donc dans quelques jours. Il est prévu que les heures d'approvisionnement pourront ensuite être révisées.

M. le président, concernant le projet du nouveau forage, je suis informé que dans le cadre du programme national de mobilisation des eaux souterraines en cours, la *Water Resources Commission* de mon ministère réalise des levés géophysiques pour le développement de 20 nouveaux forages sur l'île, notamment dans les régions avoisinantes de Dagotière, L'Espérance, Quartier Militaire et Alma.

L'appel d'offre pur ces forages sur toute l'île devrait être lancé ce mois-ci.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. Ms Thannoo.

Dr. Ms Thannoo: Is the hon. Minister aware of the poor quality of pipe laying that was done at Shivala Road and the lack of adequate pipes for the upper part of Nouvelle

Découverte? I am talking about the low quality of the pipelaying that was done in Shivala Road.

Mr Assirvaden: Je n'ai pas compris.

Dr. Ms Thannoo: Residents have complained that the pipelaying at Shivala Road was of low quality and we have one area of Nouvelle Découverte where the pipes have not actually been laid by the CWA. Thank you.

Mr Assirvaden: Je voudrais dire à l'honorable membre que nous revoyons toute l'ensemble de la circonscription en ce qui concerne *le Pipe Replacement Programme*.

Un nouveau plan va sortir incessamment. Nous attendons de finaliser avec la partie indienne parce que nous avons reçu R 2.7 milliards du gouvernement indien pour un nouveau programme de *Pipe Replacement Programme*. Je peux assurer l'honorable membre et les autres membres de la circonscription que leurs demandes seront prises en compte dans ce nouveau plan pour la circonscription.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. Hon. Venkatasami, do you have a supplementary question or your question has been answered?

Okay. Thank you.

Hon. First Member for Montagne Blanche and Grand River South East.

MONTAGNE BLANCHE – MULTIPURPOSE COMPLEX ONE-STOP SHOP – CONSTRUCTION WORKS

(No. B/861) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the construction of the Multipurpose Complex-One Stop Shop at Montagne Blanche, he will state the start and completion dates thereof, indicating the sum paid to the contractor as at to date and reasons for the delay thereof.

Mr Woochit: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Multipurpose Complex at Montagne Blanche was designed as a one-stop shop to bring key public services closer to the community. The project valued at Rs30 million was scheduled to start on 29 January 2021 and was initially expected to be completed within eight months, that is, 240 days. The facility consists of a two-level building with a total floor area of 1600 m² including parking facilities and was conceived to serve multiple functions –

- First, a reception hall with a centralised queuing system and a common waiting area for the public;
- Second, multipurpose hall with an accommodation capacity of 500 people, and
- Third, flexible offices spaces to host various public service providers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the project was executed in phases under a multi-functional team. It was divided into five main components –

- 1) Supply of labour for the construction of the building up to a grey level stage;
- 2) Supply of materials for the grey level structure;
- 3) demolition of the old Village Hall;
- 4) fixing of aluminium openings in the new building, and
- 5) laying of tiles.

To date, Rs24,769,000 has been disbursed out of the approved Rs30 million budget.

I am tabling a detailed expenditure for each component and several factors that contributed to the delay in completing the Multipurpose Hall Complex.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it was only after my Ministry intervened and drew the attention the of Council to treat all projects equitably that the Council took decisive steps to accelerate progress at Montagne Blanche Multipurpose Complex.

I am pleased to inform the House that the building structure has been completed up to grey level. Tiles work and the installation of aluminium opening have also been finalised. The project has now moved into the second phase which covers interior works, plumbing, electrical, networking installation, false ceilings, partitions, installation and commissioning of a lift system and the air conditioning system. Exterior works – we have waterproofing, painting, installation of Inox handrail, outdoor gym facilities, landscape, upgrading of boundary walls and gates, tarring of the parking yard and access roads.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is closely monitoring progress to ensure that the remaining works are completed without further delay so that the people of Montagne Blanche and the surrounding communities can benefit from this much needed facility at the earliest possible time.

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

**“LE HAMEAU”, BEAU PLAN – SMART CITY PROJECT – ENVIRONMENT
IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

(No. B/862) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the development known as “Le Hameau” at Beau Plan, he will state whether –

- (a) the promoters thereof were required to obtain an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) licence in respect thereof and, if not, why not and
- (b) his Ministry –
 - (i) was informed that same is marketed and sold as part of a larger smart city project, and
 - (ii) is informed that the operation of a crane by Terra, co-promoter thereof, is causing noise pollution detrimental to residents of the vicinity thereof.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is indeed a very interesting matter. I am informed that the Morcellement Le Hameau because it is in fact a Morcellement, at least in name, was developed prior to August 2018 whereby a Morcellement permit was not required for *bail à construction* at that particular time.

Now, later on, the Morcellement Act was amended through the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act of 2018 in order to address this. So, the amendment came afterwards whereas the development happened before the amendment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House may wish to be informed that according to the then Environment Protection Act 2022, le Hameau Project was not a schedule undertaking requiring an Environment Impact Assessment licence. Consequently, no Environment Impact Assessment licence was issued for the said development and I say again because the law, as it stood then, did not make it a precondition.

As regard to part (b) (i) of the question, I am also informed that Le Hameau Residential Project forms part of the Smart City Project in respect of which a Smart City Certificate was issued on 09 November 2018.

Now, as regards part (b) (ii), I am further informed that following a complaint regarding noise disturbance emanating from the operations of the ex-Beau Plan Sugar Factory, namely the elevators and the weigh bridge, the then Ministry of Health – that was before the elections

of 2024 – carried out a noise survey and concluded that noise survey was within established range. But I was not communicated with a report of that survey that was allegedly carried out.

However, I have also been informed that there was a survey that was carried out by a private party around the same time and that survey says exactly the contrary of what the Ministry of Health and Wellness said. The Ministry of Health and Wellness said, ‘In the survey we carried out, there is no noise above the permissible level of 60 decibels,’ whereas the survey carried out by the private consultant shows that over a week or more, the noise indeed goes almost to 80 decibels.

So, in the circumstances, I have understood, based on all the information that has been communicated to me, that the relevant Ministries decided not to do anything following the complaints precisely because they based themselves on the fact that allegedly, the noise was within the permissible level, without me having ever been communicated that report.

I am also aware that this development was, in fact, marketed as a *morcellement*. This is the information that I have. So, what I propose to do, just like I did earlier on for other hon. Members pertaining to land issues, since this is a matter that does bring about some confusion with conflicting reports and it concerns the value of land and it concerns the health of citizens living in the noisy environment, I propose to call the promoters as there are certain issues pertaining to the Morcellement Act that seems to have been put aside. I will ask my colleagues, the hon. Minister of Health and the hon. Minister of Environment, to join me to try to address this particular issue about the noise and to bring rectifications that are required. Thank you.

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

TORRENTIAL RAIN & FLOODS SEASON – WORKERS’ RIGHTS ACT AMENDMENT

(No. B/863) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to torrential rain and climatic disasters, he will state if consideration will be given for a proposed amendment to the relevant provision of the Workers’ Rights Act to be introduced in the Assembly aiming at ensuring that employees of both the private and public sectors be protected on a non-discriminatory basis in times thereof and, if so, when, keeping in view the forthcoming torrential rain and flood season in Mauritius.

The Deputy Speaker: Are you stepping in for the Ministry of Labour?

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Mohamed): Yes, I am stepping in, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. With your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I shall reply to this question.

I am informed that this matter is already being given due consideration. Section 15 and 16 of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Act 2016 make provision for a National Crisis Committee to be chaired by the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service in the event of disasters.

Notwithstanding any other enactment in situations of torrential rain and climatic disasters, the National Crisis Committee may, to safeguard the life of any person, issue after consultation with the hon. Prime Minister an order directing any person to remain indoors as long as it is unsafe to venture outside. Such order when issued applies for the whole population, except for those engaged in emergency and essential services.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, currently, the public sector and the private sector each have their respective protocols to deal with heavy rain and torrential rain situations.

These protocols are aligned with section 16 and 17 of the relevant legislation while recognising the diverse nature and specificities of the public and private sectors. The protocol for heavy torrential rain and tropical storms or cyclones for the public sector serves as guidelines for ministries, departments and public sector organisation in times of heavy rain, localised heavy rain, torrential rain, cyclone warnings in force in the Republic of Mauritius.

It provides practical guidance on work arrangements in such cases with a view to ensuring the safety of employees as well as continuity of service delivery. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to refer to the Workers Rights Act 2019 which is of relevance. Section 32 of the Act which deals with the payment of remuneration in other specific circumstances provides amongst others that –

“(1A) Where, during a period of extreme weather conditions, including, but not limited to heavy or torrential rainfall [and it goes on to explain at subparagraph one and two which is] an order is issued by the National Crisis Committee under section 16 requiring any person to remain indoors, or a state of disaster is declared and any direction for the purpose of assisting and protecting the public is issued under section 37 of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act –

- (a) an employer shall not require a worker to report to work, or to continue to work, where he is exposed to the weather conditions, as the case may be.”

I shall not be that long, but allow me to add, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that during the *Assises du travail et de l'emploi* organised from 23 to 25 September 2025 by the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations, social partners, including representatives of workers and employees agreed that the same regime should apply for the release of workers both in the private sector and the public sector in situation of torrential rain, and that there should be no disparity on this issue insofar as personal safety, security and threat to life are concerned.

I understand that with a view to addressing the perception of continued discrimination between the public and private sectors when the country is facing torrential and climatic disasters, the Prime Minister's Office together with the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council, the Mauritius Meteorological Services and other key stakeholders are working closely with the private sector for the development and finalisation of a combined national protocol for heavy and torrential rainfall, where safety of the population remains central while ensuring continuity in emergency and essential services.

Once there is finalisation of the national protocol for heavy and torrential rainfall, necessary amendments will be brought to the Worker's Rights Act 2019 as may be required, with a view to ensuring that employees of both the private and public sectors are protected on a non-discriminatory basis.

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

RODRIGUES – MOTOR VEHICLE EXAMINATION CENTRES – PROTOCOLS & OPERATIONS

(No. B/864) Ms M. R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to Motor Vehicle Examinations, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to the –

- (a) protocols applicable in case of discrepancies found in the course thereof, and
- (b) number of centres thereof operating in Rodrigues, indicating the –
 - (i) number of officers attached thereto
 - (ii) number and categories of vehicles examined over the past three financial years, and
 - (iii) measures envisaged, if any, for the enhancement of the services thereat.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a), I am informed by the NLTA that the protocols applicable in case of discrepancies found in the course of examination of motor vehicles in Rodrigues are covered in five points. They are quite lengthy. I am going to table them.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Mr Osman Mahomed: As regards part (b) of the question, there is currently one vehicle examination centre in Rodrigues located within the premises of the mechanical workshop of the Commission of Infrastructure in Port Mathurin. This centre is manned by one vehicle examiner of the NLTA posted to Rodrigues on tour of one year service.

I had, in fact, the opportunity to personally visit the examination centre during my official mission to Rodrigues from 12 to 14 August 2025. I would like to emphasise that I was taken aback by the flimsy manner in which vehicles are examined on the island. The examination actually consists of a mere visual inspection of the vehicles, which is definitely not adequate to determine whether they are roadworthy or not.

Furthermore, I observed that the examination pit belonging to the mechanical workshop, which is supposed to be used for examination of under carriage of old vehicles, cannot be acceded by vehicles due to its height above ground level. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have also personally observed that overall, the process for obtaining roadworthiness certificates for motor vehicles in Rodrigues is quite cumbersome.

In fact, vehicle owners have to call at the NLTA office at Baie Lascar for the payment of the fitness test fee according to their vehicle category.

Thereafter, the vehicle has to call at the vehicle examination centre in Port Mathurin. There, the vehicle is visually inspected by the Vehicle Examiner and in the event of a favourable vehicle examination report is issued, the vehicle owner vehicle has to call back to NLTA office in Baie Lascar to collect the certificate of fitness – so, quite cumbersome. I had raised my concern with the Chief Commissioner of Rodrigues during a courtesy meeting I had with him. In a bid to align with the procedures in place in mainland in Mauritius for vehicle examination, I had proposed that an Expression of Interest to be launched by the NLTA for authorising vehicle examination stations currently operating in Mauritius to extend their services to Rodrigues.

The Chief Commissioner of Rodrigues welcomed the proposal and is even willing to put at the disposal of the vehicle examination station, a plot of land outside of the centre of Port Mathurin for that purpose.

I am informed that the NLTA has already initiated actions at its end for the implementation of the proposal with the assistance the Chief Commissioner's Office, of course.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as an ending note, as regard of part (b)(ii) of the question, I am tabling the list outlining the number and categories of vehicles examined over the past 3 financial years. Thank you.

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

**RODRIGUES – “LES ASSISES DE L'ÉDUCATION” –CONSULTATIONS,
OBSERVATIONS & CONCLUSIONS**

(No. B/865) Ms D. Henriette-Manan (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to “*Les Assises de l'Éducation*”, held in Rodrigues, he will state –

- (a) the key observations and conclusions which resulted from the consultations held, particularly in relation to the concerns and demands expressed by stakeholders in Rodrigues, indicating any concrete measure or initiative implemented as at to date, and
- (b) whether there has been any formal engagement, collaboration or follow-up meeting with the Rodrigues Commission for Education, local unions or other relevant bodies in Rodrigues with a view to addressing the issues raised.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, we have got only two minutes to go. Is your answer long? I see you have an iPad. Do you have a hard copy of your reply?

Dr. Gungapersad: No, I have... Let me use the two minutes.

The Deputy Speaker: Use the two minutes, then briefly you say what you have but next time come with a hard copy of your answer so that you...

Dr. Gungapersad: I will stay guided. After two minutes, I will stop.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the very outset, I would like to congratulate the Education Commission of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the successful organisation of “*Les Assises de l'Éducation*” on 26 and 27 May 2025 and thank all the stakeholders who contributed to make it successful.

I thank the four MPs who attended same. I thank you for that. Now, I wish to inform the House that the consultations held in Rodrigues in May 2025 brought together a wide range of stakeholders including Rodrigues Commission for Education, educators, unions, NGOs, parents and so on.

Deliberations were structured around 8 thematic areas namely, –

1. The student behaviour, discipline well-being;
2. Curriculum and pedagogy;
3. Teacher training and capacity building;
4. Assessment and progression;
5. TVET and skills development;
6. Technology in education;
7. Legal and regulatory framework, and
8. Youth voice.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, notwithstanding the current drafting process of the blueprint, I would like to enumerate some measures which have already been implemented or being currently implemented in the light of the consultations held –

1. Psychosocial supports have been reinforced through training in emotional intelligence for educators;
2. Discussions are ongoing with MES and MIE to contextualize the curriculum, prioritizing agriculture, marine and blue economy subjects;
3. Discussions are being held with MITD to expand TVET course and to increase enrolment capacity in Rodrigues;
4. Career guidance sessions have been intensified to better align student choices with labour market opportunities, and
5. Opportunities for co-curricular activities for Rodrigues have been strengthened through the foundation programme with the support of the MIE.

If you need further information, I will be always volunteer to do so. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over. Hon. Members, the Table have been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/867, B/870, B/871, B/872, B/873, B/874, B/876,

B/879, B/880, B/881, B/884, B/885, B/887, B/888, B/889, B/890, B/891, B/893, B/894, B/895, B/898, and B/897.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

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

Mr Mohamed rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation Bill (No. XXII of 2025) was read a first time.

Second Reading

THE CIVIL APPEAL BILL

(NO. XXI OF 2025)

Order for Second Reading read.

(3.54 p.m.)

The Attorney General (Mr G.P.C. Glover, SC): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the Civil Appeal Bill No.XX1 of 2025 be read a second time.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Bill forms part of our ongoing effort to modernise the justice system, to make our laws simpler, clearer and more coherent.

Following the Criminal Appeal and Criminal Review Act which streamlined criminal procedures earlier this year, this Bill now does the same for civil cases. The Bill may look small if one stops at the number of pages it covers, however a closer and more informed look at its provisions reveal that this Bill is part of a bigger picture. It is part of the long and important process of rebuilding the system to make the processes simpler and less burdensome.

We are still in the throes of addressing all the issues that need to be looked into to provide a better and more efficient system of justice. At present, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the

rules governing civil appeals are dispersed across several statutes, namely the Court of Civil Appeal Act, the Courts Act and the District and Intermediate Courts (Civil Jurisdiction) Act amongst others. Each has developed separately resulting in inconsistencies, overlapping provisions and uncertainty for litigants. The result has also been confusion, procedural disputes and unnecessary delay.

This Bill remedies the situation; it consolidates all civil appeal procedures into one coherent framework replacing outdated enactments and standardising the rules that apply when an appeal is made. First, to the Court of Civil Appeal from the final decision of the Supreme Court in its original jurisdiction or second to the Supreme Court in its appellate jurisdiction from the final decision of a subordinate court such as District Court, the Intermediate Court, the Industrial Court, the Master and Registrar, the Judge in Chambers or a Statutory Tribunal. Henceforth, all such appeals will follow the same process from start to finish.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me briefly guide the House through the principal provisions of this Bill. Clauses 6 and 13 provide for a uniform procedure for the lodging and prosecution of appeals. Whichever court the appeals lies to, the Court of Civil Appeal or the Supreme Court, the same steps, time limits and forms will apply.

Clauses 9 and 15 empower both the Court of Civil Appeal and the Supreme Court in its appellate jurisdiction to determine questions of law referred to them by subordinate courts. This will allow for timely clarification of legal points that would otherwise create uncertainty at lower-levels.

Clauses 18, introducing more realistic time limits for the filing of skeleton arguments and submissions, appellants will now have to file their written submissions 30 days before the hearing rather than 45 days whilst respondents will file theirs 15 days before rather than 30. These adjustments reflect the experience of both practitioners and Judges and will make scheduling and deliberation more efficient.

Clauses 19 to 23 harmonise the powers of both appellate courts. Previously, Court of Civil Appeal and the Supreme Court did not enjoy the same authority when determining civil appeals. A technical anomaly that this Bill now removes.

Clause 3 introduces a simple but important safeguard. Every Court, immediately after giving judgement, must notify each party in writing of their right to appeal. This ensures that

access to justice is not hindered by a lack of information, especially for litigants without legal representation.

Clause 29 provides for consequential amendments to six statutes –

- The Courts Act;
- The District and Intermediate Courts (Civil Jurisdiction) Act;
- The Environment and Land Use Appeal Tribunal Act;
- The Equal Opportunities Act;
- The Industrial Court Act, and
- The Sale of Immovable Property Act.

The Court of Civil Appeal and its 1965 rules are repealed entirely, making this Bill the sole reference for civil appeals.

However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will be proposing amendments at Committee Stage to this clause 29 of the Bill, more specifically to amend the Court of Rodrigues Jurisdiction Act and the new Revenue Tribunal Act, so as to align their procedures with this new legislation.

Together, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these clauses establish a single, predictable system that applies uniformly across all levels of the judiciary. Civil appeals will henceforth be simpler, quicker and less prone to procedural disputes. This will also reduce the burden on the Courts by discouraging points of law being raised on unclear or overlapping provisions. The preparation of this Bill, I must stress, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has benefitted from close consultation between my office, the Chief Justice and the Judges of the Supreme Court. It reflects their experience in the daily administration of appeals and their support for the creation of a unified and rational structure. This reform also sits within the wider context of judicial and legal reform already underway.

In recent months, Parliament has enacted the Revenue Tribunal Act, the Legal Aid and Legal Assistance Act and the Criminal Appeal and Review Act. Each of these Bills, now enacted, have aimed at simplifying access to justice and restoring coherence to our legal framework. This Civil Appeal Bill now furthers this goal for civil matters. The Government is working to implement the various necessary changes for these different statutes just referred to, to all, be proclaimed and enforced as from the 01 January 2026. Again, proposing uniformity and clarity for all these changes.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, codification arises from the need to transform scattered inconsistent rules into a single, rational body of law. From the *Code Civil des Français* of 1804 to the Field Code in the 19th century of America, codifiers sought not only to compile existing laws but to impose coherence upon them, to replace fragmented statutes and judicial customs with a systematic and accessible structure. Historically, such efforts emerge when legal systems mature to a point where accumulation breeds confusion. The aim is twofold; compilation by gathering dispersed provisions into one reference text and rationalisation by simplifying, harmonising and removing contradictions.

In modern procedural law, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, codification reflects the same spirit: efficiency through clarity. By standardising appeal routes and timelines, a codified regime ensures equal treatment, predictability and ease of application. *Ce n'est donc pas juste pour faire joli, mais plutôt la poursuite d'un idéal issu du cercle des lumières, que la loi soit claire, connue et compréhensible pour tous.*

In practice, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these are not abstract measures. They affect real cases, real people and real time saved in the delivery of judgements. The ultimate aim is to make the law not only fair in principle but fair and efficient in operation. This is thus a practical reform, the product of broad consultation, careful drafting and will obviously strengthen the administration of justice, bring clarity to practitioners and litigants alike and reinforce public confidence in our Courts.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I therefore commend this Bill to the House.

Mr Pentiah rose and seconded.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Seeburn!

(4.03 p.m.)

Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I rise today not as a humble backbencher but as a firm believer in the continuing evolution of our justice system. Just a few weeks ago, this Assembly came together to pass the Criminal Appeal Bill, a decisive piece of legislation that marked a watershed in the rationalisation of our criminal appeal process. It was an act of legislative courage, one that put consistency above complexity and the citizens above bureaucracy and today, we are called upon to act again, to complete the other half of that equation through this Civil Appeal Bill which seeks to consolidate what has too long remained fragmented and

unclear. For years now, civil appeals have been governed by a patchwork of statutes scattered across multiple pieces of legislation, resulting in uncertainty, delay and confusion.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I therefore rise in support of the Civil Appeal Bill that will be cited as the Civil Appeal Act 2025, which is a reaffirmation of our rule of law. The Bill comes with a view to bring clarity, certainty and uniformity in this area of the law. The Bill will simplify and standardise the procedures for all appeals in civil matters under one deliberate and thoughtful consolidated legislation that will govern all civil appeal cases at all levels of our judiciary.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, under the current system, the civil appeals are governed by a scattered set of legislations, including –

- the Court of Civil Appeal Act;
- the Court of Civil Appeal Rules 1965;
- the Courts Act;
- the District and Intermediate Court (Civil Jurisdiction) Act;
- the Environment and Land Use Appeal Tribunal Act;
- the Equal Opportunities Act;
- the Industrial Court, and
- the Sale of Immovable Property Act.

This causes great uncertainty as the Attorney General earlier said. Thus, the Courts are operating under different routes of appeal and this has let the people – especially the vulnerable ones – and the lay persons who wish to challenge the decision of the Court of first instance, often confused and disempowered. This lack of uniformity risks undermining the very principles upon which our justice system is built, including fairness, accessibility and equal treatment under the law.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Bill is a transformative step forward of how justice is administered in our country. The Bill unifies the appeal rights of all appeal cases in civil matters that are from the final decision of the Supreme Court in the exercise of its original and appellate jurisdiction and also from the final decision of the District Court, Intermediate Court, Industrial Court, the Master and Registrar, the Judge in Chambers or a Statutory Tribunal. In so doing, the Bill will strengthen legal certainty and will protect the rights of all parties involved in civil litigation and civil proceedings.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Bill clearly imposes an obligation on any Court after it gives judgement in a civil matter, to immediately notify any party to the case of his right to appeal. Part I of the Bill deals with the preliminary matters, including the Short Title, Interpretation, Notification of the Right to Appeal. Part II of the Bill outlines the composition, the jurisdiction and the powers of the Court of Civil Appeal and further outlines the procedures, the proceedings and the notice required to resist appeal before the Court of Civil Appeal.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a legal system should not only require a map to navigate; it should be a road clearly sign posted, opened to all who seek redress. Under clause 4 of the Bill which provides that an appeal before the Supreme Court shall be heard by at least 2 Judges, and further provides that the Chief Justice may, upon receipt of an application, direct more than 2 Judges to hear the appeal having regard to the magnitude of the interests at stake or the importance or intricacy of the questions of law and the importance of facts involved.

Section 5 of the Bill provides that the Court of Civil Appeal shall have unlimited jurisdiction and powers to hear and determine appeals in civil matters against the final decision of the Supreme Court.

Sections 6, 7 and 8 of the Bill deal with the procedures, leave required to appeal and the notice to resist appeal to the Court of Civil Appeal.

Section 9 of the Bill provides that when a question of law arises at the hearing of any civil matter and where the matter is referred to the Supreme Court upon application by any party, where it is so determined, the Court will adjourn the matter until such question has been determined by the Supreme Court.

Section 10 of the Bill provides that the Supreme Court shall state the circumstances in which such question arose and direct such statement under Section 9 to be entered upon the record for the opinion of the Court of Civil Appeal.

Sections 11 and 12 of the Bill deal with the composition, jurisdiction and unlimited powers of the Supreme Court to hear and determine appeal in civil matters against the final decision of the subordinate court.

Section 13 of the Bill provides that a person who intends to appeal from the final decision of the Supreme Court shall, within 21 days after the date of the final decision of the

subordinate court, give a written notice of appeal to the Clerk and shall, after service the notice, lodge the appeal within 14 days with the Registry of the Supreme Court.

Section 14 of the Bill provides that a party may resist the appeal within 28 days upon whom a notice is served, failing which that party may be deemed to have elected not to resist the appeal.

Sections 15 and 16 of the Bill make provision for the Supreme Court to postpone and determine any question of law referred by any party while hearing any civil matter by the subordinate courts.

Sections 17 and 18 of the Bill deal with the stay of proceedings, service of skeleton arguments and submissions on the grounds of appeal.

Sections 19 and 20 of the Bill provide the general powers of the Appellate Court on the civil appeal to reverse, amend and alter the decision of the subordinate court or order a new trial before a constituted bench.

Sections 21 and 22 of the Bill provide for the Appellate Court to deal with the issue of immaterial errors and frivolous appeals. Under Section 23, the Appellate Court is empowered to make such order as the case may require.

Section 24 of the Bill provides the general powers of the Appellate Court in determining the question of law referred by a party within 6 months and for the subordinate court thereafter to give its final decision within 3 months.

Sections 25 and 26 of the Bill make provisions to deal with the application for the extension of time and the costs of appeal. The Bill further makes provision for the Chief Justice, under 27 of the Bill, to make such rules as may be necessary.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Section 28 of the Bill makes provision to repeal the Court of Civil Appeal Act 1954 and further revokes the Court of Civil Appeal Rules 1965. Section 30 of the Bill makes provision for a fair application of the Bill so as not to disrupt the current ongoing appeal matters.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in summary, this Bill, before us today, consolidates all existing civil appeal provisions into a coherent piece of legislation. It clarifies the grounds

and timelines for civil appeal across all courts and further reinforces judiciary efficiency and legal predictability.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, any person who cannot easily understand their right to appeal or when the process to seek redress is unnecessarily complex or inconsistent, it is the integrity of our entire justice system that is called into question. Complexity and inconsistency outcome cause delays and uncertainty, not only for the appellants and respondents, but also for the law professionals. It is unacceptable that in matters of such gravity, where the rights of our people are at stake, our justice system would tolerate ambiguity in the process.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Bill ensures that once a final decision has been delivered by the Supreme Court or the subordinate court, the parties will have a clearly defined legally consistent pathway for appeal that will ensure confidence and fairness.

The Bill further reinforces the constitutional rights of individuals under Section 10 of our Constitution which guarantees a fair trial.

The Bill supports the independence of the judiciary by offering a clear and predictable framework for civil appeal and further protects the most vulnerable ones.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Bill also reflects our international obligations under human rights instruments to which Mauritius is a party, including International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to simplify legislation for fair trials.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of this august Assembly to the inspiring words of the hon. Chief Justice of India, Shri Ramkrishna Gawai, who, recently in Mauritius, during the Sir Maurice Rault Memorial Lecture on The Rule of Law in the Largest Democracy, and in the presence of a historical gathering of legal professionals and high officials, reminded the world that the rule of law is not a mechanical formula, but a moral and ethical compass that upholds equality, dignity and fairness that guides our courts and every organ of the State, and further emphasised that in a democracy, law must serve justice and every statute must pass the test of fairness and constitutional morality. Hence, the Bill does that.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the judiciary, as we know, is a cornerstone of our democratic society. By simplifying civil appeals, we are reducing unnecessary delays, we are alleviating the burden of our courts and we are ensuring that judicial time and resources are focused on the substance of justice. When I voted for the Criminal Appeal Bill a few weeks ago, I did so because I believe in creating a justice system that speaks one language, not several dialects. It would be inconsistent and irresponsible for us, as lawmakers, to reform one arm of justice and neglect the other.

Today, this House is being asked not only to pass the legislation, but rather to reshape the very system of justice for our country. We are being asked to bring clarity in an area of law that is complex and confusing for our system and for our people. We are being asked to ensure that the pathway to justice is a clear road that is accessible to all, regardless of status, age or means.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, before I conclude, I would like to thank the hon. Attorney General who, with his team, is leaving no stone unturned to reshape our justice system. We are grateful to have his continued contribution to reinforce our rule of law. This will go down in the history of Mauritius for many more years to come. By coming forward with this progressive piece of legislation, it will reshape our civil appeal cases, thus increasing public confidence in our institutions.

I, therefore, urge all Members of this House to come together in support of this Bill as custodians of justice and servants of the people and deliver a framework that will serve all the people of Mauritius. We are sending a strong message to the people out there, that we believe in a justice system that is transparent, fair and equal for all. As the great Mahatma Gandhi says –

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

Let us vote, not just with our voices, but with our vision for a more just Mauritius. With these words, I commend the Bill to the House. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Attorney General!

(4.16 p.m.)

Mr Glover: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me close this short, but interesting debate by saying that this Bill is, of course, a necessary piece of the puzzle we are slowly and painstakingly building to provide a better and more efficient justice system sooner than later.

The next step will be the amendments to be brought to the Court Act to simplify the end streamline – the procedure for judicial review.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am done. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: You commend the Bill to the House?

Mr Glover: That stands to reason, yes!

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(Mr Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

THE CIVIL APPEAL BILL

(NO. XXI OF 2025)

Clauses 1 to 28 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 29 (Consequential amendments)

Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill.”

Mr Glover: Mr Chairperson, I move for the following amendment to clause 29 –

“in clause 29 –

(a) by inserting, after subclause (1), the following new subclause –

(1A) The Court of Rodrigues Jurisdiction Act is amended by repealing section 11 and replacing it by the following section –

11. Appeal to Supreme Court

(1) An appeal to the Supreme Court shall, subject to subsection (2), be governed by the Civil Appeal Act 2025.

(2) The time for prosecuting an appeal before the Supreme Court from the final decision of the Magistrate for Rodrigues shall, notwithstanding the 7-day period specified in section 13(5) of the Civil Appeal Act 2025, be 28 days from the day of lodging the appeal in the Registry of the Supreme Court.

(b) by inserting, after subclause (5), the following new subclause –

(5A) The Revenue Tribunal Act 2025 is amended by repealing section 11 and replacing it by the following section –

11. Appeal to Supreme Court

(1) An aggrieved party who intends to appeal to the Supreme Court shall, not later than 21 days after the date of the final decision of the Tribunal, give written notice of appeal to the Secretary to the Tribunal.

(2) An appeal under this section shall be prosecuted in accordance with the Civil Appeal Act 2025.

(3) Notwithstanding an appeal under this section but subject to subsection (4), any tax to be paid or refunded shall be paid or refunded in accordance with the decision of the Tribunal, as the case may be.

(4) Where an appeal under this section is lodged against the determination of the Tribunal relating to a claim under section 28(3F) of the Land (Duties and Taxes) Act, payment of the tax due under section 28(4A)(a)(ii) of that Act shall be withheld pending final determination of the matter.”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 29, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 30 and 31 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

The title and enacting clause were agreed to.

The Bill, as amended, was agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with Mr Deputy Speaker in the Chair, Mr Deputy Speaker reported accordingly.

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Civil Appeal Bill (No. XXI of 2025) was read a third time and passed.

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

At 4.21 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.08 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Second Reading

THE ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC SERVICE

AND INNOVATION BILL

(No. XXII of 2025)

Order for Second Reading read

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister.

(5.09 p.m.)

The Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms (Mr L. Pentiah): Madam Speaker, I move that the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation Bill (No. XXII of 2025) be read a second time.

Madam Speaker, ...

Madam Speaker: Yes, please.

Mr Pentiah: Madam Speaker, and I quote –

Madam Speaker: One moment, I missed that.

You are trying to get my attention, right?

Mr Pentiah: Yes.

Madam Speaker: But I am all ears.

Mr Pentiah: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I quote –

“A democratically elected government cannot escape its mandated responsibility to give the lead in building the nation, transforming the society and bettering the lives of

the people. Neither can anybody demand of that they step back from these responsibilities.”

Madam Speaker, this was addressed by Nelson Mandela at the National Civil Society Conference dated 24 April 2001.

Madam Speaker, this government has a clear vision. This government is committed. This government stands head up to face its responsibilities. In the face of dire circumstances and extreme demands, this government stands faithful towards building a strong nation to face the challenges of tomorrow and honour its mandated responsibility.

From day one, when the Government Programme – A Bridge to The Future – was presented to the nation, it was in effect, a clear commitment to ensure that Public Officers, delivering public service to the people of our country, are empowered to exercise leadership, competence, efficiency and professionalism in delivering services to each and every public service user with respect and dignity. The government is fully aware that the public service lies at the heart of economic development, welfare and innovation. In its programme, the government has undertaken to put quality service at the very centre of public sector transformation.

The clear object set out is to restore trust and respect in our public sector institutions in as much as for the past decade our nation has witnessed severe erosion of values, ethics and good governance principles and practices.

Madam Speaker, once again, I quote –

“Government is committed to bringing the Public Service to new heights of efficiency and effectiveness, centred around the evolving needs of our citizens and one which is responsive to societal aspirations of the nation while providing necessary support and training to its staff.” – Paragraph 68 of the Government Programme of 2025-2029.

Madam Speaker, I stand before the House today to give effect to the vision of this government, the commitment of this government and to the undertakings to valorise each and every Public Officer and ensure that they are equipped with the correct tailor-made training and competence to fulfil their duties.

Madam Speaker, I bring before the House the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation Bill. This Bill, Madam Speaker, is an answer to 10 years of lethargy; 10 years of ostrich behaviour of hiding one’s head in the sand and a decade of inaction. This

Bill provides the necessary framework, structure and parameter to answer to the demands of our public officers. This Bill brings in innovation.

Madam Speaker, when resuming my responsibilities, I found this Ministry in a state of despair; to say the least.

Just take one example – hundreds of millions of rupees of taxpayers' money were spent over a decade for training at the then Civil Service College and for these hundreds of millions of rupees for the last decade, all we had to show was a certificate of attendance given to each and every Public Officer who attended training at the then Civil Service College. A meeting with the person responsible of the Civil Service College revealed that his demands and his propositions to develop concrete, substantive training courses remained within the deaf ears of the then Minister concerned.

Madam Speaker, from that point to now, in a matter of months, we have not only inaugurated on the 12th of March of this year, a state-of-the-art institution with modern facilities, IT equipped classrooms, an outstanding auditorium as well as leisure and recreational facilities. We opened the doors of the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation to our Public Officers.

Madam Speaker, the fundamental objects of the Bill before the House are enumerated in its provisions and they lay unprecedented emphasis on the following –

1. Continuous professional training of Public Officers for an innovative service to the public;
2. Promotion of organisational, excellence, ethics and values, transparency and accountability in the Public Service;
3. Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Public Service through good governance principles;
4. Conducting research and development activities in light of the changing environment of the Public Service so as to promote in forms, and above all
5. To develop a people-centric Public Service.

Madam Speaker, we did not rest there. With the cooperation of the staff of the institution and the Ministry, we have already developed courses to award internationally recognised certificates, diplomas, degrees and post-graduate qualifications in Public Service

Administration, Finance, Procurement, Human Resource and Occupational Safety and Health to name only a few.

Madam Speaker, we did not even stop there. My Ministry and the staff of the Institute have further worked in close cooperation with International Institutions from different countries to establish linkages and develop MoUs to ensure that the training and capacity building courses to be delivered by the Institute, is of high standards and quality.

This Bill, before the House today is not only making provisions to set up an institution worthy of its name but also to provide the necessary foundation to lead as a centre of excellence, providing Public Service Administrative courses to other countries in our region.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House that this Government's vision goes beyond the boundaries of our Nation. As examples –

- The African Development Bank has been working closely with my Ministry, and it is prepared to work in collaboration with the Institute to provide training and capacity building in the regions of Africa.
- The cooperation and support of the People's Republic of China is noted with gratefulness to support us in our endeavour.
- So is the help and the willingness of the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and of Egypt to support us in our mission;
- We welcome the support of the United States and its willingness to share its experience and training resources through the Ambassador in Mauritius.
- My Ministry is working closely with the UN and the UNDP as well in order to further develop the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation into an international centre of excellence for training and capacity building.
- How can I not mention Bharat? The Government of India did not only support our Government to realise a state-of-the-art centre of learning, but the Government of India is supporting us to ensure that our objective of building a centre of excellence for training and capacity building is realised.

Madam Speaker, this Bill sets out to provide a comprehensive framework to set up a competent Board of Directors, the Office of a Vice Chancellor, the Office of a Registrar and

an Academic Council as well as innovative and groundbreaking departments inasmuch as it incorporates its own quality and standard monitoring unit and an innovation and research laboratory to develop demand-based policy proposals in the Public Sector.

Madam Speaker, through this Bill, this Government reiterates its commitment towards our people and our public officers serving our people. This Government reiterates that the officers of the Public Service form the very heart of our economic growth and development. In the very heart of the government, lies the welfare of each and every public officer serving our people.

Madame la présidente, l'adage nous enseigne –

« Les chiens aboient, la caravane passe. »

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Enn lisien kinn gagn pis sa.*

Mr Pentiah: Le peuple de notre pays, notre patrie...

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Ar zot ki lisien in gagn pis. Ar nou, gagn puce.*

(Interruptions)

Mr Pentiah: Je vous garantis, Madame la présidente, je regardais que vous !

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Monsieur le ministre !

Mr Pentiah: Le peuple...

Madam Speaker: Monsieur le ministre !

Mr Pentiah: Le peuple de notre pays...

Madam Speaker: Monsieur le ministre, je ne sais pas comment je dois prendre ce que vous dites ! Ce matin, j'ai fait une petite blague sur les chiens, n'est-ce pas ?

Dr. Boolell: Oui, les chiens aboient !

Madam Speaker: Vous pensez que maintenant, il faut continuer cette blague, peut-être ?

Mr Pentiah: Non, au contraire, Madame la présidente !

Madam Speaker: Allez-y!

Mr Pentiah: Merci.

L'adage nous enseigne : les chiens aboient, la caravane passe.

(Interruptions)

Le peuple de notre pays, notre patrie, témoigne de la volonté de ce gouvernement de redresser le fonctionnement de nos institutions.

Madame la présidente, il y a eu des gens qui volaient l'argent du peuple et d'autres qui volent au supermarché pour des produits de beauté !

(Interruptions)

Madame la présidente, au fondement même de ce gouvernement, nous faisons preuve du sens des responsabilités envers nos engagements solennels au peuple de notre pays. Nous sommes prêts à travailler dur dans l'unité et parfois même à prendre des décisions qui peuvent nous rendre impopulaires, mais on croit fermement en un avenir meilleur pour nos enfants.

Madam Speaker, my Ministry fully appreciates the invaluable contribution of over 58,000 public officers delivering public service. And this Bill also symbolises the fundamentals to transform the public sector from a job orientated culture towards a career orientated public service where a public service officer in turn appreciates that he or she can transform the lives of people of our country.

I quote –

“The role of Public Officer is not only to run the administration but to transform the lives of people.”

This was said by His Excellency Narendra Modi, the hon. Prime Minister of Bharat.

Madam Speaker, I shall move with a few amendments at Committee Stage, which have already been circulated to hon. Members. These proposed amendments, Madam Speaker, in effect, align the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation Bill with all other institutions of the land.

Madam Speaker, with this, I commend the Bill to the House.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Madam Speaker: Monsieur le ministre, il y a des liaisons qui sont dangereuses. Ne prenez pas cela mal. On reste dans la même histoire d'amour. Des liaisons dangereuses ! Thank you. Now, the debate is open.

I will call on the hon. Leader of the Opposition. Beware!

(5.25 p.m.)

Mr G. Lesjongard (The Leader of the Opposition): Si je peux me permettre, Madame la présidente, dans un pays où on va demander les poulets de faire enregistrer les chiens, il y a de quoi que les chiens aboient !

Ms Anquetil: Come on! Come on!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, allow me, first of all, at the very outset, to express my sincere gratitude to India for making the construction of the Civil Service College possible. Also, let me acknowledge that the establishment of the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation is in principle a commendable initiative.

I shall be brief, Madam Speaker. *Mais je vais toucher des points pertinents dans le projet de loi.*

Madam Speaker: Parlez dans le micro. On doit parler dans le micro.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, our public service needs continuous professional development, research and innovation, if it is to remain fit for purpose in a fast-changing environment. I also welcome the provision in the Bill – I did not hear the hon. Minister talk about that – that ensures that every employee of the Civil Service College will be transferred to the institute with unbroken service and preserved rights. That is a positive measure which safeguards our workers, Madam Speaker.

Having said that, let me say that good intentions do not justify bad structures. This Bill, in its current form, sets up a governance framework that is not only flawed, but also wasteful and potentially dangerous for the credibility of the Institute.

Madam Speaker, let me highlight the key areas of concern. Let me get to the first one with regard two posts that is the post of vice-Chancellor and the post of Director General. *Et je trouve cela inélégant, Madame la présidente, premièrement, d'avoir circulé un amendement majeur* at the last moment and the hon. Minister, in his second reading, did not also elaborate on the creation of this new post, that is, the post of the Registrar of the Institute replacing the post of Director General.

Madam Speaker, the Bill places a vice-Chancellor at the top of the Institute. You will agree that this Institute is a newly formed Institute. Let us take for example, Madam Speaker, the University of Technology Mauritius or the Open University of Mauritius, these universities have been here for a long time with full-time and part-time learners and yet, Madam Speaker, they do not have vice-Chancellors in place.

The vice-Chancellor, Madam Speaker, is reduced, I understand from the Bill, to presiding ceremonies, chairing the Academic Council and acting as a figure head. Madam Speaker, the vice-Chancellor will become nothing more than a political appointee, if I may use this sentence – a puppet in the hand of the Minister, while the taxpayer's money will be wasted on maintaining a redundant position.

Madam Speaker, the second area of concern is with regard to establishment of the Board of Governors which I would, if you will allow me, qualify as cronyism over representation.

Madam Speaker, the Board of Government, as defined in clause 9, is where policy and strategic decisions or directions will be established. And what do we find? A chairperson, handpicked by the hon. Prime Minister, representative of the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms, Ministry of Education, Finance, ICT, Tertiary Education that is all of the government ministries and four persons appointed by the Ministry. I put that question: why a representative of the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms when the Secretary of Public Service is already there? Where will be the independence, Madam Speaker, of that representative to express himself or herself freely when we know he or she works under the same Secretary of Public Service?

Madam Speaker, on the Board of Governors, allow me to ask, if I may, the hon. Minister, the following – where do we have on this Board the voice of learners? Where is the voice of the academic staffs? And Madam Speaker, where is the voice of the non-academic employees who will keep the Institute running? Where are the representatives of Trade Unions? The legitimate representative of public officers as it used to be on the Board of the Civil Service College Mauritius.

Here, Madam Speaker, in the new Institute, they are excluded. How can we talk of training and capacity building for public officers while silencing their very representatives. The people who will attend the courses, who will benefit or suffer from the policies, who have the pulse of the Public Service, their voices, Madam Speaker, are nowhere to be found

on this Board. Instead, the Board is crowded with Ministry representatives, political nominees but no space for the Unions, no space for the learners and no space for the staffs of the Institute.

Madam Speaker, you will again agree that this is a step backward in participation and inclusiveness. These are the stakeholders who matter the most yet they are completely excluded in this piece of legislation. To make matters worse, Madam Speaker, the Bill allows the Board to determine its own fees and allowances and, in my opinion, this is a textbook case of conflict of interest.

How can a Board decide how much to pay itself with the approval of the same Minister who have appointed them to sit on that Board? This is bad governance plain and simple, Madam Speaker.

And my third area of concern is the concentration of power in the hands of the hon. Minister. The Bill gives extraordinary powers to the hon. Minister, Madam Speaker, from appointing the vice-Chancellor to nominating members of the Board and to approving fees and to making regulations. This heavy concentration of power politicises the Institute before it has even started. If this is truly meant to be a centre of excellence, then independence, professionalism and credibility should be at its core, Madam Speaker. I have spoken on the good measure which is about the transfer of the employees. I will not mention that again and let me conclude, Madam Speaker.

I believe in strengthening of the Public Service training and innovation but this Bill, as it stands, risks creating a bloated structure filled with cronies and political appointees wasting public resources while sidelining, Madam Speaker, I have said that earlier, the very people who will deliver quality training and research.

Madam Speaker, this is what will give credibility to the Institute. I have mentioned that and I repeat it again. A balanced representation at the level of the Board comprising academic staffs, non-academic staffs and at least one representative of the Trade Union.

The elimination for the time being of the post of the vice-Chancellor which I believe, Madam Speaker, like I said, will give credibility to the Institute. This is why I called upon Government to review certain clauses of the Bill and bring back a structure that serves the public interest and not partisan interest.

Madam Speaker, Public Service training must serve the nation not the Minister and this Bill, Madam Speaker, is in the interests of the Minister. If Government truly wants

innovation; it must start with good governance. Without it, this Institute risks becoming not a centre of excellence, but a centre of political patronage. I am done, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Beehook!

(5.37 p.m.)

Mr R. Beehook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today I feel very honoured to be able to debate on a Bill that bears the name of a towering political personality, not only political but a writer, a poet, a philosopher of high calibre, late Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee who has had a huge influence in my life and my political career.

Madam Speaker, a strong and trained civil service is the backbone of a functioning democracy. They are the crucial links between us, democratically elected Members of Parliament, hon. Ministers, and the people of Mauritius; the taxpayers of Mauritius. From Imperial China to Egyptian Kingdoms, from ancient Greek and Egyptian civilisations to the gigantic colonial British Empire, history has taught us one thing; all these successful administrations ran on a strong civil service.

Allow me, Madam Speaker, through you, to pay tribute to our 58,000 or so civil servants who run this country on our behalf. However, Madam Speaker, while I was listening to the Leader of the Opposition, I found it utterly disgraceful for the Leader of the Opposition to come up with arguments and to qualify clauses of this Bill which have a very noble objective, to empower our civil servants, to term them as wasteful and potentially dangerous. I leave it to the conclusion of the people of the Republic of Mauritius and the civil servants. Does the Leader of the Opposition, for example, find it wasteful and disgraceful that the aim at clause 4(f) of this Bill is to develop a people-centric public service? Because at the end of the day, what matters is that people who pay taxes in this country, get a service that is geared towards them and this is what this Bill does.

Does the Leader of the Opposition find it wasteful and potentially dangerous that at clause 4(b), this Bill aims at promoting organisational excellence, ethics and values, transparency and accountability in our public service? We understand they do not have the culture of having an accountable and transparent administration. *Il n'y a qu'à voir la façon dont ils ont traité le rapport de l'Audit, où certains administrateurs ont refusé sous instruction des ministres de soumettre des comptes, notamment à la Santé, au directeur de l'Audit. Et il ose nous donner des leçons !*

Does he find it wasteful and potentially dangerous that at Clause 5(2)(b), this Bill, this institute, the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation aims at what – and I find it very interesting; to comply with internationally accepted norms and standards and quality management systems? What can we expect from a Leader of the Opposition whose government’s objective by spending millions of money in the Civil Service College which at the end of the day delivered what? The hon. Minister of Civil Service has rightly said so – that it used to deliver certificates of attendance which professionally, in the career of a civil servant, was not of great use.

Another criticism that I find *très pale, je veux dire*, when he blames the Minister not to include civil servants on the Board of the Civil Service College. Maybe it is one-sided reading because at clause 9(2)(h), it is clearly mentioned that –

“4 persons, to be appointed by the Minister, at least one of whom shall be an executive head of a local tertiary education institution and another one who shall have wide experience in the field of tertiary education and open and distance learning;”

There are four members. What stops the hon. Minister to appoint someone from the Trade Union Organisation? Everyone knows! Hon. Dr. Sukon, the Minister of Tertiary Education, hon. Dr. Mahend Gungapersad, Minister of Education know that usually trade unionists, from such academic organisations, they themselves hail from an academic background. So, what stops the hon. Minister? The door is not closed. *Le Leader de l’Opposition veut tout simplement faire peur*. However, as I said, this Bill is very important. The transformation of this organisation which is the Civil Service College which from a certificate of attendance, now is going to deliver diplomas, degrees and has an academic council. I have seen the structure. It has an academic council which enables this council to tailor-make training programmes to cater for the market, to cater for the civil service of tomorrow.

By talking about innovation, allow me to refresh the mind of the Leader of the Opposition that, since the budget speech read by the hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, we have introduced AI tools to assist our civil servants in their daily tasks. This is a huge step. I speak under the correction of the hon. Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation that the civil service of tomorrow will be highly dependent on innovation, on AI tools because we will be dealing with a population which will be totally conversant with AI tools, e-mails that we will write to reply to queries for example, CSU complaints would be e-mails generated by AI tools. So, the flexibility in the structure of the

Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation Bill will allow this institution to cater for the public service of tomorrow.

Madam Speaker, that is why I say that maybe after independence where we struggled, SSR struggled to create a civil service that will lead to the sugar boom, industrial boom and later on to the services boom. This institution will shape the civil service of tomorrow. No doubt about that because it is bound to evolve. Till now today, we cannot say what will be the jobs of tomorrow, in ten years, what type of jobs, what type of services an economy may require. Therefore, I wish to commend this Bill and congratulate the hon. Minister for showing so much flexibility so that this organisation can tailor-make training programmes for our civil service.

At the same time, I wish that the training and the additional qualifications provided by this organisation to be explicitly recognised by the State. For example, the PRB report should clearly take into account these trainings and qualifications for salary increments. Promotion guidelines within the public service should clearly mention marks, points that candidates should be allocated when they go for these kinds of trainings; be it certificates, diplomas and degrees which will enable them to climb the professional ladder within the civil service.

Madam Speaker, I believe that this Bill is a huge step towards a transparent and meritocratic public service.

To end, Madam Speaker, allow me to quote this very powerful speech by late Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji, which he delivered on 27 May 1996 in the Lok Sabha. It is the epitome of statesmanship from someone who, on that day, lost a vote of no confidence in Parliament. This is what he said, and I will translate it –

“Satta ka khel to chalega, sarkare ayengi, jayengi, partiya banegi bigdegi - magar ye desh rehna chahiye. Ye desh ka loktantra amar rehna chahiye.”

I translate it. The game of power will go on. Governments will come and go. Parties will be made and unmade. But this country should survive. Its democracy should survive.

By coming up with such a bill to empower our civil service, this Government is ensuring that the civil service of tomorrow shall continue to be the backbone of our functioning democracy.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Dear Minister, hon. Dr. Ramtohul!

(5.49 p.m.)

The Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation (Dr. A. Ramtohul): Madam Speaker, today, we are not merely debating a Bill. When I hear the Leader of the Opposition saying that this Bill is dangerous because it has training on ethics, we understand that ethics is dangerous for the MSM government.

Madam Speaker, a person who does not use AI today in his own professional and personal activities will be overtaken by other people. An organisation that does not use AI for its activities will be overtaken by other organisations. So will a nation!

This Bill establishes the right path for a transformational journey on which we have embarked for our civil service that represents the backbone of any progress that we can make. We are shaping a vision – a vision of a public service that learns, empowers, leads and innovates. In today’s age of AI, it is more than ever important to learn, unlearn and relearn. This Institute provides the channel for learning, unlearning and relearning to take to place.

The Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation Bill 2025 is not about constructing another institution. It is about constructing a new culture for work – one that is built on integrity, intelligence, innovation, knowledge, and ethics.

The Bill symbolises a national belief: that our people – our public officers – are not the subject of the problem of governance. They, actually, are the solution. For years, we have invested in systems, platforms and infrastructure. Through this Bill, Madam Speaker, we invest in the most powerful infrastructure of all – the human brain.

Madam Speaker, it is profoundly fitting that this institute bears the name of Atal Bihari Vajpayee – a leader who embodied moral courage, administrative vision and unshakeable faith in people. He once said, and I quote –

“Empowerment is not about giving people power; it is about reminding them that they already have it [in the form of knowledge].”

This is the soul of our Bill.

We are creating a national institution that empowers every public officer to grow intellectually, professionally and ethically. An institute where knowledge meets purpose and where innovation becomes an act of public service.

This Bill before this House establishes, under Clause 3, the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation as a corporate body with degree-awarding powers.

Clause 4 defines its purpose clearly, that is, to –

“provide continuous professional training and development to public officers for an innovative public service;”

It will promote –

- the use of Artificial Intelligence, for sure;
- organisational excellence, ethics and values;
- research and development for reform;
- good governance, transparency and accountability, and
- cooperation with local and international partners.

We are building the nerve centre of a learning State – a State that reflects, adapts and constantly improves itself. In the current matrix in which we are, the matrix of facts, it is really important that we provide our civil servants with the required knowledge and the opportunity to learn. This, Madam Speaker, takes us from training to transformation.

For too long, training in the public sector has meant attending courses and only ticking boxes, as mentioned earlier by the hon. Minister. This Bill departs from that mindset. The institute will turn training into transformation and prepare officers, not merely to perform tasks, but also to solve problems, to challenge conventions, challenge the status quo and drive innovation.

Every programme will be aligned with the real needs of Government – from data management to service design, from cybersecurity to AI-driven policymaking. It will be integrated with the Government Information Human Resource system in order to empower employees with a learning path and to follow-up on the progress for same.

In this way, we do not offer training to an employee just because that employee has not received a training in the past. We offer training because that training will help the employee

move to the next level and that employee will be able to contribute more effectively. So, the goal is clear: to produce public officers who can emerge as leaders in the digital age, not merely followers.

Madam Speaker, digital transformation is no longer optional – it is existential. Through our Digital Transformation Blueprint 2025-2029, launched in May, my Ministry has laid solid foundations –

- Through the application which will be called ‘KOREK!’, it will consolidate e-government services and digital payments.
- Through the introduction of AI-powered assistant aimed at responding to citizens in English, French and *Kreol*.

Our public officers will be called upon to act on those requests made by users on these super-apps.

- The Citizen Hub and InfoHighway, which is again operated by public officers, to enable secure data exchange across Ministries.
- As we have just started the training on the e-Health Project, we are very happy with the determination with which our public officers are walking the path together with the hon. Minister of Health and myself. They need further training, and this institute would enable that training.

Several other digital projects in education, social security, land transport, and others have been planned.

For our officers to deliver effectively in that environment, training is needed. We need the right institution to provide the right level of training, which is also measurable. Technology can only go as far as the hands and hearts that use it. This is why this training will bridge the gap between digital infrastructure and digital intelligence. It will ensure that every officer becomes a confident, competent and compassionate digital actor within our digital ecosystem.

Digitalisation, Madam Speaker, saves time, reduces waste and unlocks value. Just like an organisation is formed by information processed and people for effective execution of services, the people need to have the right level of training.

A 2024 UN study shows that countries with advanced digital governance can save up to 25% in administrative costs, while improving citizen satisfaction by 40%. For Mauritius, this means that we can do more with less resources.

This institute will play a determining role in upskilling and reskilling in the age of AI. There are a lot of concerns around jobs being displaced. People need to be reskilled and upskilled, and this training institution will provide that facility.

Honestly, I do not see that as us going a step back. We are taking so many steps forward. Yes, we took steps back in the last 10 years, and now, we are having to catch up on that delay, Madam Speaker.

AI is transforming every dimension of governance, from predictive health analytic to digital finance, from citizen services to policy design, yet AI is only as ethical and effective as the people who use it. This is why this new institution will be the one giving training in AI to all civil officers and every public officer, whether in finance, health, education or local administration will be able to receive basic to advanced training in effective use of AI. Some will learn how AI works, others will learn what AI can do, of course, but others will also learn what AI should not do or what they should not do with AI. Based on a public-private partnership approach, we have established a technical committee that is working on the AI strategy and the leg around human and talent development will be executed in a major chunk under the institution.

Behind every innovation, Madam Speaker, there is a story. A mother applying online for child benefits, a farmer using Apps for subsidies, a retiree renewing a passport with a single click. With these services working seamlessly, citizens feel respected. They feel they have got their dignity back that was once snatched away from them and when they fail, they feel forgotten and that demands an effective public service behind the machines and that ability to operate effectively behind the machines, again, will be delivered under the roof of this institution.

Digitalisation, Madam Speaker, must never dehumanise governance. Our aim is not to replace the human touch, but to amplify it. This Institute will train officers to balance technology with empathy – to understand that every data point represents a person and every algorithm affects a life. A digital State must still have a human soul.

Clause 4(b) calls for the promotion of ethics and transparency and these are not mere slogans; they are the soul of governance. Our citizens expect not just efficiency, but honesty as well and transparency. This training, the measures that will come out of the dashboards out of those systems used to manage the trainings being delivered, will be transparent and they will be fair.

The Institute will, therefore, embed modules on digital ethics, cyber-responsibility and data privacy in all its courses, which will be common to every other topic.

The Data Protection Office, CERT-MU and the new AI Unit which is being established will provide institutional synergy to ensure that every civil servant understands not only how to collect data, but also how to protect it. Some people say data is the new oil, others say data is the new soil or the new gold. This is our wealth and we have to train our people on how to protect it.

Clause 5(g) introduces the Innovation Lab and this will be the creative heart of the Institute, Madam Speaker. This Lab will allow officers to test bold ideas and prototype solutions to national challenges.

Imagine a health officer designing an AI tool to optimise blood distribution or a teacher building a mobile App to support literacy for children in creole. And, this represents, Madam Speaker, a partnership of ministries and minds. And we want to empower the people who serve, the people who have voted us in.

Public officers are not faceless bureaucrats; they are men and women with passion, families and pride. This Institute will give them recognition, purpose and possibility to develop further. And, I will say to them – ‘your ideas matter. Your growth matters. Your service matters.’

Clause 20(4)(e) calls for the establishment of a blended learning system at the back of the Internet technology. The Internet, Madam Speaker, is not just a technology, its access to information, access to knowledge, access to development, access to innovation, a tool for inclusivity and this institution relies on the Internet as a backbone for delivery of blended learning to Mauritians, to the whole republic of Mauritius.

Clause 10 mandates good governance and transparency in all operations. This Institute will be held to the same standards; we expect it to teach.

Madam Speaker, this Bill is not only a legal contract between government and officers. It is a moral contract between the State and its people. The results will be monitored because what we don't measure, we cannot manage. We will thus be able to measure the number of staff trained. The training sessions delivered, the time saved for transactions and, finally, the increase in citizen satisfaction.

Let us imagine, Madam Speaker, a Mauritius where –

- Every officer is AI-literate;
- Every citizen accesses services seamlessly;
- Every policy and decision is backed by data, and
- Every institution is powered by innovation and guided by ethics.

Madam Speaker, the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation is a bridge between the civil service we inherited and the one we aspire to build. It will make learning continuous, leadership courageous and governance compassionate. And, I close with a conviction –

“A smart nation is not defined by its devices, but by the devotion of its people.”

This Institute will nurture that devotion and, in doing so, shape the Mauritius of tomorrow.

Madam Speaker, I wholeheartedly commend and support this Bill.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Dr. Sukon!

(6.04 p.m.)

The Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research (Dr. K. Sukon): Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation Bill.

The Leader of the Opposition – fortunately he left – harped on the nomenclature of vice-chancellor. It all depends on the institution; in France, we call it Rector. In certain

institutions, Director General, Director, so, it's just a question of nomenclature what we would like to call it. The important thing is the process. He again talked about political patronage, I think he was thinking about MIC but here, in the University, in an Institution like that there are processes. We cannot just give a degree.

The Bill makes it clear that there is an Academic Council and the Academic Council is responsible for coming up with the programmes. The process of the programme is that there must be an Advisory Committee which will happen and in the Advisory Committee, you will have people from the Union, he wanted to have people from the Union. The Advisory Committee will have. He says that the board has too many civil servants but this is a civil service college. Who will we have? It's a civil service college. We should have civil servants on the board to advise. So, he talked about this is another institution – wrong.

All institutions awarding degrees will have to abide by the High Education Act. It is the law. The Quality Assurance Authority will conduct audits. And, on top of it, as the Bill says, they will have to abide by international norms, there is no way out.

But what is important for us to realise is why do we need this institution. We need this institution because if you look at the PRB Reports, reports after reports, it says that unfortunately our civil servants have not been trained. Funds were given but the training did not happen. Reports after reports. That is why we need this institution. We need this institution because all the international organisation – the FMI, the World Bank Report – they have all mentioned that we need to improve the efficiency of the civil service.

Today, first, the public is looking for that. Today, when someone goes home, can do all his banking transactions on their mobile. He or she, expects that, well, I should be able to have a civil service that will help me do that. We can buy the technology, as my colleague said, and bring it here. We can fill the room with computers and digital gadgets. But if you don't train the person to use it, if we don't empower the people to use it, nothing will happen. That is why this Bill is important.

Second, in terms of content delivery, the Civil Service has its own specialities. I take an example – Performance Management. Performance Management taught at a university for the general public or private sector is different from Performance Management taught in the Public Service because the set up itself is different. So, in terms of content as well, it will be different.

I am very happy because this will help to attract international students here and that is our prime aim. Today we heard that even the Mali delegation, without invitation, came to learn from us. So, we would like to have more and more organisations coming to study here but formally and legally of course. There is potential.

So, the Leader of the Opposition also mentioned about whether this is a waste of public money. I will tell him the real truth. If you look at the PRB Report 2021, Rs113 million were dedicated and how much has been used for training? Only 35%.

Ms Anquetil: How much? Say again!

Dr. Sukon: 35% of it.

Why? Because as my colleague, hon. Beechhook said, the Civil Service College was giving certificate of attendance. Not attractive. Two weeks ago, the Cabinet approved the Micro-Credential Framework which the new Institute will use. The Micro-Credential now will accredit the new programmes that will allow the person to use and accumulate the credit towards a qualification. So, it becomes attractive. The same model was used by the Singapore Civil Service College.

In the 90s when they were set up, they actually partnered with Harvard Kennedy School and INSEAD in order to have programmes at the highest level. This is what made Singapore, as we all know, a Civil Service which is ranked first in the world because they had the right partnership. And here as well, provisions have been made to have solid partners in order to have programmes that allow our civil servants to move around.

And in his budget speech, the hon. Prime Minister mentioned research – we would like policy decisions to be anchored in research. This was not happening before. We were making decisions very often without doing the research behind. And here, I am very happy to see the focus on research and on the lab. The lab is the most beautiful piece I found in the legislation because it really gives the opportunity for the civil servant, for the first time, to come and experiment, to come and test his ideas without fear.

So, this Bill has been well crafted and deserves our recommendation, deserves that we support it and deserves that we have such an institution.

Madam Speaker, thank you. I commend this Bill to the House.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Yes, hon. Deputy Prime Minister!

(6.12 p.m.)

The Deputy Prime Minister : *Madam Speaker, we are creating the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute* pour le progrès du pays avant tout, pour le progrès de la population avant tout. Mais aussi pour le progrès et le *welfare*, le bien-être des fonctionnaires en générale.

Au moment où nous discutons de ce projet de loi, je tiens à remercier les fonctionnaires, à les féliciter aussi et leurs souhaiter bonne chance pour le voyage qui commence. Le nouveau voyage, une nouvelle étape plutôt qui commence avec la création de cet important institut que nous créons, important pour le progrès du pays avant tout.

Et vous me permettez, sans m'attarder là-dessus, de faire encore une fois remarquer qu'il y a deux membres de l'opposition. Le troisième qui est présent n'est pas officiellement dans l'opposition mais il est là. Officiellement, il y a deux membres de l'opposition et ce petit mal élevé qui est à côté du Leader de l'opposition, n'est jamais présent quand le Leader de l'opposition fait un discours, et la liste des orateurs a été circulée, s'il vous plaît. Il sait que le Leader de l'opposition va être seul parce que lui, il brille par son absence.

Vous m'excuserez mais je m'indigne à chaque fois que je vois cela. Je m'indigne au nom de mon pays. Il ne mérite pas d'être là et il le fait bien de ne pas être là d'ailleurs.

Je salue la création de cet institut qui va jouer un rôle clé dans le nouvel élan de développement de notre pays. Mais pour ma part, je vais parler, je ne vais pas revenir sur tout ce qui a été dit et bien dit par les orateurs avant moi. Je vais parler essentiellement d'Atal Bihari Vajpayee parce qu'il faut bien que nous mesurions la portée de ce que nous faisons. Quand nous donnons le nom de ce grand homme d'état à une institution pareille, nous avons un devoir de réussir. Nous n'avons pas le droit d'échouer au nom, ne serait-ce qu'au nom de cette personnalité. C'est donc sur Shri Vajpayee que je vais parler essentiellement.

Le 25 décembre de l'année dernière, le 25 décembre de 2024, on a célébré le centième anniversaire de la naissance de Shri Vajpayee. Nous sommes légèrement en retard mais il n'est jamais trop tard pour saluer ce genre d'être humain. Je le salue au nom du pays et en mon nom personnel.

Madame la présidente, le 25 décembre 2024, donc nous célébrions le centième anniversaire. Et aujourd'hui, nous créons cette institution. Shri Vajpayee a été un des plus grand Premier ministres que l'Inde ait produit depuis 1947 et je dirai aussi que les faits sont là. Shri Vajpayee a été the *longest serving member* du Parlement indien.

Il a été élu dix fois. Je m'arrêterai là, je ne parlerai pas d'autres qui ont encore plus d'années de service et qui ont été élus plus des fois mais lui, c'était un être extraordinaire, *Madam Speaker*.

Je le répète, il était certainement un des plus grand Premier ministres que l'Inde ait produit et l'Inde en a produit depuis 1947 des grands Premier ministres. Cela me touche aussi quand je lis et quand j'apprends, quand je me rappelle que Vajpayee avait beaucoup d'admiration – il était du BJP – et beaucoup d'estime pour Jawaharlal Nehru.

Un jour, dans le *Lok Sabha*, dans le Parlement indien, Nehru, en écoutant – parce que c'était aussi un grand orateur – Vajpayee prendre la parole, a prédit qu'il sera *one day Prime Minister of India*.

Il y a une phrase qui me touche profondément à chaque fois que je la relis. Quand Nehru est mort le 27 mai 1964, Vajpayee a fait ses éloges. Il a dit deux choses. Entre autres, il a dit, d'abord, que Nehru avait été *the orchestrator of the impossible and inconceivable*. C'est vrai que Vajpayee était un grand poète aussi, et ça s'entend quand on lit ce genre d'éloges de Nehru. Ce qui est admirable aussi, c'est que Vajpayee était du BJP, mais il a fait plus que la plupart des premiers ministres de l'Inde pour rapprocher l'Inde et le Pakistan.

Alors que des guerres éclataient à des intervalles plus ou moins réguliers entre ces deux grands pays, il a fait plus d'efforts que n'importe qui. Jusqu'à organiser un sommet à Agra avec le président Musharraf, que j'ai connu aussi, pour essayer de rapprocher et de tourner la page pour ouvrir une nouvelle page d'amitié entre l'Inde et le Pakistan.

Peu de gens savent que Vajpayee est venu quatre fois à l'île Maurice. L'honorable Premier ministre le sait. Quatre fois ! Le 12 mars 1978, alors qu'il était ministre des Affaires étrangères, il nous a fait l'honneur d'être ici à cette occasion. En 1993, la petite île Maurice – c'était très beau – a invité Vajpayee en sa capacité de leader de l'opposition. Et il est venu chez nous en sa capacité de leader de l'opposition.

Le 3-4 septembre 1998 – et cela, mon voisin, l'honorable Premier ministre, s'en souvient mieux que moi ! Il était avec Vajpayee en Afrique du Sud –, l'honorable Premier ministre de l'île Maurice est revenu dans l'avion du Premier ministre de l'Inde en passant par l'île Maurice. Troisième visite chez nous ! Et le 13 mars 2000, alors qu'il était à nouveau Premier ministre, Shri Vajpayee, quatre fois, il nous a fait l'honneur de nous rendre visite à l'île Maurice. C'est pourquoi nous avons tellement raison de donner le nom honorifique de ce

grand homme, de ce grand Premier ministre à cet institut que nous créons aujourd'hui, *Madam Speaker*.

Je parle un peu avec émotions de Shri Vajpayee parce que quand j'étais Premier ministre – je me souviens plus de la date exacte –, je me suis fait un devoir en tant que Premier ministre – bien que je fusse Premier ministre pendant quelques années seulement – de visiter les cinq pays de peuplement de l'île Maurice. C'est-à-dire, Madagascar, Mozambique, la France, l'Inde et la Chine. Et l'Inde fut le premier pays où j'ai fait un devoir de le visiter en ma capacité de Premier ministre.

Je ne suis pas le seul ; je connais des Mauriciens et des Mauriciennes qui sont profondément attachés à Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. C'est pourquoi je concluais, *Madam Speaker*, en disant alors que nous sommes en train de créer cette institution, je le répète, nous avons le devoir d'être à la hauteur de cet homme dont nous vénérons le nom et dont nous saluons son passé.

C'est pourquoi, je le répète, bravo à l'honorable ministre concerné et bravo au gouvernement pour la création de cette nouvelle institution ! Mais je le répète, nous n'avons pas droit à l'erreur et nous ne commettrons pas d'erreurs lorsque nous célébrerons à notre façon la mémoire d'un grand homme d'État et d'un grand Premier ministre de *Mother India*.

Merci, *Madam Speaker*.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister!

(6.23 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, at the very outset, let me, again, thank the Government of India for having so generously gifted us with this state-of-the-art building to be the seat of the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation, which I opened when hon. Prime Minister Modi was here. Both the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and I had the privilege to know this Great Son of India.

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee epitomised what every leader should aspire to be. He was a towering figure, a man of great vision and culture. Not many people knew he was also a poet, but I noted hon. Beehook said that. He was also a poet. Perhaps that why he was such a great orator because he understood what rhythm in speech meant.

Madam Speaker: Interesting!

The Prime Minister: He had not only a great voice, but a command of language. He was an accomplished and abled parliamentarian, a statesman, a leader of man who devoted his life to public service – a long period, as the hon. Deputy Prime Minister said. He was such a figure!

I remember I met him in his official residence just prior to the elections. Elections being what they are, he lost that election just afterwards. That was the election where they said ‘India Shining.’ I saw when I came back that when he lost the election – to give you an idea –, hon. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, the first thing he did, he took a lot of flowers, he went to his home and put a garland around his neck. After he had lost the election! Can you imagine this happening here?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: On ne sait jamais !

The Prime Minister: The hon. Deputy Prime Minister enumerated the dates – he came here four times. I remember in 1978, when he came here as Foreign Minister – You know the protocol that we have with the Civil Service –, Sir Seewoosagur wanted to go and welcome him at the airport. But the protocol told him, ‘It is not right. He is not a Prime Minister. He is a Foreign Minister. So, the Foreign Minister should go.’ I saw the note in the file. The then Prime Minister Sir Seewoosagur said, ‘For me, he is the Great Son of India. I am going to go and welcome him. Never mind protocol!’ That is what he did!

I must say, Madam Speaker, I am very sad not to have been able to pay him my last respect when he passed away as there was an objection to my travelling abroad at the time. So, I did not. But never mind! Hon. Damry knows, hon. Dr. Ms Jeetun knows, those who came with me know, the hon. Foreign Minister knows, every time I go to India, even when I had COVID, I went to his *samadhi*. Again, when I went to India, I think the young minister, hon. Aadil Ameer Meea also knows, we went to his *samadhi* to pay our respect to that Great Son of India.

I do hope that those who will be entrusted with the stewardship of this institution will ensure that it lives up to the reputation of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, as the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and hon. Minister Sukon also said, because that institution is named after him. And the setting up of this institute should also be placed in the perspective of the Government’s aim to have a more performing public sector. It is in our Government Programme of 2025-2029.

Madam Speaker, we live in a rapidly changing world. It follows that all our institutions should have the capacity to adapt and to change. Our very success will be tributary to our capacity to lead during a period of perpetual mutation on all fronts.

Quality of service, as I think many orators said before me, should be at the centre of public sector transformation, ensuring that the needs of all citizens remain our top priority. In this endeavour, Government will also introduce a Public Sector Reform Bill, which will also pave the way for an open government culture.

Government's intention... I am sorry, I should not really refer to him, they are not even here, but they have not understood anything. At least the Leader of Opposition, the other one was not here, he did not understand anything. Government's intention is to encourage innovative practices and empower public servants to exercise leadership and to address the systemic issues rather than relying on the traditional approach.

Our aim is to position the Civil Service as a dynamic force for national development and long-term success. We used to be! There was a paper in the Modern Law Review of all magazines a long time ago. It compared countries in Africa and it pinpointed two countries: Botswana and Mauritius. It said these two countries have been successful because they have civil servants worth their salt. We had managed to achieve that but *avec le MSM, tout a dégringolé*. No meritocracy, no equal opportunity, nothing.

Our aim is to position the Civil Service as a dynamic force for national development and long-term success. Enhancing the Public Service would entail deepening civil servants' knowledge and capacity, strengthening their understanding, empathy for the needs of our citizens and reinforce the values and commitment to excellence.

Madam Speaker, Mauritius is in dire need of a Civil Service which adapts and which proactively plays its main role, that is, driving national progress and nation-building. All public sectors employees should be able to navigate through the complexity that we see, the uncertainty, the change that is needed.

Furthermore, Madam Speaker, Government will introduce a public service facilitation system, again, to enhance service delivery to the population, reducing the cost of assessing services and eliminating unnecessary inconveniences. Lots of this is happening because nothing has been done. In fact, as, I think, hon. Beechook and hon. Sukon said, they were giving certificate of attendance; that is what they were achieving.

We want to change all this, Madam Speaker. If we want to create a generation of adaptive leaders in the service, it is imperative that we ensure fairness, meritocracy and the recognition of skills. People say we can become like Singapore. We will not become like Singapore unless we do these changes. We must recognise meritocracy! We must give equal opportunity! We must recognise skills! This is the only way to guarantee a modern and effective civil service. That is why I introduced the Equal Opportunity Act. This is why I introduced the Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal. Why? The Civil Service was not happy with this, I must say – the top civil servants, I mean. But there are injustices that happens to civil servants. We have seen it; who are not given the chance. And did you see what has happened? Since that, many civil servants have had their promotion reinstituted. It is very important that they feel that they are part of the system and that we will recognise their ability when they are working hard and producing results.

Government is committed to bringing the Public Service to new heights of efficiency. And let us say it, let this be clear – the hon. Deputy Prime Minister said it also – we have some very able civil servants in this country.

We have, through the manipulation of the MSM, some people who are not up to that level. We must also agree to that, but some are very, very able civil servants. There is no reason, therefore, why the Public Service cannot be as efficient and performing as the best in the private sector. Why is it that people go to private clinics and try not to go to hospitals? Can you imagine? I know hon. Bachoo doing a lot for this and he is being criticised, never mind.

We have to do what we have to do to make this country a better country. That is our purpose! Can you imagine somebody who is diabetic – I will give an example – he/she is told not to eat anything? In fact, they tell them, I checked, the ‘night before’, when in fact, they should have said ‘after midnight’. So, the person does not eat anything. The diabetic patient comes to the hospital, sits there, goes in a queue, wait for three hours. This is not how you treat diabetics. But if you go to a private clinic, they will tell you not to eat anything after midnight, you come in, they immediately take your blood and check your results. This is possible in the Public Service as well but we are not doing it. That is what we have to change. I am giving this as an example.

During recent years, we have witnessed, I must say, severe erosion of values, ethics and good governance. Restoring trust in our Public Sector institutions at large is, therefore, high

on this Government's agenda. This is a *sine qua non* condition if we want to build a resilient country and meet the evolving needs of our citizens. We will provide all the necessary support and training to civil servants.

I am not sure whether it is Dr. the hon. Sukon or hon. Beehook who said it. We will have to have people from Harvard, from other places to come and teach them. And there is something about Mauritians that perhaps people do not realise. They like to learn, they are keen to learn but they are not given the opportunity to learn. There is an attitude. I give you an example: I got some veterinary surgeons to come to Mauritius to give lectures and to train. When I checked, only those who work in the Public Service were invited. I said why? Why can't you invite the private sector as well? We want them to learn. It should not be restricted and many of them were very thankful that we did this.

The Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service will play a critical role in the modernisation of the Public Sector. The need for organisational ability to perform and deliver has assumed a paramount importance for any institution, whether public or private, to meet the prevailing daunting challenges. And it has not dawned upon us yet that the status quo represents an existential threat for our country.

This is why it is very important to analyse on a regular basis the issues and the drivers of change in the environment we are operating because this environment is becoming increasingly complex. More than ever, we have to integrate; we have to have a vision to think of the country at the institutional level. It is critical.

An important issue which considerably impacts on the thought process and work culture in Mauritius is the emotional dynamics of our country, the mindscape of our population that makes it extremely difficult to undertake fundamental reforms for transition from an insular mindset to a global mindset. The sooner we learn this, the better for the country.

Basking in the glory of a pseudo economic miracle, coupled with navel-gazing and self-congratulations has lulled us into a dangerous level of complacency and has fostered an ideology of comfort, relegating reform to rhetoric – just rhetoric – regurgitated during workshops and seminars, same thing. Can we, collectively as a nation, marshal our political, intellectual and moral sinews to chart out a coherent, practical framework with specific, innovative strategies for responding to these new challenges and managing these changes in a complex world? We all agree; we cannot be locked in the 20th century-thinking anymore.

Minister Dr. Ramtohul just said that some people do not even know what AI is. Would you believe it? They are still in the 20th century. We cannot continue frozen in the model of yesterdays. However successful this model was, in this new era it will not take us to the new heights that we want to achieve. It can only bring us down.

Highly successful countries like Singapore, New Zealand, and Finland owe their achievements to institutions with values and systems that inculcate a culture that fosters a strong national cohesion and adaptable and resourceful people that help to lay the foundation of a creative society.

We have reached a moment in our development where the basis of our strategy is literally changing overnight. This necessitates an urgent and fundamental course of correction and frequent recalibration.

Let me quote the former CEO of KPMG, Mr Jon Madonna –

“Nothing stops an organisation faster than people who believe that the way they worked yesterday is the best way to work tomorrow. To succeed, not only do people have to change the way they act, they have got to change the way they think about the past.”

Frankly, I despair sometimes when I see some civil servants – no fault of theirs – do things this way because this was the way it has always been done in the past. I tell them we must innovate, think out of the box, remove the blinkers, get out of your comfort zone. What is important is to get things done efficiently in the shortest possible time and respond to the expectations of the people of this country. The Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation should not and will not be allowed to join those mammoth institutions which have failed in their missions and have literally become redundant and obsolete.

Madam Speaker, the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service will hopefully become a centre of excellence, not only for Mauritius but for the region. It should continuously be committed to designing and developing programmes that support competency-driven growth within the civil service. It should ensure that they have the ability not only to grow but to thrive.

In this prospect, the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation will also organise a focused capacity building programme for members of the committee to implement the measures of the Government Programme 2025-2029. The aim is to assure policy coherence and a timely implementation of Government’s vision for a better Mauritius.

To allow the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute to attain a reputation as a pole of excellence, it is extremely important for it to have the linkages with well-known institutions in the world as Minister Sukon just said.

During my recent State visit to India, officials of my delegation have raised the possibility of linkages and arrangements with the famous Indian Institute of Management in Hyderabad where many of our former top civil servants were trained. We have also talked to institutions in other countries like France, *l'Ecole Nationale d'Administration* and the Singapore Civil Service. We also talked to some people in the UK.

As we look to the future, Madam Speaker, the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation Bill is one of the bold steps of Government to restore the trust and dignity of our public service. I have said it many times – a country's success depends on the quality of its institutions. That is what makes a country progress. It is a commitment of transforming and empowering our public servants, ensuring that they are ready to embrace the future and that they serve with proper attitude, integrity and dedication. And I want to reassure our civil servants that Government will help them to achieve these new heights.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you so much. Yes, hon. Minister, your winding-up speech, please!

(6.45 p.m.)

Mr Pentiah: Madam Speaker, first and foremost, I wish to take this opportunity to thank all the hon. Members of Parliament who have intervened and provided their valuable contribution. It is an honour indeed to hear the contributions of the hon. Prime Minister himself and the hon. Deputy Prime Minister on this innovative step towards a better public service. Hon. Beehook, may I please reassure you that everything you said has been noted by the officers of my Ministry present and actions will be taken onboard.

Madam Speaker, the contributions of the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research, Dr. Sukon, comes also from his experience in the field and whatever he has said, his suggestions will be noted. Last but not least, my good friend on my left, hon. Dr. Ramtohl, Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation.

Madam Speaker, we cannot go forward without his contributions, his knowledge and experience. Hence, speaking of the Board as the hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned,

there is a reason why in the Board itself – and it is important for me to inform the House – that there is a representative of the Minister of Education because Human Resource Development, HRDC is with him and it is to the competence, the volition of this Minister to name the right person on the Board to the right job. There is a reason why a representative of the Minister of Tertiary Education is on the Board because his contribution is invaluable.

There is a reason, Madam Speaker, why the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation is represented on the Board because without the contributions of these Ministers, we cannot move forward in a positive direction. The more so, we mentioned a representative of the Minister of Finance. Well, it goes without saying, the motto of our Budget 2025-2026 is performance-based budget. We want to be accountable from day one: what we are spending and for what we are spending the money of the people.

Madam Speaker, speaking of representatives of the teaching staff and speaking of representatives of the trade unions, as rightly pointed out by hon. Beehook, there is the possibility because the Bill has made provisions for this.

Besides what the hon. Deputy Prime Minister has said, the continuous absence of the Opposition, what is sad though is each and every time, Madam Speaker – there must be a way to stop this – the hon. Leader of the Opposition appears to be reading only part of the provisions of the laws before this House. He misleads the House and misinterprets the lines and the provisions of the Bills, and that is improper. Very often, we hear in this House the term ‘a seasoned politician’. Well, this is not the behaviour or the act of a seasoned politician because prior to being a seasoned politician, we have to be a patriot, thinking about the benefits and welfare of this country and the people of this country. He just says whatever comes to his mind. Each and every time, he addresses parts of the provisions of the Bill and disappears without hearing the reply or explanation given in this House.

Mr Jhummun: *Malelve!*

Mr Pentiah: That is really not commendable. Madam Speaker, I now go back to my summing up.

Madame la présidente, nous avons la certitude que nous avons la confiance du peuple. Ensemble, nous allons continuer à œuvrer pour le bien être du pays.

I quote –

“The Civil Service plays a crucial role in the implementation of Government policies. It will be equipped to support the building of a solid foundation for a new economy and the new social order and to effectively serve all citizens.”

This is the speech of our Prime Minister in the Budget 2025-2026 at paragraph 208.

Madam Speaker, the provisions of this Bill before the House set out the very foundation towards –

- an efficient;
- a transparent;
- an accountable;
- a resilient;
- an agile, and above all
- a people-centric public service.

In the words of the Father of our Nation, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, I quote –

“We shall all work together, for the country belongs to all of us, and let us contribute our share in the building of a strong, free and happy Mauritius.

It is the life of the ordinary men and women of this country who form the backbone, and who, after all represent what is the prosperity of the island, that matters.”

Madam Speaker, along the same vision and line of thinking, Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s life itself was a lesson in integrity, humility and dedication to the people. Vajpayee Ji’s vision teaches us that the greatness of a nation depends on the quality of its citizens and its public institutions. His vision inspires and guides us that governance is not about authority, but about responsibility. He teaches us that governance is not about power, but about empowerment. Inspired by his vision, we would create a generation of public officers that will contribute to the fulfilment of the vision of the Father of our own Nation.

Madam Speaker, it is with these values, principles and vision that this Government sets out towards administrative reforms and a new innovative public service, which I have the pleasure and honour to contribute with a dedicated and committed team at my Ministry.

Madam Speaker, it is through properly structured demand-orientated and correct framework with a modern-conducive environment that each and every provision of this Bill

has been developed while carefully listening to the legitimate expectations of public service users. My Ministry puts forward this Bill as the building block towards the construction of an edifice that each and every public officer will be duly valued and respected for the contributions towards building trust and confidence in the public service we deliver.

At the end, Madam Speaker –

“The success of any country lies in the strength and credibility of its institutions. As such, it is vital that the public service continually renews itself to ensure high quality public services.”

Hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, the Prime Minister of this country. It is his words.

With these words, Madam Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

THE ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND INNOVATION BILL (NO. XXII OF 2025)

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

Clause 1 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 2 (Interpretation)

Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill.”

Mr Pentiah: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendments to clause 2 –

“in clause 2 –

- (i) by deleting the definition “Director-General” and replacing it by the following definition –

“Director-General” means the Director-General of the Civil Service College, Mauritius;

- (ii) by inserting, in the appropriate alphabetical order, the following new definition –

“Registrar” means the Registrar of the Institute, appointed under section 20;”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, ordered to stand of the Bill.

Clauses 3 to 8 ordered to stand of the Bill.

Clause 9 (The Board)

Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill.”

Mr Pentiah: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendments to clause 9 –

“in clause 9, in subclause (5), by deleting the word “Director-General” and replacing it by the word “Registrar”;”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 9, as amended, ordered to stand of the Bill.

Clauses 10 to 15 ordered to stand of the Bill.

Clause 16 (Academic Council)

Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill.”

Mr Pentiah: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendment to clause 16 –

“in clause 16, in subclause (3), by deleting subparagraph (b) and replacing it by the following subparagraph –

- (c) the Registrar;”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 16, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 17 to 19 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 20 (Director-General)

Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill.”

Mr Pentiah: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendments to clause 20 –

“in clause 20 –

- (i) by deleting the heading and replacing it by the following heading –

20. Registrar

- (ii) in subclauses (1), (2) and (3) by deleting the word “Director-General” and replacing it by the word “Registrar”;

- (iii) by deleting subclause (4) and replacing it by the following subclause –

(4) The Registrar shall be responsible to the Board for the –

- (a) provision of necessary advice to the Board on policy matters as well as the execution of the Board policies and decisions;
- (b) day to day administration and the establishment of sound management policies and a proper internal control system for the efficient operation of the Institute;
- (c) preparation of the business plan and budget for training programmes and monitor expenditure of the Institute;
- (d) further development and implementation of a blended learning system to cater for demand-driven training needs in the public service;
- (e) development of capacity and capability building of the Institute as an awarding body;
- (f) keeping of records including admissions and results;
- (g) preparation of examinations, assessments and award ceremony; and
- (h) provision of support and information in relation to enrolment, programme enquiry, admission, fees, discipline and complaint.”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 20, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 21 (Appointment of employees)

Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill.”

Mr Pentiah: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendment to clause 21 –

“in clause 21, in subclause (2) by deleting the word “Director-General” and replacing it by the word “Registrar”;

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 21, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 22 to 25 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 26 (Delegation)

Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill.”

Mr Pentiah: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendment to clause 26 –

“in clause 26, in subclause (1) by deleting the word “Director-General” and replacing it by the word “Registrar”;

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 26, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 27 to 33 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 34 (Savings and transitional provisions)

Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill.”

Mr Pentiah: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendment to clause 34 –

“in clause 34, in subclause (3) by deleting the word “Director-General of the Institute” and replacing it by the word “Registrar of the Institute”.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 34, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 35 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

The Schedule ordered to stand part of the Bill.

The title and enacting clause were agreed to.

The Bill, as amended, was agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with Madam Speaker in the Chair, Madam Speaker reported accordingly.

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation Bill (No. XXII of 2025) was read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Friday 10 October 2025 at 3.00 p.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned!

At 7.03 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Friday 10 October 2025 at 3.00 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MR K. P. – CONTRACT TERMS & CONDITIONS – OVERSEAS MISSIONS

(No. B/821) 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 Mr K. P., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the Ministries, Government Bodies and Parastatal Bodies in which he held remunerated positions since 2015 to 2024, indicating in each case, the –

- (a) capacity thereof;
- (b) terms and conditions of contract, including remuneration, allowances and benefits drawn, and
- (c) overseas missions undertaken, indicating costs incurred, countries visited, duration and names of accompanying persons, if any.

(Withdrawn)

COMMISSION OF THE PREROGATIVE OF MERCY – COMMISSION COMPOSITION

(No. B/824) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Commission of the Prerogative of Mercy, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the present composition thereof.

(Withdrawn)

SPECIAL STRIKING TEAM – DRUG PLANTING ALLEGATIONS – REPORTED & PROSECUTED CASES

(No. B/825) 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 allegations of drug planting by officers of the defunct Special Striking Team prior to December 2024, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) the number of reported cases thereof, indicating the number thereof being prosecuted and the charges preferred against the suspects, and
- (b) whether the Scotland Yard or any other similarly constituted foreign investigating body has or will be requested to assist in investigations thereinto.

(Withdrawn)

MR S.K. DEATH – INQUIRY UPDATE

(No. B/828) 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 inquiry initiated into the death of S. K. in or about October 2020, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

FORMER PRIME MINISTER'S ADVISORS – NAMES & PAY PACKAGES

(No. B/829) 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)

NATIONAL AGENCY FOR DRUG CONTROL – ANNUAL BUDGET – CEO & CHAIRPERSON’S BENEFITS

(No. B/830) 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 National Agency for Drug Control, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) details of the annual budget allocated thereto;
- (b) monthly salaries and benefits drawn by the Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson thereof, and
- (c) amount disbursed in terms of other salaries, consultancy fees and administrative overheads as at date.

(Withdrawn)

MR P. G. DEATH – MUMBAI – CIRCUMSTANCES

(No. B/834) Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) 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 Mr P. G. who passed away in Mumbai on 30 September 2025, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain through the relevant authorities, information as to the circumstances surrounding the death thereof.

(Withdrawn)

GENERAL ELECTIONS – LAW AMENDMENTS – MAURITIAN DIASPORA – RIGHT TO VOTE

(No. B/835) 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 National Assembly Elections, he will state if Government proposes to amend the legislation

aiming at allowing Mauritian nationals living abroad the right to vote therefor and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

CASINO DE MAURICE – YEARLY PROFIT & LOSS – PROPOSED MEASURES

(No. B/837) 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 Casino de Maurice, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Investment Corporation Ltd., information as to the yearly profit/loss thereof over the period 2015 to 2024, indicating the measures being proposed to address the current state of affairs.

(Withdrawn)

E-SERVICES PLATFORM PROJECT – IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

(No. B/867) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the E-Services Platform Project of his Ministry, he will state the timeframe for the implementation thereof.

(Withdrawn)

SAINT-JEAN CEMETERY – DAMAGED TOMBS – NOVEMBER 2023 FLOODS

(No. B/870) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the 300 tombs at the Saint-Jean Cemetery which were damaged during the floods which occurred between 08 November 2023 and 15 January 2024, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Development Unit, information as to the current state thereof.

(Withdrawn)

VALLÉE DES PRÊTRES, MORC. RAMLAGUN – FLOOD MITIGATION MEASURES

(No. B/871) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to flood mitigation measures within the region of Vallée des Prêtres, particularly in Morcellement Ramlagun, including the placing of rock bunds at critical locations as per the report issued on 16 September 2025, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Land Drainage Authority, information as to where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

**POINTE AUX CANNONNIERS, VALE, GRAND BAY, FOND DU SAC,
SOTTISE & GOODLANDS – IRREGULAR WATER SUPPLY – MEASURES
ENVISAGED**

(No. B/872) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to Pointe aux Cannonniers, Vale, Grand Bay, Fond du Sac, Sottise and Goodlands, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the number of complaints received from inhabitants of the said regions regarding irregular water supply prevailing thereat since December 2024 to September 2025, indicating the measures being proposed for the provision of regular water supply thereat.

(Withdrawn)

**VALLETA B6 BYPASS – SPEED CAMERAS & TRAFFIC LIGHTS
IMPLEMENTATION**

(No. B/873) Mr P. G. Venkatasami (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether in regard to the proposed installation of speed cameras and pedestrian traffic lights at the Valleta B6 Bypass, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Traffic Management & Road Safety Unit, information as to where matters stand, indicating the –

- (a) reasons for the delay in implementation, and
- (b) expected coming into operation date thereof.

(Withdrawn)

POLICE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE BILL – PROPOSED INTRODUCTION

(No. B/874) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Attorney-General whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of the Police and Criminal Justice Bill in the Assembly, he will state where matters stand, indicating whether the practice of lodging provisional charges against every suspect of arrestable offences after every arrested offence will be done away with.

(Withdrawn)

PORT-LOUIS NORTH SSS – STUDENT/TEACHING STAFF RATIO

(No. B/876) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the Port-Louis North State Secondary School, he will state the –

- (a) number of students enrolled thereat, indicating the enrolment trend over the past five years and whether same raises concern and, if so, the corrective measures, if any, envisaged in relation thereto, and
- (b) pupil/teacher ratio thereat.

(Withdrawn)

GAZA-ISRAEL CONFLICT– MAURITIUS’ OFFICIAL STANCE

(No. B/879) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to Gaza, following recent findings and official statements from the United Nations (UN) and other international bodies confirming serious violations of international humanitarian law and acts constituting genocide committed thereat, he will state if Government will consider –

- (a) condemning Israel’s actions in stronger terms at the UN and elsewhere;
- (b) severing/suspending diplomatic relations with Israel until a verified, immediate and permanent ceasefire is observed and respected, and
- (c) supporting/joining international legal actions before the International Court of Justice in defence of Palestinian civilian lives and international law.

(Withdrawn)

HARRY LATOUR STADIUM – RENOVATION WORKS

(No. B/880) Mr C. Lukeeram (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the renovation works undertaken at the Harry Latour Stadium, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

DARUTY & VALE JUNCTION – TRAFFIC CONGESTION – REMEDIAL ACTIONS

(No. B/881) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand’ Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to junction Daruty and Vale, he will state if a survey has been carried out to assess the traffic congestion occurring thereat between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) findings thereof, and
- (b) remedial actions being envisaged in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

SAINT-JEAN ROAD, QUATRE BORNES – EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN

(No. B/884) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to Saint-Jean Road in Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether an emergency evacuation plan has been put in place in case of the occurrence of incidents including fire outbreaks, accidents or medical urgencies and, if so, give details thereof.

(Withdrawn)

CITÉ LA FERME, BAMBOUS – WASTE WATER NETWORK PROJECT

(No. B/885) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Waste Water Network Project in Cité La Ferme, Bambous, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to –

- (a) whether all the households have been connected to the network and, if not, why not, indicating whether consideration will be given for Avenue de l'Indépendance to be connected thereto, and
- (b) the sum of money paid to the contractor for variation works as at date.

(Withdrawn)

MELVILLE, GRAND GAUBE – BUS ROUTE 178 – IRREGULAR SERVICES – REMEDIAL MEASURES

(No. B/887) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre D'or) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to bus route 178 in Melville, Grand Gaube, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to whether urgent remedial measures will be taken to ensure regular public transport services along same.

(Withdrawn)

FOND DU SAC – COMPULSORY LAND ACQUISITION – PORTION NUMBER 40 – SETTLEMENT DATE

(No. B/888) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre D'or) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the compulsory land acquisition of portion number 40 for the construction of drains for flood mitigation measures at Fond du Sac in 2018, he will state the reasons for the non-settlement of the price payable to the land owners thereof as at to date, indicating the expected date of settlement thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**ST JULIEN D'HOTMAN B24 ROAD – PIPE LAYING PROJECT – ROAD
REINSTATEMENT**

(No. B/889) Mr G. P. Venkatasami (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether in regard to the Pipe Laying Project along St Julien d'Hotman B24 Rd, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to where matters stand, indicating the –

- (a) reasons why complete reinstatement of the roads in areas where pipe laying works have been completed have not been carried out, and
- (b) expected completion date of the whole project.

(Withdrawn)

**SOCIAL REGISTER OF MAURITIUS – FREE INTERNET CONNECTION –
FAMILIES REGISTERED**

(No. B/890) 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 provision of free internet connection to families on the Social Register of Mauritius, as announced in the Budget 2025–2026, he will state the –

- (a) modalities thereof, and
- (b) present number of families registered on the Social Register of Mauritius to date, indicating the number thereof having applied and benefiting from this measure.

(Withdrawn)

AFRICAN NETWORK INFORMATION CENTRE – INTEGRITY PRESERVATION

(No. B/891) Mr C. Lukeeram (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the African Network Information Centre, he will state the key actions taken to preserve the integrity thereof, indicating where matters stand as at to date.

(Withdrawn)

GINGER – UNFAIR COMPETITION – SALE & IMPORTATION

(No. B/893) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to ginger, he will state whether he is in presence of representations from

planters thereof as to any unfair competition to which they are facing from importers thereof and, if so –

- (a) indicate the measures his Ministry proposes to take in relation thereto, and
- (b) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Agricultural Marketing Board, information as to whether consideration could be given for the local production thereof to be purchased at a guaranteed price and be given priority on sale.

(Withdrawn)

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS & PREMISES – ABANDONED/RENOVATION STATE – PROPOSED REINSTATEMENT

(No. B/894) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to Government buildings and premises, he will state the number thereof presently lying in abandoned states and/or under renovation, indicating if an assessment of costs to Government in terms of rental of buildings and premises by Ministries and Government agencies have been made and whether consideration will be given for the reinstatement of abandoned Government buildings and premises with a view to offsetting the costs to Government in terms of rentals.

(Withdrawn)

PRIVATE HEALTHCARE SERVICES – FEES & CHARGES – REGULATION

(No. B/895) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the fees and charges for services provided by the private healthcare sector, he will state whether measures are being put in place for the regulation thereof, including the fixing of the quantum thereof and prevention of any kind of collusion in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

LA LOUISE, QUATRE BORNES – FLOOD MITIGATION MEASURES – DRAINS CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/897) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the flood mitigation measures in the region of La Louise, Quatre Bornes he will state if consideration will be given for the construction of drains along the Lal Bahadur Shastri Avenue and Boundary Road behind the Queen Victoria Hospital, instead of solely along the Candos-Vacoas Road.

(Withdrawn)

**RIVIÈRE DES CRÉOLES, BOIS DES AMOURETTES, BAMBOUS VIRIEUX &
GRAND SABLE – FOOTBALL PITCHES – LIGHTING FACILITIES**

(No. B/898) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the football pitches of Rivière des Créoles, Bois des Amourettes, Bambous Virieux and Grand Sable, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the District Council of Grand Port, information as to the proposed timeframe for the installation of lighting facilities thereat.

(Withdrawn)