No. 35 of 2025

REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 28 OCTOBER 2025

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Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands
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
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Hon. Sayed Muhammad Aadil Ameer Meea	Minister of Industry, SMEs and Cooperatives
Dr. the Hon. Mahend Gungapersad, PDSM	Minister of Education and Human Resource
Dr. the Hon. Avinash Ramtohul	Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Lutchmanah Pentiah	Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms
Hon. Ranjiv Woochit, OSK	Minister of Local Government
Hon. Mahendra Gondeea, OSK	Minister of Arts and Culture

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MAURITIUS

Eighth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 35 of 2025

Sitting of Tuesday 28 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. **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 following Bills (In Original):
   I. The Criminal Code (Amendment No.2) Bill (No. XXVI of 2025); and
   II. The Court of Rodrigues Jurisdiction (Amendment) Bill (No. XXV of 2025).

(ii) Virement Warrant – Quarter 1 (July – September 2025): Nos. 1 to 5. (In Original)

(iii) Virement (Contingencies) Warrant – Quarter 1 (July – September 2025): Nos. 1 to 3. (In Original)

(iv) Virement Certificate – Quarter 1 (July – September 2025): Programme/Sub-Programme (Certificates Nos.): 0107(1), 0113(1), 0114(1), 025302(1), 060401(1), 1502(1), 2203(1), 2301(1,2), 230202(1) and 2502(2). (In Original)

B. **Ministry of National Infrastructure**

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Road Development Authority for the year ended 30 June 2024.

C. **Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations**

The Private Recruitment Agencies Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 98 of 2025)

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

(i) The Consumer Protection (Use of Liquefied Petroleum Gas in Small Cylinders) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 99 of 2025)

(ii) The Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2025.(Government Notice No. 102 of 2025)

E. **Ministry of Local Government**

(i) The Local Government (Fees)(Amendment) Regulations 2025.(Government Notice No.100 of 2025)

(ii) The Local Government (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 3) Regulations 2025.(Government Notice No. 101 of 2025)

F. Ministry of Arts and Culture

(i) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Hindi-speaking Union for the year ended 30 June 2024.

(ii) The National Archives (Access to Public and Destruction of Public Records) (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 103 of 2025)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

CESSNA CITATION 5R-HMR MALAGASY PRIVATE JET – 12 OCTOBER 2025 LANDING – PASSENGERS' ARREST

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr G. Lesjongard) *(by Private Notice)* asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Cessna Citation 5R-HMR private jet from Madagascar which landed at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport on 12 October 2025, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

(a) names of the passengers and of the crew members onboard same and the number of suitcases in their possession;

(b) reasons for the arrest of Mr M.R., Mr D.J.C.T. and Mr N.B. by the Financial Crimes Commission, and

(c) conclusions of the investigation report on the circumstances surrounding the incident, indicating the measures taken and whether the report will be made public.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Acting Director of Civil Aviation that on 12 October 2025, following a request made by Jet Prime Ltd, on behalf of Trans Ocean Airways, initially for medical evacuation, then for tourism purposes and finally, for shortage of fuel – they asked that they be allowed to land. In line with international civil aviation recommended practices, the Department of Civil Aviation allowed the plane to land.

The aircraft, a CESSNA CITATION 560XL bearing registration number 5RHMR, landed on 12 October 2025 at 0044 hours.

With regard to part (a) of the question, there were five passengers onboard, namely –

- Mrs RAVATOMANGA Ramy Nivo Haingonirina;
- Mr RAVATOMANGA Maminiaina;
- Mr RAVATOMANGA Ramy Mialy Tiana;
- Mr NTSAY Louis Christian;

- Mr RAVATOMANGA Aina Fenosoa, and
- also, there were two crew members together: Mr RAMANANTSOA Mijarizaka Raollison (Pilot in Command) and Mr HASINIAVO Zuzie Raymond.

Two senior officers of Customs Department of the Mauritius Revenue Authority proceeded to Jet Prime Ltd at 0045 hours and gave clearance to land for the five passengers and the two crew members. Nine pieces of luggage and six pieces of handbags were scanned and cleared for the passengers. Two pieces of handbags were scanned and cleared for the crew members.

All the five passengers declared that they had in their possession a total of Euro 10,000.

It is to be noted that on 13 October 2025 at 14.00 hours, the Customs Department of the Mauritius Revenue Authority carried out a search of the aircraft in the presence of the captain. Nothing compromising was found except for one suitcase-like bag INEOS. The captain explained that the bag belonged to Mr Maminiaina Ravatomanga. The bag was secured and was not opened. An appointment was scheduled on 14 October 2025 for examination in the presence of its owner, Mr Maminiaina Ravatomanga. The bag was opened and contained a car sunroof accessory only.

It is to be noted that this suitcase-like bag was among the bags which were scanned and cleared on 12 October 2025, but the owner requested that it be returned onboard because he would not need it during his stay in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, it is well-established and common knowledge that the arrest of any person by the Financial Crimes Commission, like any other investigative authority, must be based on reasonable suspicion of commission of an offence having been committed by that person.

I am also given to understand that the Financial Crimes Commission sought the views of the Director of Public Prosecutions prior to the arrest. The three persons have been arrested in connection with their suspected involvement in the offence of money laundering. The investigation is ongoing at the level of the Financial Crimes Commission, and the latter has already and is continuing to communicate officially on its website in that respect.

At the request of the *Conseil National de Défense de la Transition*, Mrs Fanirisoa ERNAIVO and Mr Anthelme RAMPARANY, were allowed to enter Mauritius on 17

October of this year to provide information and coordinate actions regarding the investigations involving Mr Maminiaina Ravatomanga.

As regards part (c) of the question, in line with the policy of my Government to be transparent and accountable in public affairs, unlike the previous Government, I will be tabling a copy of the report, including the conclusions thereof.

Madam Speaker, this inquiry has international ramifications and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has already sent a request for information and has offered to help in the investigation in relation to the sale to Iran of five Boeing 777 aircrafts against the embargo imposed by the United States. I propose to also enlist the services, not only of the FBI, but also other international foreign investigative authorities who said they are prepared to assist in the investigation.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Supplementary!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. Let me begin by this: this scandal with a lot of ramifications stinks from day one and involves a lot of very important institutions of our country and also political nominees of the actual Government.

Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House for such an important case, why the Acting Prime Minister was not made aware of the request for landing of this private jet? Don't you feel that he should have been made aware?

The Prime Minister: I certainly agree with that. He should have been made aware.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister why then he was not made aware?

The Prime Minister: You will see it in the report. I will be tabling the report.

Mr Lesjongard: Table the report!

The Prime Minister: I can table it now. Do you want me to walk up and table it? Somebody will come and table it.

They went through the procedures, but they didn't, perhaps, look at the political implications. They went through procedures and they allowed the aircraft to land because they checked on world check… They don't do all the checks, unfortunately. I will be coming

to the House to say that we have to do other checks, but they went through all the procedures. They didn't see anything against these persons and they allowed them to land at the airport.

Madam Speaker: Second!

Mr Lesjongard: In his resignation letter, Madam Speaker, the former Board Member of Airport Holdings Ltd and Jet Prime Ltd stated, and I quote –

> "The Management of Jet Prime Ltd professionally attended a life-saving evacuation in Madagascar pursuant to a military coup."

Should we understand that reasons given by the pilot for emergency landing were not correct and that local authorities at the airport were well aware of that situation?

The Prime Minister: I cannot say whether they were well aware, but it is clear from when you look at the report, that it was pre-planned. First of all, they asked for a medical evacuation, then they changed it on the same day for a tourism request to land, and then later on, they said there is low fuel in the plane, their fuel is very short and they want to land. Three reasons for the same plane! So, obviously, lots of things. Jet Prime Ltd will have to answer later on about what was its involvement exactly because it looks to me that it was pre-planned.

Mr Lesjongard: I take this is in the report, but may I ask the hon. Prime Minister who gave the final authorisation for the landing of the private jet?

The Prime Minister: The Acting Director of the Civil Aviation liaised with the Passport and Immigration Office and they checked on the world check, on the other checks that they did, and there was nothing against these passengers at that time. So, they allowed the landing.

Mr Lesjongard: Then, hon. Prime Minister, do you mean to say that nobody from your Office was informed? And, nobody from your Office cleared that landing?

The Prime Minister: Passport and Immigration Office (PIO) falls under the PMO, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Of course!

Mr Lesjongard: I am talking about the Secretary to Cabinet and Secretary for Home Affairs, Madam Speaker. Were they not informed?

The Prime Minister: The Secretary for Home Affairs was informed because the PIO falls under her. She looks at the PIO.

Mr Lesjongard: So, they were informed?

The Prime Minister: Not 'they'; I said the Secretary for Home Affairs.

Mr Lesjongard: Now, let me come to part (b) of my main question, Madam Speaker, in relation to the ongoing investigation by the Financial Crimes Commission. Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm whether the resignation of the former Commissioner Mr J. F. is related to the ongoing investigation, and if this is the case, will he inform the House whether charges will be levelled against that gentleman?

The Prime Minister: As I always say, Madam Speaker, we will leave no stone unturned. Whoever gets involved, they will have to answer for their actions. I saw in the paper that he has given reasons –personal reasons – but an investigation in ongoing. He will be called, I am sure, if he has not been called already.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister must be aware of the very serious allegations that are being levelled against officers of the FCC, including the Acting Director General regarding an eventual *trafic d'influence*. Will he give assurance that if there is any inquiry against officers of the FCC, it will not be for the FCC to carry out that inquiry and, if this is the case, that necessary decisions will be taken to ensure the proper functioning of the FCC?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: We are not living in the era of the MSM, Madam Speaker. If you were in power now, I can tell you, for sure I can tell you, this gentleman would have been allowed to leave Mauritius quietly; nothing would have happened but money would have worked under the table.

(Interruptions)

This is not the case here. Nobody will be spared. And, besides the proof of the pudding is in the eating. What is happening now? People are being arrested, are being questioned. Nobody is being spared.

An hon. Member: *To ti krwar Yogida sa twa?*

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, political nominees are nominees of the actual government. He is referring to the past.

Ms Anquetil: So, what?

Hon. Members: Et alors ?

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, there are also allegations of a meeting which took place at Quatre Bornes in the presence of Mr J. F. and some other persons. Will the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether he is aware of that meeting, and can he confirm whether Mr H. F., the Chairperson of the Central Electricity Board was also present in that meeting?

Je suis tenté, Madame la présidente de me référer …

Madam Speaker : Non, ne soyez pas…

Mr Lesjongard: Donnez-moi l'occasion.

Madam Speaker: Non. Ne soyez pas tenté.

Mr Lesjongard: … à une phrase …

Madam Speaker: Question !

Mr Lesjongard: … du film Sholay qui dit –

« Hmmm… kitne aadmi… ? »

Combien des personnes y avait-il à cette réunion ?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I could also say –

"Hmmmmm."

Do you know, I am told from people in the press that the people very, very close to the top hierarchy of the MSM are also being contacted?

(Interruptions)

But you don't seem to know this.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: You don't seem to know this. As I say, again, I cannot know; I am not investigating. I am not the investigator. Let the FCC do the investigation as they are doing, properly questioning everyone, and they will be questioning everyone.

Mr Lesjongard: If he is aware…

Madam Speaker: Question! Question!

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask him whether he is aware that during that meeting, there was a telephone conversation with a member of his government?

The Prime Minister: How would I be able to know whether there was a telephone conversation or not? Let the enquiry find out.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, we know that Madagascar has been suspended by the African Union. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that the Deputy Prime Minister told a media that the Government has, and I quote –

« … de très bonnes relations avec le nouveau président et avec le nouveau régime. »

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Oui et mo fier.*

Mr Lesjongard: Are we made to understand that the Government is accepting the new President of Madagascar?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Leader of the Opposition has no experience in diplomatic matters. Clearly, he has no experience.

There has been a takeover. It is not quite a military coup as people are saying. There was a revolt in Madagascar. It is different from it as if the military came and did a coup; it is different. But they have taken over. The former President has left the country.

What we want to ensure is that Madagascar comes back to proper civil government with an election. That is what we are trying to do.

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Prime Minister state to the House the stand Mauritius has taken at the SADC in relation to the situation in Madagascar?

The Prime Minister: There has been no position taken by SADC. I know some people…

(Interruptions)

You want to listen, hon. Leader of the Opposition?

… some people from SADC went there, but we are not aware of what has … after that.

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether himself or the Deputy Prime Minister during his actingship were in communication with the former President of Madagascar when he left Madagascar?

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Eta ki to gagne? Mwa, mo pa twa mwa!*

The Prime Minister: Neither of us have, obviously.

Mr Lesjongard: May I …?

The Deputy Prime Minister: No!

Mr Lesjongard: The pilot provided multiple reasons to justify landing and the first of which was for medical reasons.

The Prime Minister: I have just said that.

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House if the Ministry of Health was informed immediately and if a team was sent to the airport?

The Prime Minister: No. Hon. Leader of the Opposition, let me remind you. First of all, they said it was for medical evacuation. Secondly, then, it came to tourism. Thirdly, it came to lack of fuel in the airplane. So, three reasons on the same day within hours. So, that gentleman is now in a clinic.

I have said that it is too easy for somebody just to go in a clinic and say that he has got a cardiac problem. We will be sending officers from the Ministry of Health to check whether it is true or not – we have to check.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, the Cabinet Decision of 17 October mentioned that the Acting Director of the Civil Aviation referred the matter to the Police. Can we know on what date was the statement taken?

The Prime Minister: You will see all in the report that I have just circulated, the various *étapes de ce qui c'est passé.*

Madam Speaker: Then you will be able to put a proper question next time if you read the report.

Mr Mohamed: This one is not proper.

Mr Lesjongard: But he should have tabled it.

Madam Speaker: No, but you can …

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: This is my time; I have the right to put questions, Madam Speaker. You should not tell me to come later.

Madam Speaker: No, I said you can. I am not telling you. I am only saying that, if need be, you will be able to do that.

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, but people of this country need to know.

Madam Speaker: But you can still carry on.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House, given the circumstances in which the private jet landed, why was the pilot authorised to take off shortly afterwards?

The Prime Minister: There were two pilots, I suppose you are referring to the captain of the aircraft. Again, when the checks were done, nothing was found against him. He was allowed to leave. But as I said, we will incorporate a new system. Lots of countries are doing this – Africa, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Asia as well. So, we will have to do the same system I believe.

Mr Lesjongard: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister to confirm to the House whether the private jet was refuelled upon landing?

The Prime Minister: The investigation will look into all these. The captain said there was no fuel in the jet and they were allowed to go. So, I suppose they were not refuelled straightaway because they were allowed to land.

Mr Lesjongard: I don't know whether the hon. Prime Minister has this information. Can he also provide to the House information with regard to the type of passports in possession of the passengers?

The Prime Minister: You mean whether they were diplomatic passports? I believe not, but I can't say. The investigation will be able to look at all this.

Mr Lesjongard: Now, the Acting Prime Minister claimed in a press conference that he was not made aware of this incident whilst the Executive Chairperson of Airport Holdings stated that the Acting Prime Minister was kept aware at all times.

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Al dormi do.*

Mr Lesjongard: Which is which?

The Prime Minister: Well, he is lying. The Deputy Prime Minister was not made aware; I can say that.

Mr Lesjongard: He is lying you said?

The Prime Minister: The other guy is lying.

Mr Lesjongard: This is very serious, Madam Speaker, if he is lying.

The Prime Minister: Who said that the Deputy Prime Minister is lying?

I said that the other guy is saying that the Deputy Prime Minister was made aware; he was not made aware. That is what I am saying. Why are you changing my words?

Madam Speaker: He understood.

Mr Lesjongard: Now, the Acting Prime Minister has also expressed dissatisfaction that two flights to Madagascar were cancelled during that period; to which the former Chairperson of Air Mauritius replied that it was for security reasons. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether this has also been cleared?

The Prime Minister: I did not quite follow the question. The question is about this plane but now you are asking about other planes.

Mr Lesjongard: But that statement was made by the Acting Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Even if it was made by the Acting Prime Minister, the question is about this plane.

Mr Lesjongard: You promised the nation that everything will be cleared.

The Prime Minister: Well, I can tell you that everything will be cleared.

Mr Lesjongard: Let's hope so. I am done, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. A. Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister, in relation to part (b) of the question with regard to the alleged offences of money laundering, will the hon. Prime Minister reveal the names of the management companies, the banks and the real estate promoters who have helped allegedly this person to stash so much money in Mauritius contrary to FATF rules? And again, it looks like there have been loopholes that have been found by those persons.

An hon. Member: *MSM sa*!

Mr A. Duval: It does not matter whose regime it was. What matters is what you will do about it. Will he now, seriously, call a serious investigation, regardless of who might be involved, to ensure that we protect the financial services sector and that we ensure the integrity of the Mauritian economy?

An hon. Member: *Bizin dir Padayachy*!

The Prime Minister: I remember very well, your own father was Minister of Finance around the time all this was happening, including the MSM government! We will ensure – that is what I said – no stone will be left unturned.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, may I ask, again, the names. We are interested to know who are the banks, who are the management companies, and who are the real estate promoters that have allegedly aided and abetted. This is what we are interested in.

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member must learn to be careful. It is not for me to name names. An investigation is ongoing. So, if you name names, do you know what is going to happen? This is precisely what they want – they will take the money out of the bank.

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Kouman ti fer*!

Madam Speaker: Okay, we are done. Thank you very much. Questions to hon. Ministers!

REPUBLIC OF INDIA – STATE VISIT – DELEGATION COMPOSITION & COSTS INCURRED

(No. B/899) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to his recent State Visit to the Republic of India, he will –

(a) state the –

(i) composition of the accompanying delegation, indicating in each case, the official capacity thereof, and

(ii) total cost incurred by Government in relation thereto, including cost of airfares, accommodation, transport and *per diem* allowance paid in respect of each member of the delegation, and

(b) table copy of the official programme thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, as I stated during my press conference on 27 September 2025 following my State visit to India, I was invited by Shri Narendra Modi to visit India.

In fact, on the very day, the results were coming out in Constituency No. 5. He rang me. I left the place; I came to my residence because there was too much noise, and he invited me to come to India. And I explained, unfortunately, because the results of the elections were not yet proclaimed, and obviously, I would need to look at urgent matters – we were sure there was going to be urgent matters as Prime Minister – so, I could not undertake the visit right away, but I will undertake the visit at some point.

With regard to part (a)(i) of the question, I wish to inform the House that I led a high-level delegation to India from 09 to 16 September 2025. The delegation comprised of five Ministers, one Junior Minister, one Member of Parliament, senior government officials, heads of key public institutions and some 50 representatives of the private sector.

In regard to part (a)(ii) of the question, I think it is ironical that the hon. Member, who himself undertook three missions during the short stint he was Speaker – 78 days to be exact – appointed under very dubious circumstances is more interested in expenses incurred for the mission – such an important mission, instead of focusing on the outcome of the visit.

In fact, during the 78 days of his Speakership, the hon. Member travelled for more than 13 days.

Mr A. Duval: You have said it at least three times!

The Prime Minister: No, but I do have to repeat it.

The Prime Minister: To three different countries!

Mr A. Duval: As long as you…another.

The Prime Minister: Except for him – except for you –, nobody is aware of the benefits that the country derived from the nearly Rs800,000 spent on these missions!

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Jouisseur*!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the total cost incurred, in respect of the Prime Minister's Office, during my State visit to India and the official delegation is around Rs3.8 million, representing basically airfares, allowances and so on. I must point out, Madam Speaker, that the quantum of the allowances is based on the same rate applicable since 2017. It has not been changed.

I wish to inform the House that my State visit resulted in a Special Economic Package to the tune of 680 million US Dollars, which is approximately Rs31 billion. The financial assistance will meet the needs and priorities in Mauritius in several areas.

India has also agreed to give us a grant of 25 million US Dollars as budgetary support for this financial year. 25 million dollars!

In regard to part (b) of the question, I consider it frankly a lack of respect towards the Prime Minister of India and his Government for the hon. Member to request a detailed copy of the programme of the visit. It is India who decides where I should go and whom I should meet. It is not me who says I want do this and I want to do that.

(*Interruptions*)

You should know all this!

Madam Speaker, let me highlight the salient features of the State visit –

(i) The visit started with India-Mauritius Business Conclave, held on 10 September 2025 in Mumbai, which was jointly organised by the Economic Development Board and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

The business meeting brought together some 200 Indian and 55 Mauritian private sector players. It allowed Mauritian businessmen to network with their Indian counterparts for potential collaboration in various sectors of interest, including

financial services, Information and Communication technology, medical Services, and manufacturing.

This meeting resulted in the identification of several important foreign direct investment potential. Some high-level investors have already travelled to Mauritius and will soon be embarking on high value projects. The Lilavati Foundation which came to Mauritius soon after my visit met me there. They will embark on the construction of a 200-bed multi-speciality hospital. It will be a state-of-the-art hospital which will include a separate paediatric and gynaecological ward.

This will help Mauritius. Instead of our patients having to travel to India to get top medical care, this will be here in Mauritius. They will not have to pay for whatever rooms they will have to rent. They will not have to pay. The travelling is very expensive. So, this will help.

The Economic Development Board also partnered with InvestUP to organize an India-Mauritius Business meeting in Varanasi. The event attracted 50 private sector operators from Uttar Pradesh and discussions centred on fostering joint collaboration and facilitating two-way investment between Uttar Pradesh and Mauritius.

The official part of my State visit started in Varanasi, making it the first time that a Head of Government was received in Varanasi. This is a religious and cultural heartbeat of India, and also it happens to be the parliamentary constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

(ii) As a prelude to my meeting with the Prime Minister of India, I had a working session with the Foreign Secretary of India, Mr Vikram Misri.
Our discussions focused on the launch of various new projects and on addressing the implementation of existing agreements, including the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement.

(iii) On 10 September 2025, I had a one-to-one meeting with the Prime Minister of India, Mr Narendra Modi, in Varanasi. The one-to-one meeting with Shree Narendra Modi was followed by a working session.
We discussed key issues of mutual importance, including regional security and our shared commitment to an ‘Enhanced Strategic Partnership’.

Furthermore, I had in-depth discussions related to the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement, highlighting how the Protocol signed by the previous government in May 2016 is undermining our financial services sector to the advantage of other countries like Singapore, Netherlands and all these. We agreed to pursue further consultations to ensure a mutually beneficial outcome and alignment on key issues before we can sign a new Protocol.

Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister of India responded positively to my request to facilitate the upcoming travel of a Mauritian delegation, which I will lead together with the Deputy Prime Minster to the Chagos Archipelago.

Madam Speaker, following my restricted meeting with the Prime Minister of India, there was a high-level delegation meeting during which seven Memoranda of Understanding and Agreements were exchanged and three others were announced in numerous fields such as space research, marine science, power, renewable energies, education and technological sectors.

(iv) Besides, the high-level strategic meeting with the Prime Minister of India, I also had meetings with the President and Vice-President of India, the Minister of Health and Family Welfare as well as the Leader of Opposition.

These meetings served as an enabling platform for the Mauritian side to discuss issues of mutual interest and seek the support of the Indian Authorities on a wide range of issues such as security, economic and technical cooperation as well as capacity building.

Madam Speaker, my State visit fused with “civilisational symbolism with strategic purpose”, if I may put it that way. It was an opportunity to project a story of enduring civilisational bonds.

Since our independence, India’s role has been instrumental as an unflinching partner in our development. My visit has confirmed the privileged relations between our two countries!

It is a matter of great pride for our country to have become the strategic partner of a country like India, which is projected to be by 2027 the third economic power in the world.

Madam Speaker, I take this opportunity to express my profound gratitude to the Government of India and to Shri Narendra Modi for the continued support for the development of Mauritius.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes!

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister may not be aware but I was invited by the Speaker of Parliament in India and I had met the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Vice President whom he met, and we had technical support for the live translation of Creole and French in Parliament.

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: Question!

Mr A. Duval: Five or six staff from the Mauritius National Assembly have been trained free of charge in India. All paid for by India.

Madam Speaker, I note that the Prime Minister…

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: One moment.

Now that you have said that, I can understand. Will you please put your supplementary question?

Mr A. Duval: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister has replied for the Prime Minister's Office. We note that there have been persons from state-owned enterprises who have accompanied and the Ministers, etc. May we know the total cost as per the question incurred by the Government of Mauritius, including for by state-owned companies on the payment of airfare, accommodation, *per diem,* etc.? He has answered for the PMO.

The Prime Minister: I have answered for the government side, but for the private sector, they paid everything themselves.

Madam Speaker: He was saying you just answered for PMO. You have answered for the whole.

The Prime Minister: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Now, before you put your second question…

(Interruptions)

Members, I have forgotten to tell you that the Table has been advised that PQ B/952 will be replied by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister, time permitting, PQ B/911 will be replied by

the hon. Minister of Housing and Lands, and PQ B/913 will be replied by hon. Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation.

By the way, there is a PQ that has been withdrawn. I will tell you in a minute.

I just want to tell you – I do not have a very good voice today. Please forgive me.

Question!

BANK OF MAURITIUS – DR. R. S, FORMER GOVERNOR – RESIGNATION COMPENSATION

(No. B/900) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to Dr. R. S., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius (BoM), information as to the basis of the calculation of the sum of Rs5.5 million paid thereto as compensation on his resignation as Governor of the BoM indicating, during his tenure of office, the total –

(a) remuneration drawn, and

(b) number of days spent abroad on official missions.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, as I have stated in my reply to the Private Notice Question of the hon. Leader of the Opposition on 07 October 2025, an amount of Rs5.5 million is payable to Dr. Rama Sithanen following his resignation as Governor of the Bank of Mauritius. I wish to highlight that this is not a compensation as is being alleged in some quarters, but actually dues payable to him.

I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that the sum of Rs5.5 million includes refund of unutilised annual and sick leaves, encashment of accrued passage benefits, and payment of pro-rated end of the year bonus and 3 months' emoluments in lieu of notice.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that, during his tenure of office, Dr. Sithanen has drawn a total remuneration of Rs9 million as per his contract of appointment.

Concerning part (b) of the question, I am informed that Dr. Sithanen spent 35 days abroad on official missions.

Mr A. Duval: First question, Madam Speaker: how can someone who has resigned be paid compensation payment in lieu of notice?

The Prime Minister: This is according to the law, Madam Speaker. Section 18 of the Bank of Mauritius provides for a Governor to either give a three-month notice in case he intends to resign. He did not manage to give the three-month notice but I asked him to resign. But in fact, in reality he was given a three-month notice. This is why it went like this.

Mr A. Duval: It does not make any sense – contractual law.

Madam Speaker: We are not in a court of law.

Mr A. Duval: Yes. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister without passing any judgement on Mr Rama Sithanen in view of the serious allegations that have surfaced whilst he was Governor and since he has resigned – why is it that whilst the investigation is ongoing, decision has been taken to pay Mr Sithanen, who, if it turns out has committed breaches of contract, may not be entitled to any compensation whatsoever under contractual law?

The Prime Minister: May I ask the hon. Member if the investigation takes five years, so he waits for five years? Tell me! You tell me!

Mr A. Duval: Yes, this is what happens.

The Prime Minister: In that case, I ask him: who do you think will want to take important positions in Mauritius if that is the way you are going to treat people? Think again.

Madam Speaker: Okay, next question! Hon. F. Quirin, yes!

NADC – CEO & CHAIRPERSON - SALARIES & BENEFITS

(**No. B/901) 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.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, The National Agency for Drug Control (NADC) Act was proclaimed on 15 May 2025. The NADC is a statutory body entrusted to

coordinate the national drug response through prevention, enforcement, treatment, rehabilitation and harm reduction.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that for the Financial Year 2025/2026, an amount of Rs70 million has been allocated to the NADC.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that –

(a) the Chief Executive Officer was appointed on 12 June 2025 and he currently draws a monthly package of Rs169,350, including basic salary, salary compensation, travelling allowance and telephone allowance, in addition to contractual entitlements such as car benefits, passage benefits and gratuity, and

(b) the Chairperson was appointed on 16 June 2025 and he receives a monthly allowance of Rs40,000.

In regard to part (c) of the question, Madam Speaker, I am informed that as at date, a total of Rs2,246,751.05 has been disbursed. I am tabling the information requested by the hon. Member.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that the NADC, being a newly created agency, is still in the process of transitioning into a fully established organisation. With a view to assisting the NADC administratively, 10 officers of my Office are providing support to the CEO in the fields of Administration, Finance, Human Resource, Procurement and Accommodation.

Meanwhile, to empower the Agency to fulfil its mandate optimally, a recruitment exercise for seven core posts such as Administrative Manager and Coordinators is ongoing. The posts were advertised on 03 October 2025 with a closing date on 23 October 2025.

A total of 144 applications for all the posts has been received. Interviews will be conducted from 03 to 07 November 2025.

In addition, the NADC has already identified premises to set up its office, and procedures for finalising the lease agreement are underway.

Madam Speaker, I must point out that my Office has received a number of representations from NGOs as well as from independent persons regarding the performance of the NADC and the lack of coordination of efforts *sur le terrain*. In fact, as I said, it is a new agency. It must start doing… It takes time to do all these.

But, in fact, Government is not, I cannot say that we are totally satisfied with the way the Agency has been operating, and we intend to take remedial actions to improve its effectiveness in the days to come.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Mr Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Merci, Madame la présidente. L'honorable Premier ministre peut-il dire à la Chambre suite aux doutes exprimés par plusieurs travailleurs sociaux, des ONG et même par le Junior Minister, hon. Kugan Parapen, concernant les compétences et la capacité du président Sam Lauthan à s'adapter aux réalités actuelles, s'il compte le remplacer à la tête de cette agence comme cela a était fait récemment aux seins d'autres institutions ?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: This is a sensitive post, I can tell the hon. Member, it is very difficult to find people who are actually ready do that job.

Mr Quirin: Il y en a !

The Prime Minister : Il y en a ? Mais quand on prend contact avec eux, ils s'en vont, c'est trop dangereux.

Mr Quirin : Je peux vous donner des listes.

The Prime Minister: Maybe you will be prepared to do it?

Mr Quirin: Not me. I am a Member of the National Assembly.

The Prime Minister: No, but maybe you will want to do it.

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Blabla fasil sa.*

Mr Quirin: *Blabla, mo pu donn twa nom la.*

The Prime Minister: It is not easy. If you have names, give us the names. We will consider.

Mr Quirin: Yes, I will give you!

Madam Speaker: Okay, your next question please. Do you have more supplementary? Yes?

Mr Quirin: No, no, next question, please.

GENERAL ELECTIONS – LAW AMENDMENTS – MAURITIAN DIASPORA – RIGHT TO VOTE

(No. B/902) 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.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to PQ B/816 on 07 October 2025. As I had indicated then, Government is currently working on the setting up of a Constitutional Review Commission tasked to come up with the recommendations on several constitutional, electoral and governance reforms, which will include among others, the revision of our electoral system to better reflect the will of the people, to also look at the way elections have been run, especially by the MSM, and also to revitalise our democratic principles.

The question of bringing legislative amendments to allow Mauritian nationals living abroad to vote, I am all for it, but it has wide-ranging implications. These will be examined by the Constitutional Review Commission that will be set up shortly.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, l'honorable Premier ministre peut-il indiquer à la Chambre si à l'heure actuelle son bureau dispose de données sur le nombre de Mauriciens vivant à l'étranger qui pourraient être éligibles à voter ?

The Prime Minister: As I said, the wide implications. We are looking at it but in some countries, it is going to be very difficult, I must say straightaway. We already know this. In some countries, it would be very, very difficult to organise. In other countries, not so. So, we will be looking at all this.

Madam Speaker: He wanted to know if you have figures, which I doubt.

The Prime Minister: No.

Madam Speaker: You don't? He does not.

The Prime Minister: … some figures.

Mr Quirin: Mais, dans ce cas-là, êtes-vous disposé, M. le Premier ministre, à procéder à un recensement ?

The Prime Minister: No, I should have replied to this. No, we are looking at the figures. In some countries, it is even difficult to get the figures. This is why we do not have the total number.

Madam Speaker: Some people have double nationality. That is why it is complicated to actually find out but very interesting issue.

Anyway, next question from hon. Lobine!

SYNTHETIC DRUGS – ILLEGAL USE & TRAFFICKING – CANNABIS DEPENALISATION PLAN

(No. B/903) 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 illegal use, consumption and trafficking of synthetic drugs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

(a) the number of suspects arrested and provisionally charged therefor since January 2025 to date, indicating the –
  (i) number thereof being minors, and
  (ii) quantity seized;
(b) the measures envisaged to combat same, and
(c) whether consideration will be given for the formulation of a national action plan and holding of a debate on whether to depenalise the use of cannabis for consumption purpose only.

The Prime Minister: With regard to part (a) of the question, Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that from January 2025 to 23 October 2025, 974 suspects have been arrested in connection with synthetic drugs as follows –

- 446 adults for consumption. Of these, 232 were provisionally charged, 119 opted for rehabilitation through the Drug Users Administrative Panel under the Ministry of Health and Wellness, and 95 had no provisional charge lodged;
- 22 adults for drug trafficking, all were provisionally charged;
- 497 adults for drug dealing and all were provisionally charged, and
- 9 minors for drug dealing and none were provisionally charged.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (a)(ii) of the question, I am tabling the quantities of synthetic drugs seized.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I am informed that the Police has strengthened enforcement, cooperation and preventive actions to combat drugs, including synthetic drugs. Measures include enhanced intelligence gathering and profiling of suspects, drug mapping to detect hotspots, aggressive crackdowns in drug-prone areas with the support of specialised

units, use of drones for surveillance and detection of illicit plantations, reinforcement of ADSU's resources, and daily patrols in high-risk areas.

Moreover, with a view to disrupting drug and other criminal network, ADSU is collaborating closely with other law enforcement and regulatory bodies, including the MRA-Customs Anti-Narcotics Section, the Financial Crimes Commission, the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Financial Intelligence Unit.

ADSU has strengthened regional partnerships with Reunion Island, India, Seychelles, Mozambique, Madagascar, Kenya, South Africa and Tanzania through intelligence gathering, sharing of the intelligence, tracking of suspects, controlled deliveries and exchange of best practices, which have helped curb the movement of synthetic drugs through maritime and air routes.

At the international level, ADSU collaborates with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the UK National Crime Agency (NCA), Interpol and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) for intelligence-sharing, capacity-building, cross-border investigations and financial tracing, thereby strengthening national efforts to combat transnational drug trafficking networks.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed by the Chief Executive Officer of the National Agency for Drug Control (NADC) that, in line with its mandate to support evidence-based policy decisions, the fourth meeting of the Drug Control Board considered the current national and international policy approaches on the regulation of cannabis. The discussion examined three technical models, namely –

(i) decriminalisation, whereby use/possession remains illegal but sanctions shift from criminal penalties to administrative penalties with no criminal record for the offender;
(ii) depenalisation, whereby cannabis use and possession remains a criminal offence with reduced criminal sanctions, and
(iii) regulated legalisation, whereby use/possession becomes legal under appropriate regulations.

Following deliberations, the Board agreed unanimously that a deeper, context-specific technical assessment is necessary for Mauritius. To this end, a Technical Committee will be set up to conduct a comprehensive review and submit a report covering, *inter alia* –

- the projected economic impact of each model;

- the resource implications for the scaling-up of prevention, treatment and harm-reduction services that must accompany any such reforms;
- the recommended policy option for consideration by NADC, based on technical feasibility, public health outcomes and social equity parameters, and
- the specific legal drafting required for the implementation of the selected model under the Mauritian legal framework.

The Technical Committee will be chaired by the CEO of the Agency and will comprise experts in public health, the criminal justice system, fiscal policy, neuroscience, addiction medicine, harm reduction as well as representatives of the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

The Board expects to receive the findings of the Committee within the next quarter to guide the next phase of their action.

The issue, Madam Speaker, remains complex and will require careful and thorough examination from all relevant perspectives. We are treading very cautiously to ensure that any decision taken is evidence-based and will, under no circumstances, impact negatively on our public health, our youth, and our national values.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue, hon. Caserne!

PREROGATIVE OF MERCY COMMISSION – COMPOSITION OF BOARD

(No. B/904) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port-Louis North and 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 on the Prerogative of Mercy, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the current composition thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the Commission on the Prerogative of Mercy is established in accordance with section 75(2) of the Constitution and consists of a Chairperson and not less than two other members appointed by the President, acting in his own deliberate judgment.

The President of the Republic has, accordingly, appointed Mr Hamuth, G.C.S.K. – he is a former Judge – as the Chairperson of the Commission on Prerogative of Mercy with effect from 10 October 2025 for a term of office of two years. The other members of the Commission are –

(i) Mrs Seetharamboo;

(ii) Ms Suhashinee Bachun, and

(iii) Mr Vassist Rao Luchmaya.

They have also been appointed for a term of office of two years with effect from 10 October.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes?

Mr Caserne: Thank you, hon. Prime Minister. Maybe not for now, if the hon. Prime Minister can table the number of pending cases before that Commission for next Sitting please?

Madam Speaker: Pending cases?

Mr Caserne: Pending cases.

The Prime Minister: Yes, they will be looking at all the cases before them.

Madam Speaker: No, he wants you to table, but it does not arise from your question. You can still ask on a friendly basis but it does not arise from the question.

Next question, hon. Etwareea!

DEVELOPMENT BANK OF MAURITIUS LTD. – RECRUITMENT POLICY 2024

(No. B/905) 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 Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom information as to the –

(a) recruitment policy thereof in 2024 prior to the last General Elections, and

(b) official missions undertaken by the former Chief Executive Officer since 2015 to 2024, giving details thereof, including cost of airfares, accommodation, transport and *per diem* allowance paid.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, it is clear that the policy of the previous Government was to recruit at any cost in order to win the elections and recruitment at the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd (DBM) is such a blatant case, Madam Speaker. Such a blatant case!

The DBM has recruited 102 additional staff between September 2023 to November 2024. This represents an increase of almost 45%, bringing the overall staffing to 333.

Let me stress, Madam Speaker, that this practice cut across several public institutions, not just this one, leading to inefficiencies, disruption of their proper functioning and frustration of those who are already there. Suddenly they saw a horde of people coming up, going on top of their head, getting better pay and no results. This is what the MSM did to this country.

With respect to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the DBM Ltd, that the former Chief Executive Officers undertook 28 official missions from 2015 to 2024, at a total cost of Rs1,464,211, comprising air tickets and per diem (including accommodation and transport), as follows –

i. Mr Bardwazsingh Jokhoo, Acting Managing Director/Managing Director, from 14 August 2015 to 03 April 2018, undertook 1 SADC mission and 5 missions to Rodrigues. The total amount paid was Rs453,992, of which, per diem was Rs422,971 and cost of air ticket was Rs31,021.

ii. Late Mr Lobine Dayha Unmole, Managing Director, from 04 April 2018 to 31 March 2020, undertook 4 SADC missions and 8 missions to Rodrigues. The total amount paid was Rs539,273, of which, per diem was Rs356,013 and cost of air tickets was Rs183,260.

iii. Mr Jaywant Pandoo, Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, from 01 April 2020 to December 2024, undertook 1 SADC mission and 9 missions to Rodrigues. The total amount paid was Rs470,946, of which, per diem paid was Rs361,740 and cost of air ticket Rs109,206.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Prime Minister.

Time is up! Time is up! I am sorry!

I have a few questions which have been withdrawn: PQs B/906, B/907, B/908, B/912, B/914, and B/952. Thank you very much everyone.

Now, we go to questions addressed to hon. Ministers.

Hon. Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles, Dr. Ms Daureeawo!

PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES – PAST 3 YEARS STATISTICS & SUPPORTING MEASURES

(No. B/917) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to mothers experiencing severe perinatal mental health issues, he will state the –

(a) reported number thereof over the past three years, and
(b) measures put in place to support these mothers.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that the mental condition of pregnant women is investigated once patient has mental health issues or shows obvious signs of distress that demand immediate attention. I am informed that over the past three years a total of 117 mothers has been reported to be experiencing severe perinatal mental health issues.

With regard to part (b) of the question, my Ministry recognises the impact of perinatal mental health issues on both the mother and child. To support these mothers, various measures are already in place. Mothers suffering from perinatal mental health issues are catered by a multi-disciplinary team, comprising obstetricians and gynaecologists, psychiatrics, clinical psychologists, medical social workers and community psychiatric nurses. The multi-disciplinary team provides assessment treatment and ongoing monitoring during pregnancy and post-delivery.

During pregnancy, the maternal treatment is concurrently done by both the obstetrician and psychiatrist. In case there is further management, the mothers are referred to psychiatrists and psychologists for counselling, and these health professionals address the initial phase of anxiety and mental health concern during and after the pregnancy as part of their follow-up. Mothers with severe symptoms are admitted in ward for stabilisation and treatment.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed that in case of mothers suffering from severe perinatal mental issues, the new born babies are kept in the nursery for care and feeding under the supervision of trained nurses in Neonatal Intensive Care Units. The mothers are also encouraged to come to the nursery to breastfeed them, and extraction of the mother's milk is carried for mothers who are unable to breastfeed their babies due to their health conditions.

Furthermore, once the mothers are discharged from the hospital, the medical social services assign a trained care giver to carry out home visits so as to assist the mother and other family members in the upbringing of the baby at home. The medical social worker may also liaise with the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare on a case-to-case basis. In addition, the new born babies are followed by a paediatrician to ensure optimal care and safety of the baby, and community nurses specialised in psychiatrics also pay visits to the mothers.

Madam Speaker, as a caring government, my Ministry remains committed to strengthening perinatal mental health services through early intervention, integrated support and continuous monitoring to ensure the wellness of both the mothers and the babies.

Madam Speaker: Dr. Aumeer, please!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, hon. Minister. It is very well-known that postpartum period represents a very difficult time for mothers who have delivered. Sometimes, the services provided at our hospitals are not in line with what is expected to support them. May I request the hon. Minister to consider having a walk-in service well after they are discharged from the hospital, particularly given that we have quite a percentage of women who suffer from mental problems well after having delivered? Thank you.

Mr Bachoo: I take note of this request, but I would like to remind the hon. Member of the limited number of gynaecologists as well as specialists in our medical field. However, in the months to come, probably, we are going to recruit additional specialists for that purpose.

Madam Speaker: I am sorry, but postpartum would not be gynaecologist. Would it be?

Dr. Aumeer: Both gynaecologists and psychiatrists.

Mr Bachoo: Psychiatrists.

Madam Speaker: I thought it was more there. Okay, thank you.

I just have to remind everyone that we have questions which have been withdrawn. B/918 has been withdrawn. PQ B/934 will be replied by hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

So, now, hon. Ms Anquetil!

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARENESS PROGRAMMES – YEARLY ORGANISATIONS & BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/918) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the Entrepreneurship Awareness Programmes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from SME Mauritius Ltd., information as to the number thereof held on a yearly basis, over the past two years, indicating in each case the number of beneficiaries who benefited from facilities therefrom.

(Withdrawn)

SAINT-JEAN CEMETERY – DAMAGED TOMBS BY FLOODING – RESTORATION

(No. B/919) 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 information as to the current state thereof.

Mr Gunness: Madam Speaker, I am informed that as per records available at my Ministry, following the flooding which occurred in the region of Saint-Jean Cemetery whereby, amongst others, several tombs were damaged, a meeting was held on 13 November 2023 under the chair of Mgr Durhône at l'Evêché de Port Louis in the presence of the then Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, the then Mayor of the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, the representatives of the Ministry of Health and Wellness, the National Development Unit and the Land Drainage Authority, during which several decisions were agreed to and including a committee chaired by the then Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, comprising all concerned stakeholders would meet initially on a weekly basis at the seat of the l'Evêché to monitor the progress of the works.

During subsequent weekly meetings chaired by the then Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, the Parish of Saint-Jean requested for an assessment of damages caused to the tombs and the rehabilitation and repairs of the tombs in

the cemetery to be undertaken. Unfortunately, nothing was done and was left unattended by the previous government despite several appeal made by the Parish of Saint-Jean.

Furthermore, in his reply to a PNQ on 14 November 2023, the then Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development informed that the cleaning of the tombs and cemetery would be undertaken by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change and Mauri-Facilities Ltd. but still nothing was done.

Madam Speaker, in view of the high emotional and cultural significance relating to the loss of loved ones and considering the humanitarian dimension of the problem, I chaired a meeting at my Ministry on 16 October 2025 with Dr. hon. Boolell, Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries, hon. Veda Baloomoody, the Deputy Speaker, hon. Ms Anquetil, the Government Chief Whip, the Parish of Saint-Jean, the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes and the National Development Unit to see the way forward to address the issues with regard to the tombs, which were damaged during the floods.

Madam Speaker, during our discussions at the meeting, the representatives from the Parish of Saint-Jean informed that a total of 512 tombs were damaged, of which, 71 were critically impacted, 141 tombs partially damaged and 300 tombs with minor damages or with missing ornaments. The Parish further informed that last year a Rehabilitation and Repair Plan was prepared, following a survey carried out by its Quantity Surveyor, Architects and Engineers for the repair of the 512 tombs and the reinforcement of three walls around the perimeter of Saint Jean Church. The plan with detailed cost was submitted to the previous government but, again, unfortunately, no positive response was given to the Parish despite successive reminders.

Madam Speaker, we are not heartless as the previous government. I am pleased to announce that this Government has approved the funding for the repairs of the damaged tombs as well as the reinforcement of the three walls around the perimeter of the church.

Madam Speaker, the works will be undertaken by the Parish of Saint Jean, being given that each tomb has its own specificity. The Parish has also confirmed the duration of the works to be six to eight months.

Madam Speaker, I am again meeting the representative of the Parish of Saint Jean this Thursday 30 October 2025 at 11.30 hours together with my three colleagues of the Constituency No. 18 to pursue our dialogue.

Madam Speaker, I am also glad that before the All-Saints' Day 2025, the Government has agreed to do needful to enable the rehabilitation and repairs of the tombs.

Ms Anquetil: Madame la présidente, je suis profondément émue par la réponse du ministre. À quatre jours de la Toussaint, ce gouvernement rétablit dignité et respect au défunts touchés par les inondations de 2023-2024. Le ministre pourrait-il indiqué à la Chambre si son ministère envisage d'accélérer les procédures afin que ces trois cent familles puissent dans les meilleurs délais se recueillir dignement sur les tombes de leurs proches ? Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: M. le ministre!

Mr Gunness: Madam Speaker, as I have said, this Government is a government which has a heart. Government has approved only Friday last to do good, to go for the funding of the repairs and rehabilitation of the tombs.

Now, together with the MPs of the Constituency, we are going to make sure that the necessary funds be made available to the Parish and it is up to the Parish to do the work.

Madam Speaker: Au plus vite ! C'est dans quelques jours !

Next question, Second Member for Savanne and Black River!

CHEMIN GRENIER – MAIN ROAD REPAIRS – CONTRACTOR – FAST-TRACKING

(No. B/920) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the current state of the main road at Chemin Grenier, particularly the stretch from the taxi stand to the Farmers Service Centre, he will state –

(a) the name of the contractor or body having carried out civil works thereat, indicating whether it has been notified to reinstate the road to its former state, and

(b) if consideration will be given to fast-tracking the necessary repairs to minimize risks to road users and residents.

Mr Gunness: Madam Speaker, the Chemin Grenier Road B10 is a classified road linking several villages namely Surinam, Riambel, Chemin Grenier and Rivière des Galets. The Central Water Authority had requested wayleave from the Road Development Authority in July 2024 for the renewal of its pipeline along the main road at Chemin Grenier, from the Farmers Service Centre, Camp Charlot to Jumbo Road, over a total length of about 3.28 km. The RDA had, accordingly issued a Letter of Intent and, subsequently, wayleave was granted in August 2024, subject to several conditions.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities that the CWA undertook pipe laying works through its in-house team as part of its ongoing pipe replacement programme. The works involved the laying of 160 mm diameter high density polyethylene pipes on both sides of the main road, one section extending from the Taxi Stand to Winners and the other from the Taxi Stand to the Farmers Service Centre, covering a total length of approximately 1.2 km. The works started on 21 August 2024 and were completed in October 2024. Temporary reinstatement of the road surface was carried out, concurrently, with the pipe laying works by Probuild Contracts Ltd.

However, due to deterioration of temporary reinstatement at certain locations, Pride Civil Engineering Contractor Ltd was engaged by CWA on two separate occasions, namely, during the end of year festive period in 2024 and prior to the Maha Shivaratree Festival in 2025 to undertake remedial reinstatement works and ensure accessibility and safety for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. I wish to highlight that following several road inspections, the RDA observed that the temporary reinstatement works were in an unacceptable condition with surface settlements and exposed crusher run posing safety risk to road users.

Consequently, the RDA issued several notices to CWA, requesting the latter to immediately reinstate all trenches with asphaltic concrete in line with the conditions of wayleave.

Madam Speaker, as regard part (b) of the question, as the CWA failed to comply with the conditions of wayleave, the RDA initiated procedures for the forfeiture of the CWA's bank guarantee to enable it to carry out the repair works instead. This was subsequently put on hold after the CWA indicated on 05 September 2025 that the bid document for the permanent road reinstatement contract had been finalised and was expected to be launched by end of September 2025. However, I note with deep concern that we are now at the end of October 2025 and the bid has still not been launched. I shall be taking up this matter with my

colleague, the hon. Minister of Energy and Public Utilities, to determine the way forward for the reinstatement of the works.

Madam Speaker, as I have indicated in previous replies, namely for PQ B/616 on 08 July 2025 and for PQ B/859 on 07 October 2025, the RDA has proposed a Memorandum of Understanding with the CWA whereby the RDA would undertake the permanent reinstatement works once the pipelaying is fully completed and commissioned. The MoU will define their respective responsibilities and payment arrangements between both parties. A meeting was held on 07 October 2025 at the level of my Ministry with the concerned stakeholders during which it was agreed that the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities and the CWA will jointly review the draft MoU. A follow up meeting would be scheduled within the coming weeks to finalise the arrangements.

Madam Speaker: Yes! Supplementary!

Mr Jugurnauth: Will the hon. Minister inform the House that the project will be carried before the opening of the market fair at Chemin Grenier which is scheduled on 15 of December?

Madam Speaker: Short and sweet!

Mr Gunness: As I said, I will liaise with my colleague the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities and we will see the quickest way we can do it.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Yes, Dr. Ms Thannoo, please!

CONTAGIOUS CAPRINE PLEUROPNEUMONIA – GOATS – REPORTED CASES – SUPPORT TO SMALL FARMERS & SAFETY MEASURES

(No. B/921) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to reported case/s of Contagious Caprine Pleuropneumonia amidst goats being reared by small farmers across Mauritius, he will state the measures being taken to –

(a) support farmers who have lost their animals, if any

(b) provide prompt professional veterinary services to attend such cases, and

(c) protect healthy animals from being infected.

The Minister of Health and Wellness (Mr A. Bachoo): Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Division of the Veterinary Services of the Ministry that Contagious Caprine Pleuropneumonia is a severe and even fatal respiratory disease in goats caused by a bacterium namely, mycoplasma capricolum. It is characterised by symptoms as fever, poor appetite, breathing difficulties, coughing and nasal discharge. The disease leads to acute pleuropneumonia which can cause very high mortality rates in affected herds. Since mid-August 2025, several cases have been observed in ten goat farms over the island and during meat inspection carried out at the Mauritius Meat Authority.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that a death certificate is being issued by the DVS for the diseased animals. In addition, all farmers who are registered with the Small Farmers Welfare Fund under the Breeders Protection Scheme will be paid an amount of Rs6,000 per animal.

As regards part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that DVS provides 24/7 free service to the breeding community, one veterinary officer is on call after working hours. Any sick cases reported to the DVS or its sub-offices, are attended and treated within the same day. For cases with respiratory problems, antibiotics are being given as well as supportive treatment to reduce mortalities and morbidities. 75 % of infected goats which have been treated on time have recovered. Regular follow up is being done at these farms everyday over a period of 5 days.

Regarding part (c) of the question, affected farmers are sensitised to avoid trading their sick animals and enhance the security measures at their farm level. In the meantime, upon receipt of result from *Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement,* the DVS has requested quotation for foreign suppliers on 22 October 2025 for the supply of 10,000 USD of CCPP vaccines.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister.

Yes, Mr Lobine.

Mr Lobine: Madam Speaker, may I ask the hon. Minister as to the number of goats that have died recently with regards to this disease, if you have the figures?

Mr Bachoo: I think it is about 15 goats.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Second Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle, hon. Seeburn.

GRAND PORT ROAD, NOUVELLE-FRANCE – SPEED CONTROL MEASURES

(No. B/922) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the Grand Port Road in Nouvelle-France, he will state whether consideration will be given for the installation of speed humps or other speed control measures to ensure the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and other road users thereat, indicating the time frame or plan, if any, for the implementation thereof.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit (TRMSU) of my Ministry that the village of Nouvelle France is crossed by Savanne Road A9 and Phoenix-Plaisance Road A10 and that no request has been received for the installation of speed humps or any other speed control measures along Phoenix-Plaisance Road A10, commonly known as Grand Port Road.

I, however, understand that requests have been received for speed controlling measures at Pont Colville and Dream Price Supermarket, both located in the village of Nouvelle France. The TRMSU has advised that due to the topography and the alignment of the road, the construction of raised tables is not being envisaged at those locations as they may pose a problem in terms of visibility.

Madam Speaker, the segment of both Savanne Road A9 and Phoenix-Plaisance Road A10 crossing the village of Nouvelle France currently have a speed limit of 60 km/h. The TRMSU is exploring the possibility of implementing speed zones of 40 km/h at the specific locations along routes A9 and A10 in order to control speed and enhance the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and other road users. The project would be implemented under the framework agreement by a contractor and the name of the contractor will emerge as soon as evaluation process is completed at the Central Procurement Board.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Ms Anquetil.

SAINT-JEAN ROAD, QUATRE BORNES – INCIDENTS & MEDICAL URGENCIES – EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN

(No. B/923) 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.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Metro Express Ltd that an Emergency Response Plan is in place along Saint-Jean Road in Quatre Bornes. This plan was prepared by MEL in collaboration with emergency services including the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services, SAMU and the police in 2022. To improve and facilitate the entry and exit of fire trucks, an access point of approximately 12 metres located along Osman Avenue was designed with sufficient turning radius to allow for the safe manoeuvre of the large fire trucks. This access has been in service since the launch of Phase 2B – Quatre Bornes to Phoenix in May 2022 and is to the satisfaction of the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services.

As such, Madam Speaker, all vehicles including those of emergency services are able to travel from the region of Quatre Bornes towards Saint-Jean, Belle-Rose, La Louise, Sodnac or Trianon without the need to take detours.

I am further informed that in the event Saint Jean Road is inaccessible, owing to situations like a road accident, the emergency services can also, as a last resort, gain access to the railway tracks after receiving special authorisation from the Metro Express Operation Control Centre.

The scenario has been tested during full scale simulation in collaboration with the fire services, SAMU and the police in the presence of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre and the Singaporean safety auditor from the SMRT.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House that the collaborative efforts in developing the Emergency Response Plan does not stop here. To ensure that a high level of coordination demonstrated in the initial full scale is maintained and to continuously improve our response capability, I am proposing to hold a follow up simulation exercise. This exercise will involve all stakeholders directly – the police, the Fire Services, SAMU, the National Disaster and Risk Reduction Management Centre, the Metro Express Ltd and the TRMSU which was not involved initially.

The primary goal will be to identify any residual issues with the plan, particularly concerning rapid development and coordination across different access points and routes. By finetuning our procedures through this critical practical exercise, we will ensure that in any genuine emergency situation, every action is executed efficiently and effectively, allowing us to response swiftly and save lives while ensuring that traffic disturbance is kept to an absolute minimum.

This proactive approach underscores the government unwavering commitment to safety and security of our commuters and the community along the Metro Express corridor.

And, as a last note, I am tabling the emergency response plan for Saint Jean, Quatre Bornes.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes.

Ms Anquetil : Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. Would the hon. Minister inform the House whether there are designated safe zones or assembly points along Saint Jean Road for *l'évacuation urgente*?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, it is quite detailed in the plan that I have just submitted but when we will meet soon, I hope the hon. Member will facilitate arrangement at some appropriate location for us to come and explain what is in the plan so that everybody can understand.

Ms Anquetil: A last one, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

Will the hon.Minister inform the House how communication will be managed with residents, commuters and emergency services in the event of an accident? Thank you.

Mr Osman Mahomed A good question, a very pertinent question but like I said, when we will meet in a participative democratic manner in your Constituency, hon. Member, we will detail all these going forward.

Madam Speaker: Hon. François, please, last question, I think.

PSAC – FOUNDATION PROGRAMME INTRODUCTION – SUCCESS RATE

(No. B/924) Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the Primary School Achievement Certificate (PSAC) and the Introduction of the Foundation Programme in Literacy, Numeracy and Skills in secondary schools, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

(a) the measures envisaged for unsuccessful students of the 2025 PSAC examinations, and

(b) whether a Foundation Class at Grade 7 will be put in place in 2026 and, if not, indicate the proposed alternative course of action being envisaged.

Dr. Gungapersad: Madam Speaker, allow me before starting to answer this main question to wish good luck to all the 14,837 PSAC students who have started their PSAC examinations today and which will continue till Friday 31 October.

Coming to the main question, I wish to inform the House that the Foundation Programme for Literacy, Numeracy and Skills was introduced in January 2025 by this government to replace the defunct and much decried Extended Programme. To recall, the success rate of the previous Extended Programme was on average a meagre 6% with the result that some 2000 students were leaving the system without a certificate every year.

Allow me to provide the hon. Member from Rodrigues, figures related to the performance of our students in Rodrigues.

In 2022, only 3 out of 167 students, in 2023 only 11 out of 204 and in 2024 only 7 out of 209 students who took the NCE exams were successful. Only 31 out of 580 students who took the NCE exams in Rodrigues for the past three years were successful.

The figures above clearly show how neither the curriculum nor the assessment frameworks of the former Extended Programme was adapted for those children who were unsuccessful in their PSAC examinations.

In contrast to the defunct Extended Programme, the FPLNS blends academic and vocational components creating clearer pathways towards the technical and vocational education and training stream. The structure of the programme places emphasis on basic literacy, numeracy, digital literacy and practical skills with a view to reducing the dropout rate.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that all candidates attempting the PSAC assessment for the first time and who have not been successful in up to three compulsory core subjects, shall take part in a reassessment session during the month of December to provide them with a second chance to meet the minimum requirement for obtaining their PSAC.

Candidates who are successful in the reassessment exercise would be admitted to Grade 7 of the mainstream programme whereas those who are unsuccessful have two options – either to repeat Grade 6, once more, or to join the Foundation Programme at Grade 7.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, the options I have just mentioned remain valid for the students the 2025 PSAC examinations.

As regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the foundation class at Grade 7 has already been put in place since the beginning of this year and is operational in all our schools, including Rodrigues.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Mr François: Just one supplementary.

Madam Speaker: Yes, you got three minutes.

Mr François: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the hon. Minister for his answer and I also join him to wish good luck to all the students.

May I ask the hon. Minister, whether under the FPLNS, any special subjects will be introduced for Rodriguan students in respect to the specificity of Rodrigues and to provide detail thereof? Thank you.

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, hon. Member, that is an interesting question. Yes, the specificity of Rodrigues has been borne in mind and definitely as electives, students in Rodrigues will have the options of doing farming and also fishing. These will be part of the electives in Rodrigues.

Madam Speaker: Very good. That is a good way to stop, I think. Maybe we can break for one hour and a half.

Thank you.

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

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

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

DIGITAL HEALTH LAW DRAFTING – UNDP ENGAGEMENT

(No. B/925) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the tender launched in 2023 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with the Ministry for the Drafting of the Digital Health Law and Priority Regulations, he will state where matters stand, indicating –

(a) the number of expressions of interest received therefor, and

(b) whether any fee or payment has been made by Government to the UNDP in relation thereto.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the answer being very lengthy, I would like to circulate it.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Please circulate. Any supplementary? The hon. Fourth Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue!

ECCEA DIRECTOR – QUALIFICATIONS & SELECTION PROCESS

(No. B/926) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port-Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the post of the Director of the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority (ECCEA), he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

(a) the qualifications and experience required therefor;

(b) the number of –

(i) applications received, and

(ii) candidates interviewed to date, if any, and

(c) whether the Board of the ECCEA has made a formal recommendation for the appointment of the current Officer-in-Charge as Acting Director and, if so, indicate when.

Dr. Gungapersad: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, according to the existing scheme of service for the post of Director at the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority, candidates should *inter alia* possess the following qualifications and experience –

(a) A Cambridge Higher School Certificate or passes in at least 2 subjects obtained on one certificate at the General Certificate of Education “Advanced Level”;

(b) A degree in Education or Management or Business Administration from a recognised institution;

(c) A Master’s degree in Education or Management or Business Administration from a recognised institution; or

(d) Equivalent qualifications to those qualifications I mentioned in part (a) (b) and (c) which are acceptable to the board.

In addition, candidates should, among others, reckon at least five years experience in the education sector inclusive of experience in early childhood care and education.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the scheme of service for the above post further provides under the note section *inter alia* that –

"Candidates who, as at 30 June 2008, did not possess a Cambridge Higher School Certificate or passes in at least 2 subjects obtained on one certificate at the General Certificate of Education "Advanced Level" will also be considered provided they hold –

(a) A Cambridge School Certificate or Passes obtained on one certificate the General Certificate of Education "Ordinary Level" either –

(b) –

(i) in 5 subjects, including English Language with at least Grade C in any 2 subjects, or

(ii) in 6 subjects, including English Language with at least Grade C in any one subject, or

(iii) an equivalent qualification acceptable to the board, and

(c) A PHD or a second Masters Degree or a Post Graduate Diploma from a recognised institution or an equivalent qualification acceptable to the board."

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as for part (b) of the question, I am informed that the post has not been advertised, and as such, the other parts of the question are not applicable.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that at its special board meeting held on 20 August 2025, the ECCEA board has unanimously approved that the present officer in charge of ECCEA be assigned the duties of director pending the filling of the post. As is the current practice, assignment of duties is made on ground of administrative convenience and does not give the incumbent any claim for appointment.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Mr A. Duval: Yes, may I?

The Deputy Speaker: Supplementary?

Mr A. Duval: Yes. The hon. Minister has cited Section 9 of the Act that the person must have recognised qualifications. Can the hon. Minister say whether the person whom the board has proposed, does he have the qualifications, that is, a degree which is recognised by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and a Master's Degree as well, recognised by the HEC?

Dr. Gungapersad: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the board will take cognizance of the qualifications and so on. I need to check this with the board.

Mr A. Duval: My second question. The hon. Minister might be aware that this exercise is being done internally. The hon. Minister is not in a position right now to say whether the person possesses the recognised qualifications. That person stands to gain three times her salary once she is promoted as Acting Director. She earns around Rs60,000. She will earn, including gratuity, Rs160,000.

Therefore, the question is that the hon. Minister should ensure, before appointing that candidate, that her degree and master are indeed recognised.

Dr. Gungapersad: I will leave it to the Board to do the needful. Definitely, someone will have to manage that institution which is a very important institution and we should not be targeting people uselessly.

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

CITÉ LA CURE – AREA HEALTH CENTRE – DENTAL SERVICES

(No. B/927) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the Cité la Cure Area Health Centre, he will state if consideration will be given for the provision of dental services thereat and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, dental services are provided through 71 dedicated dental clinics as well as the major hospitals outpatient dental units across the island.

As per statistics available, Cité la Cure Community Health Centre serves a catchment population of some 7400 persons and is located within a sub urban area. Within a radius of 5 km, residents of Cité la Cure have access to several dental facilities namely, at –

1. Sainte Croix Community Health Centre – 1.4 km;

2. Dr. Mahmoodkhan Hyderkhan Mediclinic – 2 km;

3. Eastern Suburb CHC – 2.5 km, and

4. Baie du Tombeau CHC – 5 km.

My Ministry is in the process of reviewing the expansion of dental services in underserved regions or higher volume centres where the demand for oral health would be higher. Given that the existing Cité la Cure Community Health Centre was designed primarily for general primary care, re-profiting the facility to accommodate a Dental Surgery Unit would require substantial infrastructural work and investment. Accordingly, establishment of a full Dental Unit at Cité la Cure Community Health Centre is not envisaged at this stage.

My Ministry remains firmly committed to ensuring equitable access to oral health care for all citizens. Residents of Cité la Cure will continue to benefit from dental services available at nearby facilities and clear referral pathways to the closest dental clinics and Hospital Dental Units have been established to facilitate timely and convenient access to care.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, you have a supplementary!

Mr Caserne: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Considering the transport and other facilities that this region currently faces, may I request the Minister to consider this request of dental services for Cité la Cure which currently is an issue for all these inhabitants? Thank you.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, unfortunately, the building itself is not fit to accommodate a Dental Department into it. We will look at a later stage if we can try to increase the space.

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

PORT-LOUIS NORTH SSS – ENROLMENT TREND – CORRECTIVE MEASURES

(No. B/928) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human source whether, in regard to the Port-Louis North State Secondary School, he ill 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.

Dr. Gungapersad: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that 160 students are enrolled at the Port-Louis North State Secondary School for academic year 2025. Out of the 160 students, 81 are enrolled in the mainstream programme, 59 are in the foundation programme in literacy, numeracy and skills and the remaining 20 are in Grade 9 Plus which is the last cohort of the of the failed extended programme.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regard to the enrolment trend, the Port-Louis North SSS has been subject to a decreasing one over the past five years with the number of enrolled students as follows –

1. 408 students in year 2019;
2. 347 students in year 2021 – the COVID-19 period;
3. 331 students in year 2021/2022;
4. 289 students in year 2023;
5. 241 students in year 2024.

I wish to inform the House that this decreasing enrolment trend has been observed not only in the Port-Louis North SSS but as well as in other State and private grant aided secondary schools across the island.

This phenomenon is due to factors such as decreasing student population and also choice of parents for admission in schools as per the Education Regulations.

The said regulations provide that admission to Grade 7 in a regional school is based on –

1. The choice of responsible party;
2. The residence of the pupil in the geographical zone in which the regional school is located, and
3. The grade aggregate of the pupil in the PSAC assessment.

The decreasing student population raises concerns with respect to the sub optimal utilisation of government buildings and facilities and an uneven distribution of resources both financial and human.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is currently conducting an exercise on all the State Secondary Schools including the Port-Louis North SSS in relation to enrolment for

academic year 2026, taking into consideration projected admissions in Grades 7 and 10 for the Mainstream Programme as well as the Foundation Programme. This exercise will determine the perennity of numerous schools including Port-Louis North SSS. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, you have a supplementary?

Ms Savabaddy : Merci, M. le président. L'honorable ministre a-t-il un plan peut-être de conversion de ce collège d'État en centre de formation professionnelle tout en gardant certains aspects académiques afin d'attirer plus de jeunes et leur offrir une meilleure perspective pour l'avenir ? Merci.

Dr. Gungapersad: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, yes, the EDB and my Ministry are working on a list of Government Schools that are currently closed and have remained unused over the years and also where we need to close them in order to see how to make optimum use of government infrastructure. Your suggestion will be taken on board.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, B/929 has been withdrawn. So, we got to B/930. The Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac.

PROJET DE RELANCE DU FOOTBALL – ANNUAL BUDGET – EXPECTED OUTCOMES – MFA INVOLVEMENT

(No. B/929) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the "Projet de Relance du football" in Mauritius, he will state the –

(a) annual budget that is being proposed therefor over the next five years, giving details thereof;

(b) expected outcomes for men and women clubs and national teams, respectively and at grass root level, and

(c) projected financial and technical involvement of the Mauritius Football Association in the implementation thereof.

(Withdrawn)

The Deputy Speaker: So, we got to B/930. The Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS – SCHOOL ENROLLMENT – STUDY/SURVEY ON CHALLENGES

(No. B/930) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to children with special needs, including those suffering from epilepsy and autism, he will state the number thereof enrolled in schools, indicating –

(a) whether a study/survey has been carried out to better understand the challenges faced by the latter and, incidentally, by their families in relation to their schooling/provision thereto of their educational needs, and

(b) the specialized help provided thereto in schools.

Dr. Gungapersad: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there are about 3000 children with special education needs, including around 649 suffering from autism and 140 from epilepsy, enrolled in SEN schools.

Furthermore, 57 learners with autism and 53 with epilepsy are enrolled in mainstream primary and secondary schools.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that no formal study of survey has been carried out of far. However, following continuous interaction with stakeholders including the families of the SEN children and, subsequently, during the session dedicated to SEN sector during *Les Assises de l'Éducation*, the challenges in relation to the schools and educational needs have been identified as follows –

(a) Inadequate provision for physical accessibility in buildings;

(b) Unavailability of specialised vehicles for the transport of children with disabilities;

(c) Lack of SEN professionals on the market such as speech therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and even SEN educators;

(d) Inadequate specialised training to the existing educators, and

(e) Absence of an effective early diagnosis mechanism for disabilities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regard part (b) of the question, despite the existing financial constraints, my Ministry is doing its utmost to ensure that these children are not left behind.

We are, therefore, providing the following services to SEN schools –

1. Payment of grant-in-aid to NGOs and SeDEC schools registered with the Special Education Needs Authority to cover salaries of staffs, hot meals and a special support services, occupational speech and physiotherapy.

2. Transport facilities for pick-up and drop-up of the children and free bus pass are provided by my Ministry for those attending public schools;

3. Adapted furniture provided to SEN learners;

4. Adapted textbooks including large prints and drawing;

5. Services of teacher assistants to help in academic challenges and of carers for daily living challenges such as eating and toileting, and

6. Implementation of Barrier-free Project is ongoing in primary and secondary schools to make way for adapted toilets, infrastructure and accommodations to welcome and provide a conducive environment for SEN learners.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in addition, I am informed by the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity that the following facilities are provided namely, –

1. Refund of travelling expenses to children with disabilities attending daycare, specialised, integrated and mainstream schools;

2. Refund of taxi fares to students with severe disabilities. As a new budgetary measure, the refund of taxi fares has an extended to children with autism spectrum disorder and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder and 100% duty-free facilities to parents of children with disabilities for the purchase of adapted cars.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, however, as a caring government we want to do more for our children with disabilities to make them feel at par with others. This is why my Ministry is collaborating with other stakeholders with a view to coming up with a continuum of care for all children with disabilities. The objective is to adopt a holistic approach to build a more inclusive society and positively support the children and their families. Thank you.

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

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: Dr. the hon. Minister mentioned continuum of care. So, I am thinking maybe if you could clarify whether the hon. Minister is thinking of carrying out regular assessments with a view to monitor progress and adapt approaches to address the unique needs of each and every child? Is that correct?

Dr. Gungapersad: Obviously, education is a dynamic sector and definitely, officials from the Ministry and other ministries collaborate in order to look after the welfare of our kids, especially those kids with especial education needs.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Ms Thannoo!

Dr. Ms Thannoo: Can the hon. Minister ensure that these facilities are accessible to the early childhood sector as well? Thank you.

Dr. Gungapersad: Now, I do not know if when you are talking about early childhood, you are talking from 3-5 and we also have an issue, those who are above 20 – according to the Special Education Needs Authority (SENA), there are clear guidelines and definitely, that part is taken care of by the Ministry of Gender.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhummun!

Mr Jhummun: Is there any plan to cater for these students once they reach the age of 20?

Dr. Gungapersad: That is an interesting question. As we said, as a caring Government, this has not been taken care of so far. Definitely, like last week, officials from my Ministry met officials from other ministries in order to look deeper into that issue to provide the proper *cadre* for these children to be taken care of, below five and after 20 so that we provide this continuum of care as I mentioned earlier. Thank you.

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

Dr. Prayag: Regarding the transport facilities for disabled children to these schools, is the Ministry planning to implement more vehicles or to change rules in the near future?

Dr. Gungapersad: I think one important thing that this budget brought is about the refund of taxi fares which was not there and it is up to parents and institutions to avail themselves of these facilities which are provided along with the 100% duty-free facilities for parents who can afford it for their kids.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, PQs B/931 and B/932 have been withdrawn.

So, we go to the Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière.

SUGAR INDUSTRY LABOUR WELFARE FUND – OFFICE AUXILIARY/SENIOR OFFICE AUXILIARY– PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT

(No. B/931) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to Office Auxiliary/Senior Office Auxiliary employed by the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund in

Social Welfare Centres, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand as to their employment on a permanent and pensionable establishment.

(Withdrawn)

FOOTBALL PROFESSIONALISATION – IMPLEMENTATION – EXPECTED TIME FRAME

(No. B/932) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the professionalisation of football in Mauritius, he will state where matters stand, indicating the expected time frame for the implementation thereof.

(Withdrawn)

STATUS OF THE ARTIST ACT – EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION – ROADMAP

(No. B/933) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the local artists, he will state whether his Ministry has developed a clear roadmap to ensure the effective implementation of the Status of the Artist Act in Mauritius and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, why not.

Mr Gondeea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to local artists and the Status of the Artist Act, my Ministry has initiated a review of the legislation in line with the measures announced in the Government Programme 2025-2029. The aim is to ensure that the Act better reflects the realities, expectations and aspirations of the artistic community while aligning with international standards defining cultural workers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it must be noted that this Act was conceived and introduced under the previous Government without adequate consultation with artists. As a result, many in the artistic community expressed dissatisfaction, feeling that the law did not sufficiently protect their rights nor reflect their realities. In fact, during the drafting process, *l'Union des Artistes* had voiced strong reservations regarding the content and objective of the proposed legislation. According to the Union, the Act in its form, fails to provide adequate protection and recognition to Mauritian artists.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is worth recalling that during the debates on this very Bill in 2023, the hon. Member himself, still on the Opposition side, had raised several concerns regarding the lack of an appropriate definition of the term 'artist', the insufficient social protection mechanism for cultural workers and the limited consultation with the artistic

community. The hon. Member had also emphasised the need to align the law with UNESCO's definition of an artist and to ensure that Mauritian artists are recognised as full-fledged workers with equitable rights and conditions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the new Government shares these same concerns. We are, in fact, addressing precisely these shortcomings identified at that time through a comprehensive and inclusive review process aimed at strengthening the legal, social and professional framework for our artists. We firmly believe that the voice of our artists must be at the very centre of any cultural policy. We have therefore deemed it necessary to pause the implementation of the Act and undertake a comprehensive review to ensure that it truly serves the interests of Mauritian artists and align with international best practices.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in this respect, my Ministry has launched a national consultative process through the *Convention Nationale sur les Arts et la Culture,* bringing together artists, cultural operators and other stakeholders to collectively assess the sector and propose a strategic roadmap for its development. I am personally attending all sessions to hear directly from artists, including their views on the Status of the Artist Act. Once consultations in both Mauritius and Rodrigues are completed, my Ministry will consolidate the views expressed and proceed with the review so that the new framework truly reflects the aspirations of our artists.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, unlike in the past where artists were not sufficiently consulted, our government is adopting a participatory and democratic approach. The voice of our artists will remain at the centre of our cultural policy and the review of the Status of the Artist Act will be treated as a matter of priority to ensure its implementation at the earliest for the benefit of all our artists.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes?

Mr Quirin: M. le président, l'honorable ministre peut-il indiquer à la Chambre si un registre national des artistes a été créé et quel est le nombre d'artistes qui y sont inscrits à ce jour ?

Mr Gondeea: We are actually working on this, hon. Member.

Mr Quirin: Une dernière question. Peut-on savoir si son ministère a prévu des mesures pour soutenir les jeunes artistes émergeant dans les régions urbaines comme dans les rurales, cela afin d'assurer une application équitable de la loi sur tout le territoire mauricien ?

Mr Gondeea: As I stated in my reply, we are working on this together with artists to know their grievances and then, a road map will be worked on.

The Deputy Speaker: The Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac!

PRIVATE HEALTHCARE SECTOR – FEES & CHARGES – FIXING OF QUANTUM – MEASURES

(No. B/934) 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.

The Minister of Health and Wellness (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall answer this question.

I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to Parliamentary Question B/848 at our Sitting of 07 October 2025, providing that I highlighted, *inter alia,* that the Private Health Institutions Act 1989 does not empower my Ministry to regulate the cost of treatment and services and even less, the fixing of the quantum thereof. I reiterate anew that the question of regulating the cost of treatment and services offered by private healthcare institutions is indeed a complex matter which must be approached with due care and caution. It would require wide consultations with all relevant stakeholders, including patients' associations, private operators, insurance companies and professional bodies.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, health services, unlike other commodities, vary widely in scope and nature, ranging from simple outpatient consultations to highly specialised surgical procedures, each requiring different levels of medical expertise, technological inputs and infrastructural investments. Given this diversity, it would not be appropriate nor feasible to impose standardised or uniform pricing across the sector as such an approach could risk service quality, discouraging investment, limiting patient choice and affecting the overall sustainability of private healthcare systems.

That said, Government remains mindful of the need to safeguard the public interest, particularly in the area of pharmaceuticals where the prices of essential medicines are already being regulated to ensure that patients have continued access to affordable and lifesaving treatments. I am informed that the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection already regulates the prices of several essential pharmaceutical products through a regressive markup mechanism to ensure that medicines remain affordable. As present, this mechanism applies to eight critical classes of medicines, namely –

- anticancer;
- antidiabetic;
- antihypertensive;
- cardiovascular medicines;
- inhalers;
- biological vaccines, and
- antacids.

On the issue of possible collusion in the fixing of fees and charges, I wish to underline that it is the Competition Commission of Mauritius which is mandated by law to investigate and sanction anticompetitive practices in all sectors, including health. The Commission is warranted to impose financial penalties and take corrective measures to ensure a fair and competitive market pricing.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been informed by the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection that the Competition Commission has been approached to conduct an investigation in the health-related sector in line with legal framework. At the level of my Ministry, our main focus is to upgrade and strengthen services in the public health sector so that citizens may continue to access high quality healthcare free of charge and recourse to private treatment is not done out of necessity, but as a matter of choice.

On that scope, I am pleased to announce that several foreign private hospitals have expressed their intention to establish their operations in Mauritius. The presence of multiple hospitals competing in the sector is expected to foster healthy competition which would eventually contribute to more competitive pricing for health services and treatment.

For the information of the House, I wish to emphasise that this Government has made it a priority to invest significantly in critical areas such as cancer care, renal and cardiac services as well as in the continual development of our medical personnel. I do not have any qualm in saying that our services in many areas are comparable to those of some of the best private health facilities locally and abroad.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, while the direct regulation of prices in the private sector is for all intent and purposes not feasible, the matter remains open for discussion in the context of wider consultations in the context of the forthcoming review of the Private Health Institutions Act.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. François!

Mr François: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I refer to the cost of a radiological investigation in a private hospital –

- CT Angio cardiac: Rs29,000;
- CT all abdomen contrast: Rs13,700, totalling Rs42,800.

Will the hon. Minister state whether at the level of his Ministry, there are some comparative costs of pricing of services in comparison to the public sector and the private healthcare sectors?

Mr Bachoo: We do not have any such system, but all these facilities are available in our own institutions. I would invite the hon. Member to encourage patients to come to our hospitals. They are welcomed.

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

POLICE & CRIMINAL JUSTICE BILL – PROPOSED INTRODUCTION

(No. B/935) 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.

Mr Glover: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, there have been several parliamentary questions over time in relation to the Police and Criminal Justice Bill, formerly known as the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill. The Police and Criminal Evidence Bill (No. IV of 2013) was introduced in the National Assembly on 16 April 2013 for First Reading. The National Assembly was subsequently prorogued and the Bill never went through.

I wish to inform the House that since 2013, this Bill has had a rather checkered history, so much so that it has never really been finalised and certainly not gone through the legislative process.

Thereafter, as from 2015, the preceding government looked for expert advice and reports were produced, including one by Professor Michael Zander KC, who opined that the Bill ought to be introduced with relevant Codes of Practice. It is important to note that these Codes of Practice were –

- First of all, the exercise by Police Officers of statutory powers to stop and search.
- The second code would look at the searches of premises by Police Officers and the seizure of property found by Police Officers on persons or premises.
- The third Code of Practice looked at the statutory powers of arrest by Police Officers.
- The fourth Code of Practice related to the detention treatment and questioning of persons by Police Officers.
- The fifth one related to the identification process of persons by Police Officers.

In 2016, Sir Geoffrey Rivilin QC, a consultant, was mandated by the Commonwealth Secretariat to review the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, and in his initial report to Mauritius advised that, and I quote –

> "My recommendation in that report was that subject to the views of the important stakeholders I was about to meet, provisional information and provisional charges should be abolished."

The alternative to the ongoing provisional charge or provisional information had been worked out. In 2019, this Bill was almost finalised, but there was a clear lack of political will to bring about this fundamental change. Provisional information and provisional charges had been widely used, dare I say, abused by the Police as from 2015. And many political figures had to suffer the torments and anguish resulting from the arbitrary use of that procedure. *Ceci explique bien cela*.

I wish to inform the House that this Government is determined to introduce the Police and Criminal Justice Bill before the National Assembly after consultations are completed. Since the beginning of this year, my office has been looking into improvements that can be brought to existing versions of the Bill, the latest one dated 2019. My office has already begun formal consultations with the Office of the DPP and the Office of the Commissioner of Police in relation to the finalisation of the Police and Criminal Justice Bill. Indeed, a copy of an initial 2025 Police and Criminal Justice Bill has been sent to the Office of the DPP and that of the Commissioner of Police for their views and input.

But let me say this for the benefit of the House and of the general public, it is also my intention to widen the scope of these consultations to include stakeholders such as – but, of course, not limited to – Transparency International, the NGO Dis-Moi and other relevant NGOs and organisations. What must be emphasised is that we shall be doing away with provisional charges as we know them today. But there is a need to formulate a new process to be adopted by investigative authorities which will now have to work in closer collaboration with the prosecuting authority.

It is in this vein that we are also working on the National Prosecution Service Bill and the Mauritius National Crime Agency Bill. This is indeed a very tall order given the limited resources available at my office, which it bears reminding, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the smallest budget of all Ministries.

The Police and Criminal Justice Bill will indeed revolutionise the criminal justice system and will require the bind of the Office of the DPP and that of the Commissioner of Police to be workable so that it will not hinder investigating authorities whilst ensuring that fundamental rights are preserved and protected.

Let me end with a word of caution. Putting a bill through Parliament, especially this one, may be probably the easiest part. What will also be needed, and that is probably more important, is –

(i) a change in the mindset of investigative authorities.

(ii) the necessity for training for all stakeholders in the criminal justice system, and

(iii) capacity building of important departments such as forensics and cybersecurity.

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

MINISTRIES/DEPARTMENTS – RENTED BUILDINGS & PREMISES

(No. B/936) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the buildings and premises rented by Ministries and Government Departments, he will, for the benefit of the House, provide a list thereof, indicating in each case the –

(a) name of the owner;

(b) extent and location thereof;

(c) monthly rental and total annual rental payable;

(d) duration of the lease, and

(e) the number thereof currently left abandoned and under renovation.

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding part (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) of the question, I wish to inform the House that these elements of information are available at the level of Ministries and Departments. The General Office Management Unit of my Ministry only gives necessary clearances to enable Ministries and Departments to proceed with the signature of lease agreements with private building owners subject to availability of funds, concurrence to rental rates as recommended by the Valuation Department, structural soundness of the private building as determined by my Ministry, among others.

In the same vein, my Ministry also rents office space from various private owners. The total annual rental payable amounts to around Rs42.7 million. If I take into account the rent

paid by parastatal bodies under the aegis of my Ministry such as RDA, CIA, LDA and DICL, the total amount payable will be around Rs70 million. In view thereof, we are exploring the possibility of setting up a MNI House which would regroup all departments and divisions of my Ministry into one strategic location. The project is expected to be implemented under a suitable private public partnership model.

This bold initiative aims at improving the efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery and would bring positive spillover other benefits to the country at large. For convenience purposes, information pertaining to part (a), name of the owners, part (b) extent and location thereof, part (c) monthly rental and total annual rental payable and part (d) duration of the lease have been compiled. I am tabling a copy, thereof, to the House.

With respect to the last part of the question, I wish to reassure the House that all buildings currently being rented by my Ministry are in very good state and do not require any major renovation or maintenance.

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

LA LOUISE, QUATRE BORNES – FLOOD MITIGATION MEASURES – DRAIN CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/937) 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.

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with a view to addressing the flooding issues holistically and mitigating the incidence of flooding in the region of La Louise, I am informed that the NDU has appointed Vyyaass Consulting Engineer Ltd as consultant for the design and supervision for flood mitigation measures in the region of La Louise, La Source and Candos, Quatre Bornes. Owing to the complexity of the project and the site conditions, the project will be implemented in different phases. The Land Drainage Authority has recommended as Phase 1 – Construction of Absorption Drains along Lal Bahadur Shastri Avenue and Candos-Vacoas Road as short-term measures. Phase 2 will involve works along Boundary Road, Sik Yuen Road, Nehru Road and Phoenix-Beaux Songes Road amongst others.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I further informed that the project proposal for the short-term measures has been submitted by the consultant on 22 July 2025. Consequently, the project proposals and drawings were circulated to different stakeholders, including the Municipality of Quatre Bornes, the RDA, the Victoria Hospital and the Wastewater Management Authority on 31 July 2025. A presentation on the project proposal was also held on 06 August 2025 with all the stakeholders.

As at date, only the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes has submitted its views, requesting the NDU to amend the design by constructing the absorption drain along Boundary Road with two retention ponds instead of constructing an absorption drain along Candos-Vacoas Road as initially recommended by the LDA. Consequently, the request for the change in design proposed by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes has been forwarded to the LDA for consideration on 29 September 2025.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on the other hand, the Road Development Authority has informed that it is not agreeable to the proposed construction of a stormwater absorption drain and provision of metal gratings along the carriage way of the Candos-Vacoas Road because of the following reasons –

1. Same will severely affect the pavement structure of the road;

2. It represents road safety hazards;

3. Cause serious traffic issues during implementation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the conflicting views, I have requested the Chief Project Manager of the NDU to chair a technical committee with all stakeholders and to come up with urgent implementable measures to mitigate flooding in the region of La Louise, Quatre Bornes.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, M. le président. Je remercie le ministre pour sa réponse. *In view of the recurrent flooding affecting residents and road users, could the hon. Minister inform the House whether urgent measures can be envisaged, please? Thank you.*

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sure my colleague knows the complexity of the work over there, even in certain regions, we have to relocate

Houses. So, we do not go about abruptly or quickly, so that is why I have put up a technical committee which I have asked to work very fast and to come with recommendation with immediate and short-term measures as to what can be done.

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

CONSTITUENCY NO. 4 – RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS – ASBESTOS – MEASURES

(No. B/938) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the presence of asbestos in residential buildings, he will state the number of housing units concerned therewith in Constituency No. 4, indicating the measures being taken in relation thereto.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Solid Waste Management Division of my Ministry that in Constituency No. 4, there are 38 housing units at Longue Mountain and 3 at Congoma which still contain cemented asbestos sheets. It should be noted that it is only upon request from owners of the housing units that the Solid Waste Management Division proceeds with the dismantling and removal of the asbestos sheets from the housing units. A contract has recently been awarded by my Ministry for the dismantling, removal and disposal of asbestos sheets from the housing units.

According to a survey carried out by the Ministry of Housing and Lands recently, there are still around 1,560 ex-CHA housing units containing asbestos.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in order to expedite matters with respect to this long-standing issue, an inter-ministerial committee is being set up at the level of my Ministry under the chair of hon. Joanna Bérenger, Junior Minister, comprising representatives of the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Housing and Lands, Ministry of National Infrastructure, Ministry of Health and Wellness, Ministry of Local Government and my Ministry to make recommendation to government for the complete phasing out of the housing units containing asbestos sheets in Mauritius. Our first meeting is scheduled to be held this Friday, 31 October 2025.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, supplementary!

Ms Savabaddy: Je remercie le ministre de prendre ce problème à cœur. Connaissant la détresse et l'anxiété des habitants de Cité EDC à Montagne Longues, est-ce-que l'honorable ministre peut-il donner l'assurance qu'une solution sera trouvée au plus vite afin d'alléger la souffrance de mes mandants ? Merci.

Mr Bhagwan: M. le président, c'est un problème que nous avons-nous même dans l'opposition combattu. Nous avions dénoncé la lenteur du précèdent gouvernement. C'est un héritage lourd mais je suis sûre qu'avec la compréhension et avec l'aide de tout un chacun mais surtout l'aide de mon collègue que nous trouvons des solutions à court terme et bien rapides.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: I just want to ask a question. I heard the hon. Minister mentioning an inter-ministerial committee that would be set up to look at the effects of asbestos in their community. We did have an Addison Report that was set up which came following the intervention of now our Deputy Prime Minister at the time and will this inter-ministerial committee liaise, have any implication as to what was recommended by the Addison Report so that these 3,115 houses that were supposed to have asbestos since cyclone Carol, will finally be eradicated? Thank you.

Mr Bhagwan: M. le président, nous allons prendre tous les rapports que nous avons eu, le récent rapport que mon collègue a fait commanditer et venir le plus rapidement avec une solution parce que déjà dans le passé il y a eu, je crois 800 millions qui a été voté dans un budget précèdent mais rien n'a été fait au fils des années. Maintenant nous avons la ferme intention, les maisons se trouvent dans plusieurs circonscriptions et plusieurs sont dans des états les plus, je ne vais pas dire déplorables, difficiles à vivre pour ces occupants. Il est notre ferme intention de trouver une solution, surtout avec l'aide de tout un chacun.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Second Member for Rodrigues!

RODRIGUES – ISLETS MANAGEMENT – FORESTS AND RESERVES ACT – AMENDMENT

(No. B/939) Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the islets in the lagoon of Rodrigues, he will state if consideration will be given to amending the Forests

and Reserves Act and any other relevant legislation, with a view to vesting the responsibility for the management thereof in the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

The Minister of Health and Wellness (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, presently two islets found in the lagoon of Rodrigues namely, Île aux Cocos and…

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, you are stepping in for the Minister of Agro-Industry…

Mr Bachoo: Yes!

The Deputy Speaker: You have to inform the House for that we put it on record.

Mr Bachoo: Okay, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am answering on behalf of my colleague.

Presently two islets found in the lagoon namely, Île aux Cocos and Île aux Sables are declared as nature reserves under the Second Schedule of the Forests and Reserves Act. As per existing legal provisions, the management of nature reserves fall under the responsibility of Forestry Service of my Ministry. In the case of Rodrigues, I am however informed that Île aux Cocos and Île aux Sables are being managed by the Forestry Service of Rodrigues pursuant to sections 26 and 54 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act.

In these circumstances, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, no amendment is warranted under the Forests and Reserves Act with regard to the vesting of the responsibility for the management of the two islets in the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. I should nevertheless inform the House that drafting instructions for a new Forests and Reserves Bill which will repeal and replace the current Act, has already been conveyed to the Attorney General's Office.

Once a draft version of the Bill is obtained, our colleagues from the Rodrigues Regional Assembly will be consulted thereon, including any proposal to declare other islets in the lagoon of Rodrigues as nature reserves.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. First Member for Savanne and Black River. I understand that PQ B/941 has been withdrawn.

HARRY LATOUR STADIUM – RENOVATION WORKS – STATUS

(**No. B/941) 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)

CITÉ LA FERME, BAMBOUS – WASTE WATER NETWORK PROJECT – STATUS

(No. B/942) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the 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 where matters stand, indicating –

(a) whether all the households have been connected thereto and if not, why not;

(b) the sum of money paid to the contractor for variation works, if any, as at date, and

(c) whether the network at Avenue de L'independence, Bambous, will be upgraded and connected thereto in view of overflow issues caused by blockages linked to the construction of NSLD houses nearby.

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, concernant la partie (a) de la question, la WMA m'informe que la Cité La Ferme à Bambous est un lotissement de type CHA comprenant environ 275 logements. Le quartier était sujet de fréquents débordements d'eaux usées causant de graves problèmes et des désagréments aux résidents.

Afin d'apporter une solution durable à ces problèmes, la WMA a lancé un projet d'assainissement à la Résidence La Ferme selon une formule conception/construction. Ce projet comprenait 3 volets principaux – la construction d'un égout routier à la Résidence La Ferme à Bambous, le raccordement des maisons et la construction d'un collecteur le long de A3 à Bambous.

À la suite d'un appel d'offre mené par la Central Procurement Board, le contrat a été attribué Serveng Company Ltd, le 04 juillet 2023. Les travaux ont commencé le 29 juillet 2023 et ont été pratiquement achevés le 15 août 2025. L'entrepreneur procède actuellement à la remise en étape finale de la route dans la Cité La Ferme et celle-ci devrait être achevée d'ici fin octobre 2025. À ce jour, 3.1 km de conduite d'égouts ont été posées et 3.3 km des tuyaux de la *Central Water Authority* ont été remplacés dans le cadre de ce contrat.

Concernant la partie (a) de la question, la WMA m'informe que 220 foyers sur 270 sont raccordés au réseau d'assainissement public. Les 50 foyers situés le long d'une partie de l'A3 Black River Road, Mahatma Gandhi Lane, AK Azaad Lane et Kubarawa Lane n'ont pas pu être raccordés suite aux objections des certains résidents.

La WMA mènera une campagne de communication dans les semaines à venir concernant les raccordements restants, dont les 50 restants. Et, en absence d'objection des résidents concernés, les locaux seront raccordés au réseau conformément aux prochains contrats-cadres qui devraient être attribués par la WMA en décembre de cette année-ci ou au plus tard premier semaine de janvier de l'année prochaine.

En ce qui concerne la partie (b) de la question, la WMA m'informe qu'aucune somme de variation n'a été émise en vertu du contrat.

M. le président, quant à la partie (c) de la question, je suis en outre informé par la WMA que l'avenue de l'Independence se situe en dehors de la zone du projet. Il est à noter que l'avenue de Independence est située dans un lotissement Mon Repos, ex *Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund* a Bambous qui se compose d'environs 50 maisons et se trouve environs 100 mètres du nouveau lotissement NSLD, actuellement en construction.

Le system d'évacuation des eaux usées et de la Cité Mon Repos se compose d'un réseau d'égouts interne, actuellement raccordé à deux fosses septiques communes. Bien que le quartier ne soit pas raccordé au tout à l'égout public, la WMA assure et je m'assure aussi, sur demande des services de pompage pour vider la fosse septique commune afin de réduire les nuisances pour des raisons humanitaires. Comme il ne s'agit pas d'une solution durable, la WMA a contacté la NSLD en vue de fournir une solution permanente qui comprendra la déconnexion du réseau interne du domaine du système communale et sa reconnexion par gravité à son nouveau système d'égouts construit.

Le 4 septembre 2025, donc le mois dernier, la NSLD a informé la WMA qu'elle prendrait en charge la reconnexion du domaine à sa nouvelle station de pompage. La reconnexion du lotissement de Mon Repos à la nouvelle station du NSLD devrait être achevée d'ici mai 2026, dans à peu près quatre à six mois.

Merci.

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

QUATRE BORNES URBAN TERMINAL – PARKING SPACE CONSTRUCTION – PROJECT STATUS

(No. B/943) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the proposed construction of parking space for vehicles, with the upcoming proposed Quatre Bornes Urban Terminal

Project, on Victoria Avenue opposite Bus Terminal in Quatre Bornes, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by Metro Express Ltd that to address the issue of lack of parking, pick-up and drop-off facilities around the Quatre Borne Light Rail Station, four plots of land situated near Courts Mammouth Building were acquired by the Ministry of Housing and Lands and handed over to MEL in February 2024.

Subsequently, in June 2024, MEL awarded a contract for the sum of Rs14.9 million inclusive of VAT – it is a long figure but I am going to mention Rs14.9 million – to Transinvest Construction Ltd for the provision of lay-by with shelter and toilets at Quatre Borne station. The project consists of the following –

1. Construction of public toilet blocks;
2. Office for MEL officers;
3. Parking space for vehicles and related amenities;
4. Bus lay-by along Victoria Avenue.

However, I am informed that, at a meeting held at the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes in July 2024, MEL was requested to examine the possibilities of foregoing those plots of land for the provision of additional bus base required under the Quatre Bornes Urban Terminal Project.

At the time, the construction of the Park and Ride Project was well on the way and it would have been difficult to alter the scope of the project without entailing contractual and financial implications.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in August 2024, MEL had received a petition from the residents of the locality expressing their serious concerns to the conversion of the proposed parking site into bus base. Concerns raised pertained essentially to traffic congestion, safety, noise and air pollution, as well as privacy issues, in view that the site lies within a residential zone. Disruption of local access arising from movement of buses for alighting and boarding of passengers throughout the day, was evoked as another major issue.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in January this year, I chaired a meeting on the issue whereby it was agreed that the construction works for the parking facilities would be temporarily put on hold, pending a final decision on the implementation of the Quatre Bornes Urban Terminal Project. As at date, the construction of the toilet block has been completed and

MEL is in the process of handing over the site to the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes for its operation.

The construction of the bus lay-by has also been completed and is in use. I am informed that the council will launch an expression of interest shortly for its operation. According to the information obtained from MEL, 53% of the works have been completed in regard to the parking space.

I am further informed by the Ministry of Local Government that in light – I think this is important – of the complaints received from inhabitants against the proposed bus holding area traffic centre, the Council has, at its public infrastructure meeting on 13 October 2025, that is two weeks ago, decided that the said site be maintained for the construction of the park and ride facility.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, one supplementary.

Ms Anquetil : Je vous remercie, M. le président. Could the hon. Minister inform the House whether consultations have been held with residents and stakeholders who signed the petition, please? Thank you.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Seemingly that has been done at the level of the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes for them to arrive at that recommendation two weeks ago.

Ms Anquetil: Second one, please. Last one.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, last one. Quick.

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Would the hon. Minister inform the House whether an Environmental Impact Assessment or Traffic Impact Study has been conducted to ensure that the proposed parking area will not worsen congestion on Victoria Avenue? Thank you.

Mr Osman Mahomed: You mean for the Park and Ride for the Metro Express Ltd?

Ms Anquetil: Yes.

Mr Osman Mahomed: I can do that. Yes. Thank you.

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

GAZA CRISIS – HUMANITARIAN LAW VIOLATION – GOVERNMENT'S DIPLOMATIC MEASURES

(No. B/944) 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.

Mr Ramful: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are profoundly disheartened by the atrocities which have been taking place in Gaza. For the past two years, we have witnessed the humanitarian tragedies taking place there with more than 65,000 casualties, mainly women and children.

On our part, we continue to closely follow developments surrounding the ceasefire agreement reached under the 20-point peace plan proposed by the US President Donald Trump on 29 September 2025.

In answer to part (a) of the question, the House may recall that Mauritius has always shown its unwavering support for the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people and has forcefully condemned Israel for its violations of humanitarian law.

We have consistently voiced out our long-standing principal position in favour of a just and sustainable peace in the Middle East shared widely by the international community which is the Two-State solution. As at now, 158 Member States of the United Nations, including Mauritius, have recognised the State of Palestine, representing more than 80% of the United Nation's membership.

A lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only be achieved by peaceful means based on relevant United Nations resolutions and in accordance with the international law on the principal of the Two-State solution which indeed represents the only viable option to bring an end to this enduring conflict.

I would like to inform the House that on 18 August 2025, the Palestinian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates sent me a letter conveying the profound appreciation of

Palestine on the clear and principal position of Mauritius, which reaffirms the inherent and inalienable rights of the Palestinian to life, dignity and statehood. A copy of the letter is being tabled for the benefit of the House.

On the other hand, I wish to underscore that Mauritius has consistently lent its support for the Palestinian cause by voting in favour of resolutions, decisions at the level of various United Nations bodies, like the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and UNESCO.

The most recent illustration of our support was on 25 August 2025 when Mauritius endorsed the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State solution that was adopted at the high-level international conference in July 2025.

The New York Declaration highlights the international community's collective responsibility to bring a definite end to the decades long conflict through political and diplomatic means. During the high-level international conference, in line with our well-established practice, Mauritius strongly reiterated our long-standing support for Palestine.

The same position was reiterated by Mauritius during the high-level week of the UN General Assembly on 22 September 2025. I also wish to place on record that Mauritius was not present during the address of the Prime Minister of Israel on the UN General Assembly on 26 September 2025. At its session of 19 September 2025, Cabinet agreed to make a cash donation of 50,000 USD to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to support humanitarian action for the people of Palestine.

With regard to part (b) of the question, regarding the severance of ties with Israel, I wish to point out the following –

- Diplomatic relations were established with Israel in March 1968. Those relations were severed on 07 July 1976. Mauritius recognised the Palestine Liberation Organisation in May 1979 and relations with Israel were re-established on 29 September 1993, following the signature of the Israel PLO Peace Agreement on 13 September 1993.

- Since the election of this new Government, in November 2024, my Ministry has ensured that bilateral exchanges with Israel be reduced purposefully to a minimum. For instance, invitations for our Ministers to visit Israel have been turned down.

- Technical cooperation through Israel's official International Development Cooperation Programme has been stalled. The request for an Israeli airline to operate direct flights from Israel to Mauritius this year has not been acceded to. As a result of the war on a few countries like Jordan, Bahrain, Turkey, Honduras, South Africa, Chad and Chile as well, they have recalled their ambassadors from Israel whilst others like Belize, Bolivia, Colombia and Nicaragua have severed diplomatic relations with Israel.

It is felt that the severance of diplomatic ties is of an extreme order as this might adversely affect any possible influence, dialogue and communication by Mauritius at the multi-lateral level for sustainable peace in the Middle East region. Maintaining our current stance, albeit at a minimum level, leaves the window open for Mauritius to advocate for a peaceful discussion between all parties. It is felt that maintaining a meaningful channel of discussion with the Israeli side is, in fact, in the interest of the Palestinian people.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (c) of the question, the House may wish to note that Mauritius has been directly involved in international legal actions concerning Palestine notably through its participation in the proceedings at the International Court of Justice. This involvement is aligned with our long-standing support of Mauritius for the Palestinian cause at the United Nations.

In July 2023, Mauritius was one of the 57 countries to submit a written statement to the ICJ regarding the legality of Israel's policies in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The submission specifically addressed the legal consequences of Israel's prolonged occupation, settlement and annexation of Palestinian territory. Mauritius also participated in the oral proceedings at the ICJ in February 2024.

In its presentation, Mauritius drew parallels between the Israeli occupation and the Chagos Archipelago case, and argued that if the ICJ found Israel's occupation unlawful, the latter would be obliged to end it consistent with the 2019 ICJ ruling on the Chagos case.

In July 2024, the ICJ issued its advisory opinion concluding that Israel's continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is unlawful and must end. It also stated that all States have an obligation not to recognise the illegal situation and to ensure Israel's compliance with international law.

Subsequently, on 22 October 2025, the ICJ delivered another advisory opinion issued pursuant to United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/79/232 of 19 December 2024 concerning the obligations of Israel with respect to the presence and activities of the United Nations, other international organisations and third States in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The court unanimously concluded that Israel is required to fulfil its obligations under international humanitarian law, including the duty to ensure that the population of the Occupied Palestinian Territory has access to the basic necessities of life, including food, water, clothing, bedding, shelter, fuel, medical supplies and services. By ten votes to one, the court further determined that Israel must agree to facilitate by all means at its disposal relief schemes on behalf of the population of the Occupied Palestinian Territory so long as that population remains inadequately supplied, as has been the case in the Gaza Strip.

This includes humanitarian relief provided by the UN and its entities, most notably the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East as well as by other international organisations and Third States. Israel is also required not to obstruct or impede search relief efforts.

Furthermore, the ICJ unanimously affirmed Israel's obligation to respect the prohibition on forcible transfer and deportation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the prohibition on the use of starvation of civilians as a weapon of warfare.

The ICJ will now forward the advisory opinion to the United Nations General Assembly, where a resolution is expected to be drafted by Member States, that first table that resolution for an advisory opinion in December 2024.

Consistent with its policy of support to the principal of international law and the rights of the Palestinian people, Mauritius will support any UNGA resolution that would seek to implement the advisory opinion of the ICJ. Mauritius will, therefore, continue to support all initiatives at the level of the United Nations, African Union and relevant multilateral fora which are in accordance with international law and which will contribute to bringing about a just, peaceful, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict based on the sanctity of the Two-State solution.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Do you have a question, hon. Etwareea?

Mr Etwareea: *Yes, please.* L'honorable ministre des Affaires étrangères, peut-il nous dire si le pays peut participer à l'effort international de soigner des blessés résultant des bombardements israéliens à Gaza ?

Mr Ramful: Can you repeat the question?

The Deputy Speaker: Repeat the question.

Mr Etwareea : Est-ce que notre pays peut participer à l'effort international de soigner des blessés résultant des bombardements israéliens sur Gaza ?

Mr Ramful: Yes, this is a very interesting question. We will look into it and if there is that possibility, we will definitely participate *dans cet élan de solidarité.*

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

BAIE DU CAP & COTEAU RAFFIN – SHORTAGE OF WATER SUPPLY – WATER TANKERS & ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

(No. B/945) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to shortage of water supply in the regions of Baie du Cap and Coteau Raffin, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether any request has been made for the installation of 10,000 litre water tankers thereat and, if so, indicate –

(a) where matters stand, and

(b) the alternative arrangements made in instances where the supply of water through water lorries could not be availed of.

Mr Assirvaden : M. le président, concernant la partie (a) de la question, la CWA m'informe qu'un réservoir de 10 m³, donc 1000 Litres, a été installé le long de Reserve Road près du 'Domaine Ramphul' à Baie du Cap.

(Interruptions)

Ce réservoir est régulièrement alimenté par des camions-citernes de la CWA assurant ainsi un soulagement temporaire – je dis bien temporaire – aux habitants notamment, pendant la saison de restriction.

Concernant la partie (b) de la question, j'en ai parlé à la CWA et elle m'a informé qu'elle propose d'installer trois réservoirs d'eau de 30 m³ chacun et de construire une station de pompage à Contour Prunes afin de capter l'eau du forage d'agraires.

Les travaux seront réalisés en interne par la CWA et devraient débuter dans la troisième semaine de novembre, le mois prochain, 2025. Leur durée est de huit semaines, deux mois. Le projet terminé, il n'y aura plus besoin d'intervention de camions-citernes dans les régions de Contour Prunes et Baie du Cap, assurant ainsi un approvisionnement en eau fiable et continu aux habitants de la zone.

En ce qui concerne Coteau Raffin, afin d'améliorer l'approvisionnement en eau à Coteau Raffin, la CWA mène actuellement une étude de faisabilité pour l'installation d'un CPF, (*Containerised Pressure Filter)* d'une capacité quotidienne de 2000 m³ sur la Rivière Bois Noir. Grâce à cette production d'eau supplémentaire dirigée vers le réservoir de Bois-Puant, le nombre d'heures d'approvisionnement quotidienne devrait augmenter.

M. le président, je tiens à le souligner que mon ministère et la CWA travaillons actuellement sur le nouveau protocole de distribution afin de se préparer au déficit hydrique attendu dans les semaines et dans les mois à venir. La situation sur l'île et dans les réservoirs seront surveillés quotidiennement et des mesures coordonnées seront prises pour renforcer l'intervention dans les zones les plus touchées par les coupures d'eau. Merci.

The Deputy Speaker: B/946 has been withdrawn. So, we got the hon. Third Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien.

GINGER PLANTATION – LOCAL PRODUCTION & IMPORTS – UNFAIR COMPETITION

(No. B/946) 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)

AFRICAN NETWORK INFORMATION CENTRE – PRESERVATION OF INTEGRITY – ACTIONS TAKEN

(No. B/947) 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.

Dr. Ramtohul: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on the outset, I wish to inform the House that the African Network Information Centre, also known as AFRINIC, is a company limited by guarantee incorporated under the laws of Mauritius.

AFRINIC is the designated Regional Internet Registry for the African continent which implies that is manages and issues all the IP addresses that are used in the African region. However, due to one of the Members, Cloud Innovation, there were a lot of points of contention that arose and unfortunately, allegedly, as well, many of the IP addresses that were meant for use in the African region were being used outside of Africa. That too, not for lawful but allegedly again, unlawful purposes and this has been ongoing for a long number of years.

When we took government, we started addressing this problem because AFRINIC for Mauritius represents a very important symbol that puts Mauritius on the digital map of Africa.

So, this institution could have based in any other African country but it is based in Mauritius and that is a matter of pride for us. With the involvement with AFRINIC of the previous government, we ran the risk of losing AFRINIC to other countries in Africa. But thanks to the effort of the hon. Attorney General – whom I thank very much – and also the hon. Prime Minister, we managed to find, to help and to support find a solution to AFRINIC.

AFRINIC had been the object of a spate of litigation by Cloud Innovation Ltd, one of its own resource members, culminating into a receiver being appointed by the Supreme Court at the instance of Cloud Innovation Ltd. As a consequence, AFRINIC being placed in receivership and because it was placed in receivership, no new IP addresses could be issued between November 2024 and July 2025. AFRINIC was the object of a compulsory winding-up petition by Cloud Innovation Ltd and this was very dangerous for Africa and within the African digital space, it was known and it was perceived that the Judiciary of Mauritius was not handling the case properly.

Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the state of affairs of AFRINIC has caused a lot of unease within the regional and international internet community, thereby undermining the

reputation of Mauritius as a jurisdiction internationally. To preserve the integrity thereof, a set of actions have been undertaken – I will not go to the details of those actions but I table the list of the actions. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Table it. Yes, you have a supplementary question?

Mr Luckeeram: Could the hon. Minister please inform the House what is being done to bring back African IP addresses from Asia.

Dr. Ramtohul: I would like to thank the hon. Member for this supplementary question. Now that the Board has been established, the Board will define the action plan with regard to recuperating the IP addresses of Africa that are being used outside.

So, it will be up to the Board to act on this. Thank you.

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

BRAZIL – 30TH UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE – INITIATIVES

(No. B/948) Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the 30th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30) scheduled to be held in Brazil in November 2025, he will state whether participation thereto is being envisaged, indicating if any negotiation will be held to secure funding support from the Climate Justice Fund for Africa for transformative climate action for grass root initiatives in support to local communities affected by climate change.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the 30th session of the Conference of Parties, that is, COP30 to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will be held from 10th November to 21st November in Belém, Brazil.

As a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Mauritius will participate in the COP30 with the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade leading the delegation.

The delegation will comprise the Chief Commissioner of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, the Permanent Secretary and Director of Climate Change of my Ministry as one Minister Counsellor for the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the context of the climate negotiations, my Ministry, in its capacity have a national focal point to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate

Change, has the collaboration of stakeholders ministries and departments and stakeholders in Rodrigues prepared a national position which has been approved by Government on 10 October 2025. The national position paper will support the technical negotiations as well as the preparation of the different statements which the head of the delegation will deliver in the plenary sessions and presidency events on priority teams including our call to the international community in respect of climate change.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Climate Justice Impact Fund for Africa which was established in 2021 and supported by the governments of Sweden and the Netherlands targeted community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations and think tanks by providing innovative and rapid response growth funding to support grassroots initiatives and movements in their efforts to address climate change and promote climate justice.

I am informed that the Fund launches expression of interest at intervals which are decided by the partners. Representatives from the above-mentioned organisations from eligible including Mauritius can apply directly to that Fund to benefit from that window of opportunity. The call of proposals for this year was closed in August 2025 and new submission could await the next call for proposal.

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

Mr François: Just one supplementary, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Minister whether the Republic of Mauritius submitted on time its updated Third Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0) climate action plan to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC)?

Mr Bhagwan: We submitted well in advance.

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

QUATRE SŒURS-BOIS DES AMOURETTES – WATERFRONTS – CLEANING, MAINTENANCE & EMBELLISHMENT

(No. B/949) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the recently constructed waterfronts along the coastal regions of Quatre Sœurs to Bois des Amourettes, he will state whether –

(a) the National Environment Cleaning Authority (NECA) and/or any other unit under the aegis of the Ministry has been assigned the responsibility for the cleaning and maintenance thereof, and

(b) consideration will be given to allowing non-governmental organisations to contribute in the embellishment thereof through the planting of coastal and ornamental plants.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the coastal stretch from Quatre Sœurs to Bois des Amourettes within the district boundary of Grand Port contains 21 proclaimed public beaches, all of which fall under the responsibility of the Beach Authority. This figure includes seven beaches which were recently redeveloped into waterfronts and officially proclaimed as public beaches in December 2024. Current cleaning services across these 21 public beaches are being provided by the Beach Authority and Mauri-Facilities Management Company Limited, both entities falling under the aegis of my Ministry and also by private contractors. Additionally, personnel from the Beach Authority undertake regular repairs and maintenance of amenities and infrastructure across all 21 public beaches.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, my Ministry maintains an open policy regarding collaboration with Non-Governmental Organisations and the private sector for embellishment works which are effected under the supervision and technical guidance of my Ministry. I also wish to inform the House that my Ministry, through the Beach Authority, Mauri-Facilities Management Company Limited with the collaboration of the private sector, the District Council of Grand Port and NGOs, is planning to organise a large-scale cleanliness campaign during the first week of December 2025 along this coastal stretch to further uplift the environment of this vital zone.

My hon. friend and colleague and his other colleagues of the constituency will be kept informed of the programme.

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

MODIFIED MOTOR VEHICLES – NOISE POLLUTION – REGULATION, POLICING & MONITORING

(No. B/950) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change

whether, in regard to noise pollution emanating from modified exhaust systems or loud sound equipment installed in motor vehicles, he will state if consideration will be given for –

(a) the strengthening of existing environmental noise regulations;

(b) regular policing and monitoring of noise emission;

(c) designating quiet zones and strict implementation of the legislation near schools and hospitals, and

(d) the launching of awareness campaigns.

Mr Bhagwan: Thank you. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it will be a bit of a long reply. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that section 2(1)…

The Deputy Speaker: If it is a long reply, you can circulate it.

Mr Bhagwan: No, no, it is technical also. I can explain to my hon. Friends. Section 2(1)(j) of the Fifth Schedule of the Environment Act 2024 makes provision for the Chief National Transport Commissioner of the National Land Transport Authority to be designed enforcing agency in relation to smoke and noise emission by motor vehicles. Items 8, 12, 181 and 200 of the Fourth Schedule of the Road Traffic Act also provide for provision of fixed penalties or offenses in relation to noise for modified exhaust system.

With regard to part (a) of the question, with a view to strengthening deterrence and curb down noise pollution from modified exhaust systems, the fixed penalty is falling in the range of Rs1,000 to Rs5,000 has now been increased to Rs10,000 as from 09 October 2025 through the Finance Act.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in addition to the fixed penalties, Regulation 20 of the Road Traffic (Control of Vehicle Emissions) Regulations 2002 provides that an authorised officer may issue a prohibition notice where the test results of a motor vehicle's noise emission test exceed the prescribed level specified in the Fifth Schedule of the Road Traffic (Control of Vehicle Emissions) Regulations 2002 by 10 dB(A). The notice prohibits the operation of the vehicle on any road until the defect has been remedied to the satisfaction of the authorised officer within 14 days as from the date of the notice.

With regard to part (b) of the question, existing noise regulations are being enforced on a daily basis by the *Police de l'Environnement*. Special operations concerning noise nuisance are also conducted with the support of the Divisional Headquarters of the Mauritius Police Force along with the Special Mobile Force, *Police du Tourisme*, the Emergency Response

Service and the Environmental Health Engineering Unit of the Ministry of Health and Wellness during weekends.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I informed that during the period January 2025 to 23 October, 43 and 89 contraventions have been established in respect to noise emanating from modified exhaust systems and loud sound equipment installed in motor vehicles respectively in breach of regulations –

- Regulations 83(2), 83(3) and 125 of the Road Traffic (Construction and Use of Vehicles) Regulations 2010 concerning exhaust silencer system not in good and efficient working order and alternation of silencer respectively;
- Regulations 84 and 125 of the Road Traffic (Construction and Use of Vehicles);
- Regulations 2010 for using motor vehicles causing excessive noise and the Environment Protection (Control of Noise) Regulations 2022.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerning part (c) of the question, Regulation 4(4) of the Environment Protection (Control of Noise) Regulations 2022 stipulates that –

"No person shall use or cause to be used a loud speaker, a loud hailer, an amplifier, a musical instrument or any other electrical or mechanical device for producing sound, within a radius of 100 metres, and which unreasonably interferes with the proper running, of –

(a) an educational or vocational institution during the normal hours of instruction;

(b) a health institution;

(c) a place of worship;

(d) a Court of Justice;

(e) the Municipal City Council [other municipal councils]; or

(f) the Government House during the hours at which the National Assembly sits."

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (d) of the question, the Information and Education Division of my Ministry conducts ongoing awareness raising and sensitisation activities targeting various groups, including youth, women, senior citizens, NGOs, schools, local communities and the general public. A broad range of environmental issues are addressed, including noise pollution. The awareness activities are delivered through talks, short videos, radio spots, presentations, billboards and posters. From January 2025 to date, 55

talks have been conducted for the benefit of various community groups. My Ministry will enhance mass awareness initiatives to support the national campaign aimed at improving the living environment through stronger enforcement measures in collaboration with local authorities.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Third Member for Grand Baie and Poudre d'Or!

CONSTITUENCY NO. 6 – IRREGULAR WATER SUPPLY – PROPOSED MEASURES

(No. B/951) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the villages of Mont Choisy, Vale, Grand Bay, Fond du Sac, Sottise, Calodyne 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 the 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.

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, je remercie l'honorable membre. Je suis informé par la Central Water Authority que les régions de Mont Choisy, Vale, Grand Baie, Fond du Sac, Sottise, Calodyne, Goodlands ont des régimes d'approvisionnement en eau variant de 8 heures à 16 heures. Je suis également informé que le nombre total de plaintes concernant les régions susmentionnées pour la période décembre 2024 à septembre 2025 concernant l'approvisionnement régulière en eau s'élève à 15,476.

Plusieurs raisons expliquent l'approvisionnement intermittent, irrégulier en eau dans ces régions. D'abord –

- le vieillissement et la qualité des tuyaux, provoquant une baisse de pression, surtout dans les parties élevées ;
- l'insuffisance des ressources en eau ;
- la capacité de stockage limitée des réservoirs existants par rapport à la demande en rapide augmentation ;
- les pannes de pompes ;
- les coupures de courant, et aussi
- les pertes sur le réseau de plus de 60% dans notre réseau de distribution.

M. le président, depuis ma prise de fonction, j'ai fait le point sur la situation en eau dans le nord et mon intervention prioritaire a été d'accroître la mobilisation de l'eau dans le nord pour améliorer l'approvisionnement en eau des habitants. Ainsi, des nouveaux forages ont été réalisés et mis en service au niveau des réservoirs de Bois Mangue, de Forbach, de Fond du Sac, de Mapou, ce qui apportera des ressources en eau supplémentaires dans le réseau hydraulique –

1) Le forage de Bois Mangue a été mis en service le 11 octobre 2025 – il y a quelques jours – en injectant environ 384 m^3 d'eau par heure supplémentaire dans le réservoir de Bois Mangue pour alimenter Fond du Sac.

2) Le forage de Forbach a été mis en service le 16 octobre 2025 – la semaine dernière – qui alimente 4,400 m^3 par jour d'eau supplémentaire dans le réseau des tuyaux de Lower Vale et Sottise.

3) Le forage de Fond du Sac devrait être mis en service d'ici mi-novembre 2025 – le mois prochain – et alimentera le réseau de Fond du Sac.

4) Le forage de Mapou injectera de l'eau supplémentaire dans le réservoir Old Goodlands d'ici fin octobre 2025 pour soutenir ces zones de service.

5) Un autre forage sera réalisé à Endemika la première semaine de novembre 2025 et injectera de l'eau dans le réservoir de Mon Loisir Rouillard.

D'autres projets d'amélioration d'eau à moyen et à long terme de la CWA comprennent le renouvellement des tuyaux à –

- Pointe aux Cannoniers ;
- Goodlands ;
- Grand Baie ;
- Pereybère ;
- Upper Vale ;
- Cap Malheureux, et
- La modernisation de réservoir de câblage à Poudre d'Or.

Donc, ces tuyaux vont être renouvelés. C'est l'engagement du gouvernement indien de nous donner R 2,8 milliards pour le *Pipe Replacement Programme.*

M. le président, les régions dont nous parlons, aujourd'hui, connaissent une demande croissante en eau en raison du développement rapide et continu de ces zones. L'augmentation des activités résidentielles, commerciales et infrastructurelles a naturellement exercé une pression accrue sur l'approvisionnement existant.

M. le président, je viens également souligner que mon ministère, en collaboration avec toutes les parties concernées, a élaboré un plan Marshall pour le secteur de l'eau afin d'essayer de remédier à la situation à court et moyen terme. Je dis bien d'essayer. Ce cadre vise –

- à renforcer la mobilisation des ressources en eau dans les mois et dans les années à venir ;
- à diversifier le mix hydrique ;
- à améliorer l'efficacité du réseau de distribution – changement de tuyaux. Il nous faut impérativement changer ces tuyaux pour ne pas perdre 60 % de l'eau que nous mettons.

Donc, comme je disais, M. le président, ce plan Marshall, principalement pour le Nord, va essayer d'augmenter la capacité de l'eau souterraine et des rivières pour pouvoir alimenter ces régions. Nous essayons de tout faire pour améliorer cette distribution. En passant, je remercie les membres de la circonscription numéro 5 et numéro 6 pour l'aide qu'ils nous donnent en ce qui concerne la communication avec les habitants. Merci.

PROBATION OFFICERS DUTIES – REMUNERATION REVIEW & REMEDIAL MEASURES

(No. B/952) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to cases of children with serious behavioural concerns, she will state if she is aware of the request made by Probation Officers for a review of their remuneration in respect of the duties they are now required to perform through the drawing up of parenting support intervention plans and carrying out of home visits thereinto as per the provisions of the Children's Act 2020 and, if so, indicate the measures the Ministry intends to take to address this issue as the failure to

perform same is adversely affecting families, legal proceedings and the safety of the children concerned.

(Withdrawn)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. First Member for Savanne and Black River, last question for today!

FLIC EN FLAC, CASCAVELLE, TAMARIN, LA GAULETTE & LE MORNE REGIONS – IRREGULAR WATER SUPPLY – REMEDIAL MEASURES

(No. B/953) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the irregular water supply in the regions of Flic en Flac, Cascavelle, Tamarin, La Gaulette and Le Morne, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the –

(a) number of complaints, if any, received in relation thereto, and

(b) whether any survey has been undertaken to identify the root cause of the problem, indicating the –

(i) actions, if any, taken in relation thereto, and

(ii) urgent immediate remedial measures being considered.

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, je suis informé par la *Central Water Authority* que les régions de l'île comprenant Flic-en-Flac, Cascavelle, Tamarin, La Gaulette et Le Morne sont considérées comme les zones les plus soumises au stress hydrique du pays. Ces régions connaissent une pénurie d'eau principalement en raison de la capacité de production limitée par rapport au rythme rapide de développement et à la forte demande des consommateurs, en particulier pendant la saison touristique de pointe et les développements résidentiels en cours. Donc, expansion insuffisante des infrastructures hydrauliques, pertes d'eau dans les tuyaux, comme je le disais un peu plus tôt, et variations climatiques saisonnières.

M. le président, je suis informé que le nombre de plaintes pour absence d'eau reçues à la CWA concernant les régions susmentionnées pour la période du 17 octobre 2025 au 23 octobre 2025 s'élève à 122. Pour essayer de remédier à la situation, la CWA a mis en œuvre quelques projets dans la région. Ainsi, environ 14.6 km de tuyaux ont été remplacés par la

CWA dans la région de Flic-en-Flac. La CWA a également installé un CPF à Rivière Rempart, augmentant la production du réservoir de Beau Songes de 2000 mètres cubes par jour. Cette amélioration bénéficie directement à Cascavelle et Flic-en-Flac. Il est prévu d'installer un deuxième CPF le mois prochain. Pas dans les semaines à venir, mais le mois prochain.

À Tamarin, un nouveau forage à Pierrefonds, Beau Songes a été foré pour renforcer l'approvisionnement à Tamarin, notamment pendant la saison difficile.

L'infrastructure hydraulique existante à la CWA peine à faire face à la consommation croissante d'eau à mesure que les projets touristiques et de logements augmentent à Los Angeles. Je ne savais même pas qu'il y avait un endroit qui s'appelle Los Angeles ! Je connaissais New York et Manhattan, mais Los Angeles, je ne savais pas. Los Angeles – secteur de La Gaulette. Pour pallier à ce problème, j'ai été informé que la CWA prévoit d'installer un nouveau CPF afin d'augmenter les débits d'eau alimentant le réservoir de Bois Puant. Une fois opérationnel, ce projet devrait améliorer la fiabilité de l'approvisionnement en eau à La Gaulette.

Le village du Morne est normalement alimenté par un CPF sur la Rivière Baie du Cap. En cas de fortes pluies ou d'eau boueuse, le CPF doit être temporairement coupé. Dans ce cas, l'eau est généralement détournée du réservoir de l'Embrasure pour alimenter le village d'à côté. De plus, la CWA a récemment renouvelé environ 2.8 km de tuyaux dans le village du Morne. M. le président, alors que cette région est en plein développement, elle continue de faire face à d'importants défis en matière d'eau. Des efforts concertés sont déployés pour moderniser les infrastructures, optimiser la production et renforcer la résilience du système en étudiant la possibilité de mobiliser des ressources supplémentaires en eau grâce à d'autres sources potentielles d'eaux souterraines et de surface. La collaboration du secteur privé est actuellement sollicitée dans cette région pour mobiliser davantage d'eau douce.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over! Thank you.

The Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/913, B/954, B/956, B/957, and B/958.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

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

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, Madam Speaker will resume the Chair.

At this stage, Madam Speaker took the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. You may be seated!

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

On motion made and seconded, the following Bills were read a first time –

(i) The Criminal Code (Amendment No. 2) Bill (No. XXVI of 2025);

(ii) The Court of Rodrigues Jurisdiction (Amendment) Bill (No. XXV of 2025).

Second Reading

THE CRIMINAL CODE (AMENDMENT NO. 2) BILL
(NO. XXVI OF 2025)

Order for Second Reading read.

(4.04 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Criminal Code (Amendment No. 2) Bill (No. XXVI of 2025) be read a second time.

Madam Speaker, in 2021, this House enacted an amendment to the Criminal Code, introducing a new section 76B. Its purpose, at the time, was clear. It sought to criminalise the distribution or production of coins, stamps, maps, or other official objects or documents that misrepresented our sovereignty over any part of our national territory, especially over the

Chagos Archipelago. It was a legal tool crafted in response to a very specific challenge: the persistent disregard for our territorial integrity.

The law must be understood against its historical background. The fight for justice over Chagos began even at the Lancaster House Conference for Independence, when Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam objected and opposed the then deal to dismantle Chagos from our territory, and also, after independence.

I wish here to pay tribute today to the heroes of that struggle. Among them were courageous Chagossians, including women such as the late Lisette Talate and Charlesia Alexis who undertook hunger strikes in the 1970s. There was Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam who always saw the injustice of the pre-independence consultations for what they were: pure blackmail. In 1980, he thus secured a historical resolution for the organisation of African Unity calling for the return of Chagos. He also raised the matter at the UN General Assembly.

There was also the now Deputy Prime Minister, hon. Paul Bérenger, and the MMM, who brought the issue firmly onto the national political conscience. And yes, there was also Sir Anerood Jugnauth who agreed to follow the plan of action that we had laid down with our lawyer, Mr Philip Sands K.C., and he went to the UN and the Hague in 2018, as we had planned if we were to win at the Tribunal of the Law of the Sea.

History will remember that our victory today is built upon their unwavering efforts. Credit should also be given to a number of NGOs in Mauritius and abroad; and individuals who contributed in a significant manner to the struggle for our sovereignty.

Madam Speaker, in 2010, as Prime Minister, I chose to take our struggle to a new level for the first time, to bring the matter before the courts, the Arbitral Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. It was a deliberate strategy: to build, step by step, a solid foundation in international law for our claim.

Many thought we would not win but we did. In 2015, we secured our first major success before that Tribunal, with the ruling against the proposed British Marine Protected Area. And the strategy I had set in motion continued after my term in office and ultimately led, in 2019, to the favourable Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice.

It authoritatively determined that the Chagos Archipelago is and has always formed an integral part of the territory of Mauritius, and that the process of decolonisation of Mauritius

was not completed upon its accession to independence in view of the unlawful excision of the Chagos Archipelago from its territory.

Subsequently, in 2021, a Special Chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea delivered in the Maritime Boundary Delimitation Case between Mauritius and Maldives, a judgement in which it held that the determination made by the International Court of Justice in its Advisory Opinion of 25 February 2019 are legally binding and confirmed that Mauritius has undisputed sovereignty of the Chagos Archipelago.

Now, despite this clear determination of the International Court of Justice and the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea, the United Kingdom continued to cause stamps and coins to be issued purportedly on behalf of the so-called 'British Indian Ocean Territory'.

Some individuals, groups and entities continued to do as if Mauritius did not have sovereignty of the Chagos Archipelago. They performed actions that could only be validated by a State in the exercise of its sovereign powers. In fact, Madam Speaker, in Article 2 of the Agreement we signed with the UK in relation to the Chagos, it is now expressly stated that the issuance of such coins or stamps can only be done by Mauritius as a sovereign State and nobody else.

Section 76B of the Criminal Code was conceived in a specific context where it was intended to apply only to expressions of sovereign authority on the part of a foreign State or an entity acting on behalf of such State.

But as with all laws, Madam Speaker, context matters and context evolves.

Today, Mauritius stands on a very different footing. In May of this year, Mauritius and the United Kingdom signed a new Treaty concerning the Chagos Archipelago, in which our sovereignty is unequivocally recognised. Article 1 of that Treaty speaks for itself, and let me quote –

> "Mauritius is sovereign over the Chagos Archipelago in its entirety, including Diego Garcia."

That solemn recognition, therefore, changes everything.

The *raison d'être* of section 76B, therefore, no longer exists. Our sovereignty is no longer being questioned by any State or any international organisation. The law has served its purpose, and this means that it should now make way for a new chapter.

But the point is deeper, Madam Speaker, and it is important that our nation hears it from this House. Section 76B was a shield. It was not meant as a sword, it was a shield. It defended us against a persistent and well-funded campaign to deny our sovereignty. It was never intended to muzzle our own people, or to criminalise debate.

Now, having prevailed in our long struggle for recognition, diplomatically, legally and morally, we must ensure that the laws we keep on our books reflect the confidence of a sovereign nation. This shield should not become a cage. It has lost its *raison d'être.*

Our democracy is founded on liberty, including the liberty to debate matters of national importance, even passionately. In this regard, Section 76B may create misgivings. When it was passed, some feared that one could, by merely discussing the Chagos, risk prosecution if the law is instrumentalised in a perverse manner, that it so often did under the previous regime. And as hon. Reza Uteem noted during the debates at the time, it did contain some serious inconsistencies and limitations.

We are not here today to rewrite history or to criticise a law that actually served a moment of necessity. It was introduced with good intentions. It demonstrated our determination to assert our sovereignty while some countries and individuals did not fully acknowledge so.

But today, clinging to that law would be counterproductive.

It risks giving ammunition to those who, even now, try to portray Mauritius as an intolerant country of dissent, or oppressive towards Chagossians who hold different views. It risks sustaining an outdated perception that our sovereignty must be defended by legal force rather than by the strength of the law and the weight of international legitimacy that we have earned.

No, Madam Speaker, even those very few Chagossians who deny our sovereignty, very often for very personal reasons, linked to their own trajectories, whether they live here or abroad, have the right to have their views and do not need to worry about facing criminal charges against them.

Repealing section 76B is an act of democratic self-confidence.

It says to the world that –

- Mauritius has no fear of the words.

- Mauritius does not criminalise ideas.
- Mauritius lives up to its constitutional promises that guided our struggle for justice.

Madam Speaker, as we repeal this provision, we must also acknowledge a wider challenge.

Too many laws remain on our books that criminalise speech in ways that are out of place in a modern democracy. This is the legacy, in part, of colonial rule. And the time has come for a broader review.

We will move forward with reforms to ensure that offences such as "criminal defamation" or "scandalising the court" or "outrage against public or religious morality" do not unduly suppress legitimate expression, but instead target true harm, such as incitement to violence or hatred. Abusive creations of the previous regime, such as – I laugh when I think of it – "causing annoyance". Clauses of ICTA will have to be reviewed as well.

The Attorney General's Office is moving ahead with a comprehensive review inspired by the Preliminary Report of Geoffrey Robertson K.C., which I had commissioned back in 2013. He had produced a report which has been squarely ignored by the previous regime for a whole decade.

Madam Speaker, there are indeed such areas where conduct is currently criminalised despite the fact that there is no victim. No victim is being harmed or where there is no prejudice that cannot simply be sanctioned by civil proceedings. Criminal sanctions should not be society's default instrument in those contexts.

And whenever it comes to striking a balance, such as between privacy and the public interest, the dignity of individuals and the right of the press will be guided by strong constitutional principles and by our longstanding respect for human rights.

Madam Speaker, our identity is built on the foundations of democracy, the rule of law and dignity for every Mauritian, including our compatriots of Chagossian origins, who may well hold diverse perspectives on resettlement and their future but that is their right.

There can now be only one single flag over the Chagos, our sovereign State. One sovereign State. One nation.

As the ratification process proceeds, we sincerely and successfully hope through the steps at the British Parliament, it is important that we dispel the unwarranted lies about our

national character. We are a sovereign nation which values all its friends, but which also stands by its word. We pledge to honour the commitments made in the historical treaty of May 2025.

Let us, therefore, stand today not only united but unafraid. Repealing section 76B is the natural step of a sovereign nation that has prevailed. It shows maturity. It shows that we are *un État de droit*. It shows that we trust our people. And it confirms that our moral victory does not need to be secured through the criminal law but through the strength of the truth only.

With these words, I commend the Bill to the House.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Narsinghen.

(4.18 p.m.)

The Junior Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr H. Narsinghen): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to address the House on the Criminal Code (Amendment No. 2) Bill (No. XXVI of 2025).

The repeal of section 76B of the Criminal Code is not a mere act of legislative housekeeping. It is a meaningful and impactful reform that aligns our law with the new international reality that is, the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelagos is recognised, affirmed and operational.

I have listened carefully to the Prime Minister. It is true that when the law was passed in 2021, possibly, it was passed with good intention. I would say it was a sort of necessary evil. I will explain why there were some very important shortcomings in the law at that point in time.

The Prime Minister also explained the context and how, with the repealing of the law, we are again consolidating democracy but I would like to hammer on the context, Madam Speaker.

Section 76B was enacted to criminalise the so-called misrepresentation of the sovereignty of Mauritius by prohibiting maps, stamps, coins or documents depicting Chagos as anything other than Mauritian. At that time, our sovereignty was still being contested internationally. The former approach sought to defend our claims symbolically through criminal law and I lay emphasis on the symbolical approach.

Madam Speaker, as explained by the Prime Minister, the context has changed fundamentally. In May 2025, Mauritius and the United Kingdom, as you know, signed a landmark treaty by which the United Kingdom unequivocally, as pointed out by the Prime Minister, recognised Mauritian sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelagos. The British Parliament, a few days back, has also ratified this outcome and the territorial dispute that endured since 1965, is for all practical purposes, resolved.

Keeping section 76B, I would say, would be redundant and maybe a risk, making our law appear disconnected from the facts and recent events. Therefore, repeal is necessary to ensure our statutory book reflects the national truth. Mauritius is no longer asserting or claiming sovereignty; it now exercises the sovereignty. We have moved from what I would qualify as a defensive stance to proactive governance. So, how we got here, that is from litigation to recognition?

Madam Speaker, the road to the treaty was arduous, exacting and painstaking as explained by the Prime Minister. The ICJ Advisory Opinion in February 2019 found the separation of Chagos in 1965 to be unlawful and urged the UK to end its administration as rapidly as possible. The United Nation General Assembly Resolutions endorsed the ICJ's view and called for international support to complete our decolonisation.

And also, as explained by the Prime Minister, the International Tribunal on Law of the Sea reaffirmed Mauritian sovereign rights and clarified maritime entitlement in the Indian Ocean. At that point in time, this was triggered by the Prime Minister and you will remember how the Prime Minister and his team, at that point in time, chose deliberately one very famous international barrister, Ian Brownlee, who unfortunately passed away, and subsequently it was the Prime Minister and his team who chose also Mr Philippe Sands.

Building on these milestones required persistent diplomacy. Coordinated between the Prime Minister's office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the DPM's office, the AG's office, spearheaded by the AG himself, moved us from principle to agreement. By early 2025, negotiations, as you know Madam Speaker, culminated in the treaty that the UK Parliament has ratified as I mentioned before. So, the final vote of the House of Lord will soon close the chapter.

The sceptic and birds of bad omen did not believe in the historical achievement. They were making a mockery of our patient and quiet diplomacy. They underestimated the capacity of our Prime Minister, the DPM and the Attorney General and our Ministry of

Foreign Affairs to be real champions of what I would qualify as quiet and efficient diplomacy. This is not simply a legal milestone; it is the completion of decolonisation. So, this is what I would also qualify as quiet diplomacy over noisy posturing as it happened with the previous regime.

This achievement was not born out provocation or theatrics; it was delivered by calm, credible and respectful diplomacy. The kind that builds trust not tension. Grand standing may steer applause at home, I agree but it seldom changes minds abroad. What delivered results were clarity of purpose, legal consistency and diplomatic composure. No comparison with a diplomacy as in the past anchored in vulgarity if you still remember, tempestuousness under the previous regime. Fiery declarations may sound patriotic but unfortunately, does not yield results. What works is credibility and consistency as I mentioned. This is what brought our victory.

Therefore, it is undeniable that the deal struct by the actual Government is far better than the one supposedly concluded by the previous regime although not perfect, I would agree. Diplomacy, as I mention very often, in international forums, is an art and a craft. So, from optics to outcomes, while previous approaches sought symbolical victories through domestic criminalisation, this Government pursued recognition, resolution and implementation.

The treaty not only affirms sovereignty; it establishes frameworks for co-operation, very important, and environment, sustainable development and also what is important is the welfare of the Chagossians. So, this is the sort of diplomacy with the new government that delivers. We just not talk; we walk the talk.

Now, I am here also to explain, to certain extent I agree that the Prime Minister mentioned there was possibly good intention when the law was passed but Madam Speaker, you will see that section 76B explicitly or implicitly try to cast, at that point in time, extra territorial shadows – punishing acts committed outside Mauritius by non-nationals for how they depicted our territory.

And you know, as a small country, extra territorial law is rare, I would say a heavy tool, justified only for universally condemned offences, for example, terrorism, piracy, trafficking and also backed by strong international cooperation. For a small but respected state, laws with global pretensions are neither credible or enforceable. They invite, very often, legal fiction and distract from substantive statecraft.

The idea that Mauritius could prosecute a publisher in a foreign capital for a map was at best, as I mentioned before, a symbolical posturing or, at worst, a legal absurdity. Sovereignty is secured by treaties and effective governance – this is what we did and this is what our hon. Prime Minister did –, not by unreachable criminal sanctions.

Repeal also enables freedom, scholarship and confidence. Section 76B, at that point in time, cast a Damocles sword over legitimate actors, publishers, NGOs, academics, cartographers, and journalists. Unfortunately, even if there was good intention, you will see that ambiguity chilled discussion and research. As an ex-academic, I have always been championing academic freedom.

With sovereignty now settled, we should encourage writers and scholars to analyse documents and critic this chapter of our history. There is nothing wrong to criticise the outcome of what we got, without fear and without criminal liability. That is what confidence looks like in a mature republic. For sure, we are a mature republic with this new Government now. So, that is the rule of law and proportionality.

Another shortcoming you will see is, generally, criminal provisions must be clear, necessary and also enforceable. Unfortunately, when we analyse closely section 76B, it was vague. This has also been criticised by the Supreme Court in a landmark judgment and also the law by restoring discipline to our criminal code and reserving penal sanctions only for real harms, not for abstraction.

Let me reassure the House, removing section 76B does not in any way weaken protection of national integrity. Existing offences already guard the republic, for example, fraud, forgery, sedition and the National Flag Act. So, these are balanced and enforceable, Madam Speaker. You will also see, Madam Speaker, that this repeal is only a sort of step number one. At this point, I would invite the SLO and the Office of the AG to start more technical work to amend other laws.

I am just making some recommendations. We must redefine baselines around Chagos and update coordinates of our EEZ – very important to update coordinates of the new EEZ that we have – , redefine our continental shelf under UNCLOS and also to notify the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea accordingly. This is not mere cartography, Madam Speaker. It is the legal consolidation of our regained maritime space and resources.

Regarding fisheries, as I mentioned, this is only a first step. We will have to align the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act and regulations to the new EEZ that we have. Also, what

we have to do is update licensing for all vessels operating the Chagos waters, extend monitoring control and surveillance regarding Illegal Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUU) and IUU enforcement, expand marine control and satellite surveillance, and file updated notifications within the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission – we know that the Deputy Prime Minister is doing a lot of work on that –, and relevant regional fisheries management organisations.

So, Madam Speaker, we also have to look at other laws. For example, look at how we are going to deliver special visa and special work permit when it comes to the archipelagos with specific regulations for Chagos and Diego Garcia. Maybe there has to be a sort of co-management. I am just giving some recommendations.

Madam Speaker, you will see that the Chagos Archipelago is among the world's most pristine marine resources. Mainland environmental rules cannot simply be transplanted in the context of the Chagos Archipelago. I am sure my good friend, hon. Minister Rajesh Bhagwan and hon. Junior Minister Ms J. Bérenger, will look into the matter. We will need also, Madam Speaker, a special EIA regime. We must establish a special EIA framework with lower triggers, cumulative impact assessments and a dedicated Chagos environmental directorate for permitting and monitoring.

We need also to redefine – I know that the British did it –, but we have to redefine the marine parks and NPAs with the gain of the Chagos Archipelagos. Regarding regional commitments, we must also mainstream our obligations, as I mentioned before, under the IOTC and the RFMOs, the Convention on Migratory Species and Migratory Flyways and advance SDG14, that is, Life Below Water.

We also have to revisit trade, customs and port state control. So, what I want to convey, Madam Speaker, is that this is a first step. We have to commend the SLO, the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Attorney General for taking the initiative, but I am sure that lot of work remains to be done. I know that the hon. AG and his team at the SLO are working very hard. I have just been mentioning some of the laws and regulations which have to be amended in order to mainstream the content of the treaty and what we have gained from the historical treaty.

Thank you for your attention, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Junior Minister.

Those of you who have come to visit me must have noticed that I have gotten rid of the map where the BIOT was still on the big map. So, if you have one in your office, you should have a quick look and maybe get rid of the map. Make sure you get new ones!

Thank you very much. Let us break for tea for half an hour. We will come back at 5 p.m.

At 4.33 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.15 p.m., with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Please be seated. Yes, hon. Minister!

The Minister of Housing and Land (Mr S. Mohamed): Thank you, Madam Speaker, as to other who have preceded me, I have listened very carefully to all the words that have been pronounced on this particular piece of proposed legislation.

I was, therefore, duty-bound to go back to the Bill that was presented back on the 23rd of November 2021 when the then, hon. Prime Minister came to this House to present the Criminal Code (Amendment) Bill (No. XVI of 2021). I have gone through the Hansard and I have noted therein that the background to this piece of legislation was what was being done in terms of Universal Postal Union – the issuing of coins, of stamps – but I went on further to see that this Bill has made specific provisions to render it criminal, the fact that this was being done under instructions from a foreign State.

It is all well and good to come up with a piece of legislation but then all members in this House will have to reflect on something. The question is, and I will limit myself to a very short intervention where I will only comment on the legal aspect. What is the point of really coming forward with a piece of legislation as they did and bring a new Section 76B of the law when the enforceability of that law itself was in question? The first question to ask oneself is not only that and the second is how would that law have been enforced?

So, how can one enforce criminal law of the Republic of Mauritius on another State, on another territory without the consent of the other State? When there is no international basis such as a treaty or even a mandate from the United Nations Security Council, that is the question. When I read all literature on this particular aspect, the first thing that comes up is: how would you have enforced the law?

So, yes, true, they came up with a piece of legislation. Their aim was supposedly to instil the sort of threat to criminalise the right to free speech and expression. But when you

analyse it, and this is what the literature says, is that the coin was not legal tender and the stamp was only a symbolical act. Therefore, the legality, therefore, the enforceability internationally of that piece of legislation, I always had very strong doubts about it.

Second element: criminalising speech on symbolical issues such as I have said: coins or stamps clearly could have called for constitutional challenges under the Constitution of Mauritius that guarantees free expression.

So, just typical of the former government, coming up with pieces of legislation and when we analyse history after this particular amendment was brought, another question – was there any action? The answer is no. Could there have been any action? I have put the question earlier and I do not believe there could have been.

So, I have listened to the hon. Prime Minister who made a very, very important speech in that he talks about the importance of trusting our democracy and the importance of trusting Mauritians but also, I go further the importance of trusting our friends. That is the message of this particular amendment brings forward today.

Another element that which I would like about is the fact that this debate is not about party politics. It has never been about party politics. It is about the nation. It is about sovereignty. It is about nation building. It is about preserving national integrity. This is all it is about but when one reads the speech of the former Prime Minister, he uses those words but the words he uses were empty because in fact when you read the concluding remarks of the hon. Prime Minister and the exchange he was having in this House – he was so much acting like the leader of a political party and could not in any way show that he was a statesman because he was not one. He was attacking the now hon. Deputy Prime Minister, he was refusing to set up a committee for us to work together on it – together, Opposition and Government – since it was a national debate. This is the attitude that was adopted by the former Prime Minister.

Make the difference. Today, the actual hon. Prime Minister said this is how history has shown how every single political party in power has contributed. He explained how, where it started from. He went through history; he also made reference to the Late Sir Anerood Jugnauth.

But the former government pretended as though the acted as though they were only ones who had anything to do with this issue, make it purely a political matter, a party-political matter when it was not.

And now, I would like to conclude that that since it is a national issue where of the members of the PMSD and where is the hon. Leader of the Opposition? This is the debate about territorial integrity, sovereignty of our nation and as the hon. Prime Minister has said: all through the years, every political leader has stood up and stood firm and he developed a strategy and every step was important towards where we have reached today and when we look at the seats today – empty.

Ms Anquetil: As usual!

Mr Mohamed: But let me say, they have nothing to talk about on other issues or they not want to say on other issues.

Can you imagine Madam Speaker, that they have nothing to say, today, when it comes to the sovereignty, the rights of our nation, territorial integrity – they have nothing to say?

So, that is why I end on this because I would have wish that they could have been here. It would have been a pleasure to hear them share their views. Yes, I would have had to make an effort but I would have listened to them. We would have listened to them because it is important for posterity. What would the history books say on a day when this is being argued and debated? They had an opportunity of coming here. The Constitution gave them those seats, recognised their right to be here, but still, they have chosen not to be here.

So, let the record show that when the time came to take position, to add their voice to the debate and to act as one people, they were absent. Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. hon. Minister!

Yes, Deputy Prime Minister!

(5.24 p.m.)

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Madam Speaker*, je tiens à saluer un très beau discours de l'honorable Premier ministre. Nous avons écouté attentivement il y a quelques instants et je tiens aussi à saluer ce que vient de dire mon collègue le ministre, Shakeel Mohamed. Il y a beaucoup de vérité dans les quelques mots, il n'a pas été long, exceptionnellement, mais il y a beaucoup de vérité dans ces quelques mots qu'il a utilisés.

Je crois qu'il faut le dire la loi, cette nouvelle Section 76B du Criminal Code en 2021 visait aussi à faire peur, ici, à Maurice et à d'autres aussi. Ce n'est pas notre style, ce n'est pas notre façon de gouverner. Nous croyons dans le dialogue, dans la liberté d'expression et

les gens ont le droit d'avoir des opinions mêmes si elles sont mauvaises mais qu'il faut respecter.

Je le répète ce morceau de loi de 2021 visait aussi – j'ai presque envie de dire surtout mais visait aussi – à faire peur. Et comme l'a dit mon collègue, le l'honorable ministre, Shakeel Mohamed. C'était clair dès le début, nous n'avons pas voté contre, nous avons *poke holes all over the place* dans cette loi-là en 2021 parce que nous avons quel genre de campagne ils auraient déclenché si nous avions dit – ce que vient de dire l'honorable ministre, Shakeel Mohamed.

C'était tellement évident, dès le départ que c'était inapplicable, que le but n'était pas d'appliquer cette loi-là. L'idée c'était de faire du bruit, de faire de la propagande et de faire peur. C'était, dès le départ, inapplicable. Et c'est pourquoi il n'y a jamais eu de poursuite, il n'y a jamais eu de *case* basée sur cette loi parce que c'était inapplicable. Le but n'était pas d'appliquer la loi, d'avoir une loi, c'était de faire du bruit, de faire peur. Mais, je crois que c'est là aussi l'explication de leur absence. C'est vrai qu'ils sont tout le temps absent, mais dans ce cas-là, franchement !

Quand nous approuvé le texte de loi dans la dernière séance, j'étais persuadé que quand même ce qu'il leur reste de vie politique, allait se manifester, qu'ils allaient s'agiter. Zéro pendant tout le weekend ! Zéro, et aujourd'hui, double zéro. Les deux ne sont pas là. C'est éloquent que l'intention était politique, politicienne, politicaille, mais c'est honteux. C'est franchement honteux pour un pays démocratique, respectable comme l'île Maurice.

Seulement, ce qui est aussi vrai, c'est cette campagne hystérique de la droite en Grande Bretagne. Cela c'est du réel. Aucun pays aujourd'hui ne conteste la souveraineté de l'île Maurice sur les Chagos, mais j'ai rarement vu une campagne hystérique comme celle qui se déroule depuis des semaines déjà et qu'au lieu de diminuer – non, mais quand on pense aux insanités, aux imbécilités que la droite britannique déblatère tous les jours, et en passant, en contradiction totale avec Trump, leur idole ! C'est leur idole. Moi j'avais craint à un moment donné que Trump ne fasse objection à l'accord que nous avons finalement conclu avec la Grand Bretagne.

Mais non, et eux aujourd'hui, mènent une campagne hystérique et se servent de ce bout de loi inapplicable dont l'intention n'avait jamais été d'être appliquée par le gouvernement MSM. Mais, aujourd'hui la droite en Grande Bretagne se sert à fond de ce morceau de loi. C'est pourquoi c'est bon qu'on *repeal*, qu'on retire ce morceau de loi de notre arsenal légal.

Cela ne va pas arrêter l'hystérie de ces messieurs, mesdames aussi de droite, de Grande Bretagne. Là c'est quelque chose ça ! Il y a une course pour savoir des mesdames ou messieurs réactionnaires qui sont les plus hystériques dans cette affaire. Ils vont continuer, mais au moins on leur retire un argument dont ils se servent.

Mais moi, *Madam Speaker,* ce qui m'attriste aussi c'est qu'il y a quelques chagossiens/chagossiennes qui jouent le jeu de l'hystérie. C'est triste quand je pense à un jeune homme, un jeune chagossien qui été recruté dans la police mauricienne, qui a réussi ses examens. Il été policier dans notre système. Il démissionne, il part pour aller dire qu'il est persécuté à Maurice, pour se servir de ce morceau de loi pour dire que voilà, on terrorise les chagossiens et les chagossiennes à l'île Maurice. Fausseté complète et il est bon que nous retirons ce morceau de loi de notre arsenal juridique, légal, parce que ça donne prétexte aux hystériques de Grande Bretagne, mais aussi aux quelques chagossiens/chagossiennes de mauvaise foi de mener le genre de campagne qu'ils sont en train de mener.

Donc, en mai 2025, quand l'accord a été signé et nous revenons de loin, parce que franchement moi quand nous avons négocié, quand nous avons finalisé cet accord avec la Grande Bretagne, ce n'était pas gagné d'avance dans le contexte international de ce moment-là et qui dure, et qui est encore avec nous. Nous avons le droit d'être fiers. Nous avons eu à faire certaines concessions, oui, parce que nous vivons dans un monde réel, un monde difficile, très difficile. Mais aujourd'hui, c'est chose faite, ça se discute encore à Londres, mais les choses finiront par se passer comme elles doivent se passer. Mais, c'est difficile aujourd'hui de ne pas comprendre le contexte dans lequel nous avons travaillé. Il faut comprendre ce contexte dans lequel on a conclu cet accord avec la Grande Bretagne.

Donc, depuis qu'il y a cet accord, il n'y a plus de raison d'être de ce morceau de loi. Il y a des raisons de retirer ce morceau de loi parce que ça donne des armes aux hystériques et aux gens de mauvaise foi. Mais aujourd'hui, il n'y a plus de raison d'être, et c'est pourquoi il est bon pour une première occasion aujourd'hui qu'on retire cette nouvelle section 76B qui est restée lettre morte depuis qu'elle a été votée en 2021. C'est pourquoi il est bon qu'il y ait l'unanimité dans le Parlement. L'absence de l'Opposition est plus que regrettable, condamnable comme toujours, mais nous, face à l'histoire encore une fois, nous faisons notre devoir.

Je dois dire que j'aimerais conclure en revenant sur ce que le MMM a réussi en deux occasions. Avant mais surtout après les élections de 1976. C'est le MMM – je ne dis pas ça

avec une grosse tête, mais l'histoire nous regarde – qui après les élections de 1976, comme l'a dit le Premier ministre, a mis l'affaire Chagos, Diego Garcia, la question de souveraineté à l'ordre du jour : local et international. Bien d'autres se sont joints à ce combat, bravo et nous, au MMM, nous avons le droit d'être fiers de cela. Et moi je suis personnellement – à chaque occasion je le rappelle – fier d'avoir aussi mis Tromelin à l'ordre du jour. La petite île Tromelin qu'il nous reste à retrouver. La petite île Tromelin était considérée comme une des îles éparses françaises, s'il vous plaît. J'ai fait mes recherches, j'ai été fouiller dans l'histoire et franchement jusqu'au aujourd'hui je ne comprends pas comment j'ai réussi à aller à Tananarive – j'étais simple député, secrétaire général du MMM – de m'entretenir avec le président malgache de l'époque Ratsiraka et d'obtenir de lui qu'à partir de cette date de 1978, Madagascar cesse de revendiquer Tromelin, continue de revendiquer les quatre autres îles dites éparses et ils appuient notre revendication, nous appuyons leurs revendications.

Je ne me souviens pas vraiment comment j'ai réussi ça, mais c'est pourquoi ce n'est pas seulement parce que Madagascar est un pays peuplement de l'île Maurice, mais c'est un voisin, c'est un pays frère ou sœur ou les deux. C'est pourquoi nous avons droit au MMM – d'autres aussi – mais nous avons droit au MMM d'être fiers de ce que nous avons fait concernant les Chagos et Diego Garcia, la souveraineté de l'île Maurice sur les Chagos et j'espère que le temps viendra aussi vite que possible où nous retrouverons notre souveraineté sur la petite île, le petit morceau de sable Tromelin et qui a toute son importance dans le cadre de notre histoire. Encore une fois, je félicite le Premier ministre pour son discours et je remercie tous ceux qui sont présents aujourd'hui pour faire notre devoir vis-à-vis de notre histoire.

Merci, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

(5.34 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, first of all, I want to thank all those who participated in the debate, and are also present here – hon. Narsinghen, hon. Mohamed, the Deputy Prime Minister. Again, I also regret that the two Members of the Opposition have chosen not to be here, as usual, even though as hon. Shakeel Mohamed said, it is a non-partisan Bill. As the DPM and hon. Mohamed also said, they made it a partisan issue as if they owned the monopoly to defend our claim for the sovereignty of Chagos. As the Deputy

Prime Minister said, and he is right, the law was there *à faire peur*. It was not enforceable as you rightly said – not enforceable.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Who has been sued? Nobody! Just a law, *blahblahblah*, and again as the Deputy Prime Minister pointed out – it is good that he pointed out – lots of propaganda, falsities, fake news are being propagated in the House of Commons, the Reform Party, especially from Nigel Farage. The latest thing they invented – that we are discussing with China for leasing Peros Banhos. Where did he get this information from? God knows!

I think the hon. Attorney General rightly went on the MBC to forcefully deny this, and this was taken up in the House of Commons by the Prime Minister, hon. Starmer. It is also true – I did not know this little bit – that the Deputy Prime Minister said that the young Chagossian who went for interview was accepted as a Police Officer in our Police Force, who now says he was persecuted in Mauritius. It is so blatant that you cannot even believe you are hearing this!

This law, as all the hon. Members have said, is now *caduc*. There is no *raison d'être*. Section 76B has no *raison d'être* because there is no country in the world, internationally, or the UK or anyone else, claiming or has doubt about our sovereignty on the whole of the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia.

With these words, I commend the Bill to the House.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Just for the sake of clarity, may I draw everybody's attention to Section 111 of the Constitution on the definition of Mauritius, which I am sure the Deputy Prime Minister will remember, that all the islands, including Tromelin, Chagos, everything was in there, and it says –

> "(d) such places or areas as may be designated by regulations made by the Prime Minister, rights over which are or may become exercisable by Mauritius;"

Very interesting piece! Do you agree, hon. Attorney General?

Mr Glover: I do!

Madam Speaker: Thank you. That was the summing up. So, the debate is over.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

THE CRIMINAL CODE (AMENDMENT NO. 2) BILL

(No. XXVI of 2025)

The Criminal Code (Amendment No. 2) Bill (No. XXVI of 2025) was considered and agreed to.

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

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Criminal Code (Amendment No. 2) Bill (No. XXVI of 2025) was read a third time and passed.

Second Reading

THE COURT OF RODRIGUES JURISDICTION (AMENDMENT) BILL

(No. XXV of 2025)

Order for Second Reading read.

(5.42 p.m.)

The Attorney General (Mr G. P. C. Glover, SC): Madam Speaker, I move that the Court of Rodrigues Jurisdiction (Amendment) Bill be read a second time.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present to the House Court of Rodrigues Jurisdiction (Amendment) Bill. Its purpose is straightforward: it is to ensure that the jurisdiction and protective powers provided under the Children's Court Act 2020 can be exercised directly in Rodrigues without requiring children and families to travel to Mauritius for matters that concern their wellbeing.

This amendment reflects something very simple and practical. Rodrigues is part of our republic. The children of Rodrigues deserve the same access to protection and justice as children in Mauritius without added hurdles, delays or unnecessary travel. Today, when a case involves a vulnerable or a child witness, proceedings too often require travel to Mauritius. That is difficult for families and service providers, and in urgent matters, it can compromise child protection itself.

As set out in Section 5 of the Children's Court Act as it currently stands, the Protection Division of the Children's Court ensures that matters affecting the safety and wellbeing of children must be dealt with swiftly and with a full authority of the law.

It has clear jurisdiction to hear applications for protective measures under Part IV of the Act with magistrates designated for this crucial role. Its orders are enforceable as civil judgments, and appeals may be brought before a Judge in Chambers with guardian *ad litem* appointed where necessary to safeguard the child's best interest throughout the process.

In other words, Madam Speaker, as you personally know very well, the powers of the Protection Division of the Children's Court are of extreme importance. They cover the full protection pathway for children in need as per Part IV of the Act, which defines when a child requires care and protection, whether it be abandonment, neglect, exploitation or exposure to harm. It empowers Police to intervene urgently and authorise officers to make assessments, access premises and take immediate steps in the children's best interests. And importantly, it makes reporting of children in danger mandatory with confidentiality safeguards.

Part IV of the Children's Act provides for court ordered measures, emergency protection orders followed by placement orders with social enquiry reports and renewals within set limits and ancillary orders such as supervision, counselling, medical care and restrictions on contact. For longer horizons, the court may issue long term care orders and regulate contact through contact orders always guided by the child's best interest and wishes.

Finally, it addresses serious behavioural concerns through preventive intervention orders and establishes a structured Child Mentoring Scheme, monitored by the authorities. By extending these powers to the magistrate for Rodrigues, this Bill ensures that such sensitive cases can be heard and resolved closer to where those families live. It strengthens the ability of social workers, Police Officers and medical professionals on the island to act promptly and effectively in the best interest of children.

Madam Speaker, it is important to recall that this measure does not change the structure of our judiciary. The Court of Rodrigues remains part of the National Judicial System of the Republic of Mauritius and remains handled by the same Judicial Administration, the same standards and the same legal safeguards.

This Bill does not devolve judicial authority; it merely brings existing national protections within easier reach of residents of Rodrigues. Government will continue strengthening operational capacity in Rodrigues where the Judiciary requires it, including

better facilities, improved coordination with child protection agencies and the right support for magistrates and court staff handling these sensitive matters. No child, Madam Speaker, should be left with the impression that justice lies only across the sea. Justice must be accessible, timely and visible.

Madam Speaker, this Bill brings more logic and convenience to the way we serve Rodrigues families: it reduces delays, it strengthens child protection and it brings our Republic's justice system closer to those who need it where they need it. Access to justice, as I always say.

I, therefore, commend this Bill to the House.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Now, we have Ms Henriette-Manan, please!

(5.48 p.m.)

Ms D. Henriette-Manan (Third Member for Rodrigues): Merci, Madame la présidente.

Merci de me donner l'opportunité de m'adresser à la Chambre sur ce projet de loi qui concerne les enfants de Rodrigues. La discrimination, l'injustice, l'inégalité, ce sont des mots qui résonnent trop souvent encore dans les sphères législatives et judiciaires de Rodrigues. Et pourtant, ces mots ne devraient pas faire partie du vocabulaire quotidien d'une république qui se veut juste, équitable et unie.

Je ne cesserai jamais de le dire haut et fort : l'autonomie de Rodrigues ne doit en aucun cas servir de prétexte pour tolérer des inégalités de traitement entre les citoyens d'une même république. Cette autonomie de Rodrigues, dont nous venons tout récemment de commémorer le 23eme anniversaire, doit être respectée, doit être consolidée et pleinement valorisée. C'est précisément dans cet esprit que s'inscrit le *Court of Rodrigues Jurisdiction (Amendment) Bill* que nous examinons aujourd'hui.

Cet amendement vient corriger un déséquilibre, combler un retard et surtout affirmer un principe d'égalité entre les enfants de la république, qu'ils vivent à Maurice ou à Rodrigues. Rappelons-le, la loi de 2020, sur les tribunaux pour enfants a instauré des juridictions spécialisées comprenant deux divisions distinctes : la division de la protection et la division

criminelle. Cette réforme, votée à Maurice en 2020, a marqué un tournant décisif pour la justice juvénile dans notre pays mais à Rodrigues, cette réforme a mis cinq longues années à trouver son prolongement naturel – cinq ans, Madame la présidente. On croirait encore être à l'époque où les décrets voyageaient en bateau et arrivaient avec retard.

Madam Speaker : Ou par pigeon voyageur, peut-être ?

Ms Henriette-Manan : Ou par pigeon voyageur, voilà ! Bravo aux magistrats, aux officiers et aux personnels judiciaires de Rodrigues qui pendant ce temps ont continué à faire leur devoir, souvent dans un cadre légal inadapté et surtout avec les moyens du bord. Cet amendement vient donc mettre de l'ordre, donner une base légale solide et inscrire Rodrigues dans une approche nationale cohérente de la protection de l'enfance.

En apparence technique, cet amendement porte en réalité un message fort, celui de l'unité de la république de Maurice et du respect égal des droits de tous ces enfants, qu'ils vivent à Maurice, à Rodrigues ou demain, dans les autres îles de la république. Tous nos enfants doivent bénéficier des mêmes garanties de justice, de dignité et de protection. Je salue donc cette mesure qui arrive certes tardivement, mais qui est accueillie favorablement par la population judiciaire de l'île.

De plus, elle intervient à un moment décisif dans un contexte de modernisation, la rénovation complète du Rodrigues Court House, réalisée au coût de R 7 millions, financée par l'assemblée régionale Rodrigues. Je tiens donc ici à féliciter le Chef commissaire et son équipe pour leur vision et leur engagement dans cette entreprise essentielle. Grâce à cette rénovation, le bâtiment, restait inchangé pendant plus de 25 ans, répond enfin aux besoins d'une justice moderne, humaine et inclusive.

Aujourd'hui, nous disposons d'une salle spécialement adaptée aux enfants, offrant un environnement plus serein et rassurant. D'une salle de vidéoconférence qui permet aux jeunes victimes de témoigner sans devoir affronter directement leur agresseur, une avancée majeure en matière de respect, de dignité et de bien-être des enfants. C'est là une étape importante dans la construction d'une justice qui met l'humain au centre, qui comprend les fragilités et les besoins les plus vulnérables. Mais, Madame la présidente, nous ne devons pas nous arrêter en si bon chemin. Le progrès appelle la continuité.

Il nous manque encore certaines infrastructures essentielles, à commencer par un *children's play area*, un espace d'accueil et de réconfort pour les enfants avant ou après leur

comparution. L'espace existe déjà. Il ne manque que la volonté budgétaire pour le concrétiser. Nous devons aussi veiller à doter la cour de psychologues qualifiés, capable d'accompagner les enfants tout au long du processus judiciaire et d'un *Probation Officer*, chargé du suivi des rapports sociaux et des recommandations dans l'intérêt supérieur de l'enfant. Ce sont là des éléments essentiels pour rendre notre justice vraiment adaptée à la réalité des enfants. Cet amendement vient combler des lacunes oui, mais il doit aussi ouvrir la voie à une réflexion plus globale sur la justice juvénile à Rodrigues.

Trop souvent encore des familles rodriguaise vivent des drames judiciaires silencieux comme l'a mentionné l'Attorney General. Celui de voir leur enfant transféré à Maurice, loin de leurs proches, simplement parce que Rodrigues ne dispose pas des infrastructures nécessaires. Ces enfants déjà fragilisés se retrouvent isolés, coupés de leurs repères affectifs et culturels et il faut le dire, sans détour, certains reviennent brisés, perdus, parfois transformés en délinquants aguerris. La république ne devrait pas accepter cela car un enfant, qu'il soit né à Port Mathurin ou à Port-Louis, reste un enfant de la république et méritent la même attention, la même protection et la même dignité.

Permettez-moi, Madame la présidente, d'insister sur un point essentiel ? Cet amendement aussi louable soit-il ne constitue qu'une première étape. Le *Children's Act 2020* lui-même doit être amendé afin d'inclure pleinement Rodrigues. En effet, la section 8 de cette loi, qui établit la composition du *National Children's Panel*, mentionne plusieurs ministères et institutions nationales mais omet de prévoir la représentation de Rodrigues. C'est là une omission regrettable qu'il convient de corriger rapidement car comment pouvons-nous parler d'un système véritablement national de protection de l'enfance si Rodrigues n'a pas de voix au chapitre ? Une république unie ne peut tolérer des zones d'ombre dans la représentation de ses territoires.

Je tiens aussi à saluer le travail remarquable de la commissaire de la Famille à Rodrigues qui œuvre pour régulariser le *Child Mentoring Committee* sur l'île en conformité avec la section 44 du Children's Act 2020. Cette initiative témoigne d'une volonté claire de régulariser et d'implanter localement les structures prévues par la loi. Je l'encourage vivement à poursuivre dans cette voie car c'est à travers ce genre d'action concrète que les textes prennent vie, que les promesses deviennent réalités.

Madame la présidente, les lois à elles seules ne changent pas le destin des enfants. Elles doivent s'accompagner de structures solides, de professionnels formés et d'un engagement

collectif. La justice ne doit pas seulement être rendue, elle doit aussi être comprise, vécue et ressentie par ceux qu'elle protège.

Madame la présidente, le regard que nous portons sur nos enfants est le reflet du pays que nous voulons demain. En protégeant nos enfants, en leur garantissant un traitement juste, digne et équitable, nous consolidons les fondations mêmes de notre République.

Cet amendement n'est donc pas un simple texte administratif, c'est un engagement moral et républicain envers Rodrigues, envers la justice et surtout envers nos enfants – ces citoyens de demain.

Je veux croire que ce texte marquera un tournant, qu'il ouvrira la voie à un air où la justice à Rodrigue ne sera plus perçue comme une copie tardive de celle de Maurice mais comme une institution forte, respectée et pleinement intégrée à la république. Je veux croire que chaque enfant Rodriguais, quel que soit son parcours, pourra trouver auprès de la justice, une main tendue, un regard bienveillant et une chance de se reconstruire. Et pour marquer la journée internationale de la langue et culture *Kreol*, permettez-moi, Madame la présidente, de cité ce proverbe Africain en *Kreol* –

« Sak zefor ki nou fer pou protez ek respekte drwa zenfan se enn pa ki nou fer pou enn lemond pli zoli. »

Par ces mots, Madame la présidente, je soutiens pleinement *Le Court Of Rodrigues Jurisdiction (Amendment) Bill.* Je le fais au nom de la justice, de l'égalité et de la dignité de tous nos enfants de la République.

Je vous remercie.

Madam Speaker: *Thank you*. Je vous pose juste une question, Vous avez bien dit que vous avez le *video evidence* dans votre tribunal ?

Ms Henriette-Manan: Video conferencing.

Madam Speaker: J'aimerai savoir si on a la même chose à Maurice. Je ne suis pas très sûre. C'est nouveau alors.

Allez, vas-y, *hon. Member.*

(5.58 p.m.)

Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Let me congratulate my colleague from Rodrigues for her intervention.

Madam Speaker, the Court of Rodrigues Jurisdiction Act dates back to 1913. The present Court of Rodrigues Jurisdiction (Amendment) Bill (No. XXV of 2025) marks an essential milestone in this long journey. As indicated in the Explanatory Note, this Bill amends section 2 and 12 of the Court of Rodrigues Jurisdiction Act. The object of the Bill is to extend the application of Children's Court Act 2020 to Rodrigues.

Consequently, the magistrate for Rodrigues will now have jurisdiction to hear and determine cases which, in Mauritius, fall within the purview of the Protection Division and the Criminal Division of the Children's Court.

Madam Speaker, on 06 May this year, I addressed PQB/423 to the hon. Attorney General, asking whether in relation to the Children's Court, he could obtain from the Master and Registrar the number of sessions held in Rodrigues, the number of cases heard and whether consideration will be given to establishing such a court in Rodrigues. In the absence of the hon. Attorney General, Mr Glover, the Ag. Attorney General, hon. Shakeel Mohamed, replied and I quote –

> "In regard to the specialised nature and jurisdiction of the Children's Court, consideration may be given for the establishment thereof in Rodrigues. Accordingly, Government will act in consultation with the honourable Chief Justice for any decision to be taken thereof."

Madam Speaker, I commend the tangible outcome and timely efforts of the Attorney General and his dedicated officers for their rapidity of action.

This Bill symbolises a collective judicial and governments, Rodrigues and Mauritius, commitment to the safety and well-being of all children in our Republic and more particularly in Rodrigues. The specialised Children's Court will surely recognise the physical, emotional, developmental needs of children and ensures that the judicial process itself does not further traumatise them.

Until now, the Court of Rodrigues, an adult-oriented court, includes a child- friendly model, a Family Juvenile Unit which serves as a mini–Children's Court in principle, inaugurated in 2016 under the initiative of the former magistrate, Pareemala Devi Mauree. Madam Speaker, I wish to sincerely commend, her honour Magistrate Mauree, for her visionary leadership and pioneering work in establishing this unique model in collaboration with the probation office of the Regional Assembly.

The creation of the unit was a response to the Human Rights Commission's 2015 remarks, highlighting the absence of reformatory institutions, probation homes and detention centres for minors as well as the rise in sexual offences involving minors and delays in bringing juvenile cases to justice. I note that the Chief Justice inaugurated the New Children Court Unit during his last visit in Rodrigues in August this year.

Madam Speaker, from societal values, perspectives it is worth noting that our children in Rodrigues generally do not display high levels of criminal behaviour. This is important for the judiciary to safeguard them from the lifelong stigma associated with a criminal record.

Madam Speaker, statistics from Rodrigues reveals that there are around 52 cases for the last three years for emergency protection order for child with severe behavioural concerns and placement on long-term order. Criminal cases for child victims of sexual abuse: 20 cases and juvenile offenders around 12 cases.

Madam Speaker, for a Children Court to function effectively, it must be equipped with the right tools particularly access to therapeutic and support services for families and children there.

The House will recall that during my intervention on the Children's Court and Sex Offender Register Bill in 2020, I highlighted the need for facilities of the Rodrigues Family Juvenile Court Unit such as video conferencing, digital recording, a children's play area, a small library, the witness room in the court to be linked with the court room and materials on children protection for professionals to be made available. I also stress on the importance of child-friendly procedures including CCTV cameras to protect children who are victims and witnesses or offenders.

At present, Madam Speaker, in relation to sentencing a minor in Rodrigues, Rodrigues has a Rehabilitation Youth Centre (RYC) Girls with no inmates actually, which is good and a shelter for boys, le Foyer Roso not registered yet, hon. Attorney General, no Correctional Youth Centre, no probation homes or hostel and the transit homes requiring major upgrading and other facilities, no trained and qualified rehabilitation officers. Instead, they are relying on prison officers. There is a safe residential care institution for children at the Foyer Marie-Madeleine Delacroix at Baladirou accompanying around 30 children for their reintegration into family and normal life.

Madam Speaker, there remains an urgent need for a proper probation home in Rodrigues for children with severe behavioural problems as many at risk children come from

broken and vulnerable families. I note that the law is silent as there is no provision for cases where juvenile with severe problems can't be placed in institutions like probation home or hostel. My question is – what to do with them? There is a silence in the law around this point.

Actually, minors from Rodrigues, rightly said by hon. Ms Manan and the hon. Attorney General as well, are being transferred to Mauritius CYC. I believe there is a constitutional right problem being deprived of visits by close relatives.

And in line with Rule 16 of a Beijing rules and Children Act 2020, a dedicated clinical psychologist must assist the Children Court, the probation and aftercare service. At present, Rodrigues has only one clinical psychologist despite increasing demand of the service.

Madam Speaker, the Ombudsperson for Children, Mrs Aneeta Goorah, has highlighted a few major challenges for Rodrigues in relation to children in her annual report 2024-2025, requiring our urgent attention. I note with concern, for childcare and maternal parenting in Rodrigues, of the non-renewal, since 2022, of 20 *garderies* licences. There is only one registered *garderie*, and you can imagine the bearing with regard to children care and maternal parenting. I, therefore, urge the local authority, with due respect to our autonomy, in particular the Commission for Child Development, to play an active rehabilitative role for child victims of sexual offences, domestic violence and offenders alike.

Madam Speaker, on a word of caution, the establishment of this Children's Unit or Children's Court in Rodrigues must not be seen as an *échappatoire* or weakening parental authority thereat. It must instead promote a shared responsibility among families, the community and the State at large.

Many cases involving children in Rodrigues arise directly from poverty, the lack of food, shelter, property housing and a safe family environment. As we say, *enn fami, nou bann zanfan bizin ena enn bon lakaz, bizin ena enn bon lanvironnman pou zot grandi*. This is precisely where, Madam Speaker, given that in Rodrigues, since 2022, not a single concrete social housing has been constructed, I will continue to press on Rodrigues Regional Authority to urgently implement the long overdue housing scheme project for the benefit of vulnerable families and our children.

Madam Speaker, before concluding, allow me to make some proposals in relation to this Bill for the benefit of all children in our Republic. During some researches on the children's court in other jurisdictions, I observed that despite the constitutional rights

provided to individuals under Section 3 of our Constitution and the progressive provisions of the Children's Court Act 2020, there remains a need to include specific constitutional clauses that clearly define and elaborate the rights of every child in our Republic. I firmly believe that such inclusion would ensure greater clarity and the application of rights and fundamental freedom for our children. This would align our Constitution more closely to the core principle of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Madam Speaker, for instance, the only explicit constitutional reference to our children currently appears only under Section 14, Protection of freedom to establish schools, sub clause (3) which merely provides that no person shall be prevented from sending a child to any school. That is the only one – Section 14.

Despite existing legislative provisions, I believe that constitutional guarantees for our children should be consolidated under one specific article in our Constitution. Let me just come to my proposals. For instance, in addition to free compulsory education, basic nutrition, shelter and healthcare, every child should have a right –

- to be protected from abuse, violence, exploitation, inhuman treatment, punishment;
- to parental care and protection;
- not to be detained except as a measure of last resort, and when detained, to be held for the shortest appropriate, amongst others.

I am, therefore, convinced that it is necessary to amend and entrench specific additional constitutional protection for children, as is the case in several African and European countries such as Ghana, Kenya, Sweden, South Africa, Canada, India, Germany, and Italy.

Madam Speaker, the judiciary, while establishing this more child friendly court, shall also ensure sensitive training for magistrate and court staff in Rodrigues. I trust that the honourable Chief Justice, in future judicial assignments, will take into consideration a magistrate's experience and understanding of Rodrigues social realities, child welfare and family needs.

Furthermore, in collaboration with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, collaboration must continue –

- to recruit additional Probation Officers, psychologists, as I mentioned, as the existing Probation Unit remains understaffed;

- to recruit associated human resources and provide necessary training to implement, for example, Madam Speaker, the Diversion Programme under Section 56 of Children's Act. It is not being implemented. They do not have the necessary staff.

Let me also propose, Madam Speaker, that either the Ombudsperson for Children or any relevant institution undertake shortly a study in Rodrigues to examine how children express their voices and wishes during court proceedings with a view to improve the system.

On a final note, Madam Speaker, on today's Order Paper of the Regional Assembly's sitting, there was mention of a Motion standing in the name of the Commissioner for Child Development, proposing the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Child Mentoring) Regulations 2025, thus repealing the 2014 regulation, which finally has been removed. I believe it is a good move by the hon. Commissioner to have removed that motion. Indeed, it is a welcomed initiative, pending the enactment of this Bill.

Madam Speaker, with these words, I support the Court of Rodrigues Jurisdiction (Amendment) Bill (No. XXV of 2025). I thank you for your kind attention as always.

Madam Speaker: Are you surprised that I am interested in these matters?

Mr François: I know why.

Madam Speaker: Actually, I will refer you to Section 11 of the Constitution, about one of the rights where children or minors are mentioned. Not many minors are mentioned in the Constitution, but that was a very tall order. Maybe the Attorney General and the Minister will be able to reply. Very interesting.

Now, I think I have hon. Narsinghen. You are going to say a few words. Maybe you can help us.

(6.13 p.m.)

The Junior Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr H. Narsinghen): Yes, a few words, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: A few legal words as well.

Mr Narsinghen: I can fully understand the zeal of my two friends from Rodrigues, but also, I cannot understand, again, at the cost of maybe saying the same thing, how our two friends from the Opposition are not present. This amendment may seem not to be important for them at least, but I consider it to be very important.

Madam Speaker, when it comes to the Constitution, you have multiple approaches, and I have been explaining these approaches to my students. My approach has always been to take the generous approach in the interpretation of the Constitution. When this law was passed in 2020, when it was not extended to our children in Rodrigues, this potentially could be a breach of Section 3 and Section 16 of the Constitution, besides the section you mentioned. Why? Because when you analyse closely, when you scrutinise Section 3 and Section 16 of the Constitution, you will find out that one of the grounds for discrimination is also place of origin. So, according to me, potentially, this was a clear, stark breach of the Constitution. This is the first point.

Secondly, since I do not want to hammer on certain points, as I did previously on section 76B of the Criminal Code, I want to explain to the population that we, as a democratic State, also have an obligation to comply with our international obligations. You will understand that, in a way, we are implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Not only the UN Convention, ladies and gentlemen, but we are also implementing the African Charter. Very often, in human rights, we tend to forget the existence of the African Charter. So, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child is very important. One of the cardinal principles entrenched in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child is the principle of the best interest of the child principle. This principle has been onboarded by the legislation that we have in Mauritius.

Let me briefly refer to section 12 of the legislation, that is, the Children's Court Act. You will see a number of adaptions are being made in Section 12. I will just mention two for the sake of time. For example, the Court shall ensure that appropriate arrangements are made to the courtroom to hear the child's evidence. Here, we are referring to the child evidence. For the child to be accompanied by his parents unless the Court designates another person to company the child. Also, you will see, there have been special adaptations made, for example, to the use of video links, etc.

So, these special adaptations, Madam Speaker, have been made in the law and children in Mauritius, right from Soulliac to Cap Malheureux, have benefiting from that piece of legislation. Unfortunately, children in Rodrigues have not been able to benefit from such adaptations. So, I think we have to commend the hon. Attorney General and his team, after at least five years, to come up with this piece of legislation to redress the situation. They have to be commended for that.

You will see, Madam Speaker, in very practical terms, what does it implicate for the parents especially in Rodrigues. It would mean that there would be less travelling; it would implicate that this will cost less for the families and also for social workers, because when there is a case involving children, we do not only need magistrates, we also need social workers, psychologists and people who know the realities of Rodrigues. So, when the case is being heard in Rodrigues itself and whereby, we have extended the jurisdiction of the Court of Rodrigues, I think, this is a significant progress that we have made.

Also, there are very important principle – which I would call a sort of super-constitutional principle – the principle of access to justice. We cannot give justice to parents in Mauritius, to the children in Mauritius and not to the children in Rodrigues.

So, I think, we have made what would I qualify as a sort of quantum leap in terms of democratising the system, in terms of giving justice to the people of Rodrigues. So, I would strongly commend the Bill. Thank you for your attention, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes! Hon. Minister.

(6.19 p.m.)

The Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare (Ms A. Navarre-Marie): Merci, Madame la présidente.

Madame la présidente, je suis fière aujourd'hui de prendre la parole sur ce projet d'amendement. *The Court of Rodrigues Jurisdiction (Amendment) Bill (No.XXV of 2025)* en apparence anodin mais ô combien fondamentale car ce projet de loi représente une avancée majeure dans le paysage du judiciaire à Rodrigues.

En effet, ce projet d'amendement présenté par mon collègue l'*Attorney General* bien que concis dans sa forme revêt une importance capitale pour les enfants et les familles de Rodrigues.

Madame la présidente, ce texte de loi comme indiqué par mon collègue l'*Attorney General*, vise à amender la loi sur la juridiction du tribunal de Rodrigues afin d'y étendre l'application du *Children's Court Act* de 2020. Je dois affirmer que ce projet était tant attendu.

Lors de mes rencontres avec la Commissaire des affaires féminines à Rodrigues de même qu'avec la *minority leader* lorsqu'elles sont à Maurice ou même lors de ma mission à Rodrigues le mois dernier, m'ont fait toutes les deux parts de leurs *concerns* sur la question.

Madame la présidente, la Chambre se souviendra qu'en 2020 l'adoption du *Children's Court Act* avait permis d'établir un tribunal spécialisé pour les affaires impliquant des enfants en besoins de protection ou en conflit avec la loi. Le *Children's Court Act* avait dans son sillage institué deux divisions essentielles dans son application notamment, la *Protection Division* qui traite des questions de bien-être, de garde et de protection des enfants sous le *Children's Act* de 2020 et la *Criminal Division* qui traite des infractions notamment, d'abus sexuels commis sur les enfants ou des délits dans lesquels des mineurs sont impliqués.

Cependant, Madame la présidente, jusqu'à présent la juridiction du tribunal pour enfants ne s'applique qu'à Maurice. En novembre 2020, lors de mon intervention sur un projet de loi, *the Children's Court Bill*, je disais que les objectifs étaient un bon départ.

Oui, c'était un bon départ, mais il était non seulement nécessaire d'aller plus loin. Hormis de *Children's Court* qui fait partie de *Children's Act* de 2020, il est important de revoir toute la législation concernant les enfants car elle comporte des lacunes.

Je peux assurer la Chambre que mon ministère est actuellement en consultation avec le *State Law Office* pour revoir tout le *Children's Act* pour une meilleure protection de tous les enfants de la république et bien sûre, tout sera fait en consultation avec nos sœurs et frères de Rodrigues.

Madame la présidente, je dois dire que cinq ans après, c'est ce gouvernement qui prend les mesures pour avancer. Jusqu'à ici, les affaires concernant les enfants à Rodrigues devait soit être transférées à Maurice avec toutes les complications logistiques et émotionnelles que cela implique soit être traitées dans le cadre de juridictions ordinaires sans bénéficier des procédures spécifiques et protectrices prévues par le *Children's Court Act*.

Durant ma récente visite à Rodrigues, j'ai posé la question sur le fonctionnement de la Cour pour les enfants et je compris que c'était le système D – de l'improvisation. Ce présent amendement garanti désormais que les enfants de Rodrigues auront le même accès à une

justice spécialisée et bienveillante que les enfants vivant à Maurice et vient ainsi corriger une inégalité.

Madame la présidente, je voudrais saluer le travail de l'*Attorney General* qui depuis sa prise de fonction s'est donné pour mission de corriger au fur et à mesure les anomalies qui existent dans un certain nombre de textes de loi. Les amendements apportés à ce présent texte de loi vont dans ce sens. En effet, ce texte comporte deux dispositions majeures – dans la première disposition la clause 3 modifie l'article 2 de la loi principale afin d'y insérer une référence au *Children's Court Act* de 2020. Cet amendement permet d'intégrer officiellement le cadre juridique du tribunal pour enfants dans le système judiciaire de Rodrigues. Dans la seconde disposition, la clause 4, remplace le paragraphe 1 de l'article 12, toujours de la loi principale, pour que le magistrat à Rodrigues puisse juger les affaires qui à Maurice relèveraient de la Protection Division ou de la Criminal Division du tribunal pour enfants.

En d'autres termes, Madame la présidente, le magistrat de Rodrigues exercera désormais les mêmes pouvoirs et compétences qu'un magistrat du tribunal pour enfants à Maurice. En étendant la juridiction du tribunal pour enfants à Rodrigues, nous faisons un pas décisif vers une justice équitable et accessible pour tous les enfants de la République. Les enfants de Rodrigues, victimes de maltraitance, de négligence, d'abus sexuel ou d'exploitation, verront les affaires les concernant traitées sur place dans des délais raisonnables et dans un environnement adapté à leur âge et à leur sensibilité. De la même manière, les jeunes en conflit avec la loi, bénéficieront d'un accompagnement éducatif et de réhabilitation plutôt que d'un traitement strictement punitif.

C'est là toute la philosophie de ces amendements, c'est-à-dire, apporter une justice qui protège, qui éduque et qui répare au lieu de punir. Dans le même temps, il faut savoir que ce texte de loi s'accompagne d'un renforcement du dispositif local à Rodrigues. Il donnera au magistrat, aux travailleurs sociaux et aux services de la protection des enfants à Rodrigues les moyens juridiques nécessaires pour intervenir efficacement dans les affaires concernant les enfants.

Madame la présidente, ces amendements s'inscrivent aussi dans la continuité des engagements pris par la République de Maurice en vertu de la convention des Nations Unies relative aux droits des enfants. Le choix que nous faisons aujourd'hui dans cette Chambre, traduit dans les faits le principe fondamental selon lequel l'intérêt supérieur de l'enfant doit toujours primer. Aussi, notre vote de ce soir réaffirme la volonté de ce gouvernement de

garantir une égalité de traitement et de protection pour chaque enfant de la République de Maurice. Le *Court of Rodrigues Jurisdiction (Amendment) Bill 2025* est bien plus qu'un simple exercice. C'est avant tout une réforme de justice sociale, un acte d'équité et un message fort envoyé à nos concitoyens de Rodrigues et je veux leur dire que les enfants de Rodrigues ont les mêmes droits, la même protection et la même attention que tous les autres enfants de la république.

Je voudrais profiter de cette occasion pour rendre hommage à tous ceux et celles qui œuvrent chaque jour pour la protection et le bien-être des enfants à Maurice, à Rodrigues et à Agaléga. Je remercie encore une fois mon collègue, l'*Attorney General* pour ces amendements qui apporteront un changement fondamental dans la vie des enfants de Rodrigues.

Je vous remercie.

Madam Speaker: *Merci*. Hon. Deputy Prime Minister!

(6.29 p.m.)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Merci, *Madam Speaker*. Comme tous les orateurs et oratrices, comme tous les membres de l'Assemblée l'ont dit avant moi, c'est un texte de loi très important qui est devant la Chambre et c'est bon, c'est excellent, c'est éloquent que ce texte de loi fasse l'unanimité. Je ne peux pas dire des deux côtés de la Chambre, nous avons nos amis de Rodrigues de ce côté-ci, des amis de Rodrigues de l'autre côté et là aussi il y a unanimité. C'est donc un moment important et nous sommes obligés de noter qu'encore une fois à un moment important, ce qu'il reste de l'Opposition est inexistante, est absente.

C'est un moment bien important. Nos sœurs et frères de Rodrigues sont mieux placés pour le dire, mais je le dis sincèrement, c'est un moment très important pour Rodrigues et ses enfants. Je tiens à le répéter, moi-même, tout comme le Premier ministre, nous ne raterons jamais une occasion de faire des choses en faveur de Rodrigues. Consolider l'autonomie, consolider la démocratie, éliminer les inégalités entre Maurice et Rodrigues, nous ne raterons jamais une occasion de progresser dans ce sens et ce soir, c'est ce que nous sommes en train de faire. Ce soir nous faisons en sorte que la loi pour les enfants à Maurice s'applique à Rodrigues. Ce n'est pas la fin de l'histoire, pas du tout. C'est une étape importante vers un idéal.

Bravo à l'*Attorney General,* bravo à la ministre responsable des droits de l'enfance et des femmes. C'est un pas important, mais pas seulement pour Rodrigues parce que nous une vraie république. Nous autres sur l'île principale, nous devons chacun/chacune parmi nous avoir à cœur les intérêts réels de Rodrigues et c'est pourquoi je le répète ; nous ne raterons jamais une occasion d'aider Rodrigues, de consolider l'autonomie, de consolider la démocratie, de consolider l'égalité entre nos sœurs et frères et les enfants de Rodrigues et ceux de l'île Maurice.

Ceci dit, j'aimerai revenir sur quelque chose qu'a mentionné mon collègue le ministre de l'Environnement et c'est un jour important pour Rodrigues pas seulement parce que nous étendons ce soir à Rodrigues les droits de l'enfant, mais aussi avec derrière la porte le COP 30. Le COP 30 le mois prochain au Brésil est un moment crucial pour le monde entier, mais surtout pour les petites îles, pour les îles comme Maurice, comme Rodrigues, comme Agaléga et je trouve ça profondément éloquent que nous avons pris la décision que la délégation de l'île Maurice à COP 30 le mois prochain au Brésil sera dirigée par le ministre des Affaires étrangères de l'île Maurice à la demande du Conseil des Ministres, du Cabinet du gouvernement, mais inclura le Chef commissaire de Rodrigues qui est aussi responsable de l'environnement à Rodrigues dans le gouvernement régional de Rodrigues.

Il ne faut pas que ça passe inaperçu. C'est un geste, c'est un *acknowledgement*, c'est quelque chose de profond et qui ne va pas en rester là. Partout, je le répète, où nous pouvons permettre à nos sœurs et frères Rodriguais de jouer pleinement leur rôle, pas seulement dans l'intérêt de Rodrigues, mais là nous allons jouer ensemble notre rôle au Brésil à un moment où les choses se présentent mal. Il faut le dire. Le COP 30 au Brésil se présente mal. Hier, le secrétaire général des Nations Unies a donné une interview internationale sur COP 30. Les choses se présentent mal, mais nous n'avons pas – c'est ce qu'il disait, c'est ce qu'il dit – le droit de baisser les bras. Même si les choses ne se passent pas bien au Brésil à COP 30, il ne faut pas baisser les bras. Il faudra ensuite reprendre les efforts de façon à ce que dans les années à venir, nous obtenions que cette barre de 1.5% ne soit pas franchie. Cette limite de 1.5% d'augmentation de la température est en train d'être malheureusement dépassée, mais nous avons les moyens de rattraper cela et de revenir dans les années à venir. Ben, nous comptons sur le Chef commissaire de Rodrigues pour nous aider avec notre ministre des Affaires étrangères pour obtenir cela.

Donc, ça m'émotionne un peu qu'au moment où on est en train de faire progresser les droits de l'enfant et donc de la famille à Rodrigues avec un amendement important et je salue

moi aussi le travail fait une fois de plus par l'*Attorney General*. C'est formidable que nous sommes en train de faire cela à un moment où symboliquement, mais dans la pratique aussi nos sœurs et frères de Rodrigues à travers leur Chef commissaire seront au Brésil le mois prochain pour ensemble Rodrigues, l'île principale et demain Agaléga. Je n'ai pas mentionné Saint Brandon parce qu'il n'y a pas d'enfants à Saint Brandon – il n'y a que des pêcheurs, des travailleurs, le management, mais il n'y a pas d'enfant ou du moins jusqu'à présent il n'y pas d'enfants que je sache à Saint Brandon.

Donc, bravo à l'unanimité qui s'est faite dans la Chambre ce soir. Bravo à nos amis de Rodrigues, bravo à l'*Attorney General* et vive la République de Maurice. Vive Rodrigues. Merci, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister!

(6.36 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the Bill before the House, like hon. Ms Navarre-Marie rightly pointed out, is not any ordinary Bill. It is about equality before the law in one Republic. It also shows our determination to make sure that everyone in the Republic is treated on an equal footing.

This Bill concerns one of the most sensitive responsibilities of the State – the protection and welfare of children. It seeks to ensure that when a child in Rodrigues requires the urgent protection of our courts for his or her safety and well-being, intervention can take place directly on the island itself without the need to travel to Mauritius.

At present, cases involving vulnerable children, including matters of abuse, of neglect, exploitation or abandonment, we need to refer the case to the Children's Court here, in Mauritius. While our justice system is supposed to apply equally across the Republic, the physical distance, the need for air travel, the scheduling constraints associated with these court proceedings inevitably increase and create real practical barriers. These can delay decisions, increase the distress for families – imagine a child who is being abused has to wait – and ultimately, risk compromising the purpose of the law which is, first of all, to protect.

Madam Speaker, this Bill enables, therefore, the Magistrate in Rodrigues to exercise on the island the full range of protective powers provided under the Children's Court Act of 2020. These include emergency protection orders, supervision, placement measures,

monitoring arrangements and decisions connected to criminal proceedings which involve children. In short, it ensures that cases which demand urgency and humanity can be handled and without delay.

Madam Speaker, the intention is simple: to ensure that every child in Rodrigues has access to the same level of protection, delivered with the same readiness and authority as any child in Mauritius. The rights we legislate for must be meaningful wherever a Mauritian child lives. In that sense, this is not a political reform nor is it a statement about autonomy. It is a practical improvement that reflects good administration and equal treatment. Rodrigues continues to enjoy its recognised autonomy through the Rodrigues Assembly in areas of local governance, and Government will continue to support that framework, but core judicial matters must remain firmly part of the national system and everyone can be protected in the same way.

Madam Speaker, as part of its priorities, Government has committed to making justice more accessible and more efficient across the country. The Bill forms part of that effort. Government will continue to do all it can to ease the burden of the Rodrigues' population, including problems involving flight tickets, their availability, prices and conditions. It is a reminder, Madam Speaker, that we are all part of the Republic of Mauritius. We are one nation.

This approach is consistent with the broader direction of Government regarding Rodrigues: targeted realistic improvements that address the island's everyday needs. As the hon. Deputy Prime Minister said, this is one step towards that. Whether it is in transport connectivity, availability of essential services or judicial access, we are determined to deliver solutions that respond to the reality of Rodrigues because Rodrigues is part of our Republic and, therefore, must have access to the same level of public service.

I wish to end by congratulating the Attorney General for bringing this Bill to the House. He is doing a lot of work, as you can see. This is why I congratulate him. And this is why, Madam Speaker, I unhesitatingly commend this Bill to the House.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Your winding-up speech, please!

(6.41 p.m.)

Mr Glover: Madam Speaker, there can be no doubt that we have, in the amendment proposed this evening, a straightforward, practical amendment which increases access to justice. However, Madam Speaker, I do not wish to take all the plaudits for this amendment.

It must be underscored that this amendment is the fruit of consultations with the judiciary following an expressed request of the Chief Justice, showing if there was any need that collaboration between the Judiciary, the Legislature and the Executive is the best guarantor of what I have termed "the juxtaposition of powers", which cements our democracy and the rule of law.

Let me reassure the people of Rodrigues. We are fully conscious of the shortcomings which pervade the Children's Act. Believe it or not, we are, as we speak, looking into the several amendments that are necessary, and we will listen and interact with the representatives of Rodrigues in the House before coming up with any future amendment which concerns Rodrigues.

I have also taken good note of the remarks of hon. François regarding the inadequacies of the system, and we shall address them as we cannot fail the children of the Republic.

Madam Speaker, let me say this to conclude. I am in full agreement that we cannot and we must do everything that we can for all the children of the Republic so that they have the same opportunities and have the same access to justice.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. You once again commend the Bill, Attorney General?

Mr Glover: I commend the Bill to the House, Madam Speaker.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

The Court of Rodrigues Jurisdiction (Amendment) Bill (No. XXV of 2025) was considered and agreed to.

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

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Court of Rodrigues Jurisdiction (Amendment) Bill (No. XXV of 2025) was read the third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 11 November 2025 at 11.30 a.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned!

At 6.47 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 11 November 2025 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

FORMER PRIME MINISTER'S ADVISERS – NAMES & REMUNERATION & BOARD MEMBERSHIPS (2015- 2024)

(No. B/906) 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)

BANK CHARGES, FEES & COLLATERAL SECURITIES – REVIEW & GLOBAL STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

(No. B/907) 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 bank charges, fees 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 –

(a) when same were last reviewed, and

(b) whether consideration will be given to aligning same to international norms and standards applicable in other jurisdictions.

(Withdrawn)

MR M.R. – MAURITIAN ASSETS, TRAVELS – POTENTIAL INQUIRY

(No. B/908) 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 Mr M.R., he will for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

(a) the number of assets acquired by him in Mauritius, indicating the year of his initial investment;

(b) the number of times he travelled to Mauritius, indicating whether due diligence was carried out thereon, and

(c) whether consideration will be given for the setting up of a Board of Inquiry to shed light on his recent arrival in Mauritius.

(Withdrawn)

NATIONAL MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX – POLICY INTEGRATION

(No. B/909) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the development of a National Multidimensional Poverty Index (NMPI) for Mauritius in collaboration with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and within the framework of the SADC Regional Strategy for Statistics, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Statistics Mauritius, information as to the actions being taken or envisaged to –

(a) facilitate same whilst ensuring that the NMPI benefits policymaking, and

(b) integrate the NMPI into the national budget planning and allocation framework.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by Statistics Mauritius that under the SADC Protocol on Statistics, Member States are required to develop and disseminate a National Multidimensional Poverty Index.

This index assesses poverty through a broader lens than just income deprivation. It takes into account multiple aspects that influence human development, such as education, health, living standards, and access to essential services like electricity, clean water, and adequate housing.

Mauritius does not have a National Multidimensional Poverty Index. The only poverty measures being compiled and used are the Relative Poverty Line and the World Bank International Poverty Line. All of these measures are based on income only.

However, Statistics Mauritius does collect information on non-income sources of poverty that are reflected in the Relative Development Index. But the National Multidimensional Poverty Index proposed by SADC covers a much wider spectrum of dimensions. In line with Government's policy to lift up the standard of living of the population, we are pursuing all efforts to develop such a country-specific index for Mauritius.

In this regard, Statistics Mauritius has sought technical assistance from SADC through consultancy services from the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative. Our aim is to build local capacity in the development of such an index.

As regards actions being taken on this project, I wish to inform the House that officers from SADC and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative visited Mauritius during the week of 13 to 17 October this year. These officers, together with Statistics Mauritius, have carried out the following activities –

(a) First, a training session on the subject was held with technical officers of Statistics Mauritius and other relevant institutions;

(b) Second, a working session was conducted with senior officials from key line ministries;

(c) Third, the officers participated in the Symposium on Poverty organised by the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity to gather valuable feedbacks from a broader audience, and

(d) Fourth, a consultative session was organised with some Members of the National Assembly to sensitise them on the benefits of the Multidimensional Poverty Index Framework.

The next step is to train the technical staff of Statistics Mauritius on the methodology, computation, and analysis of the index. This phase of the technical assistance will start as from January 2026.

With regard to part (b) of the question, we will definitely integrate the index into the national framework for policy-making, budget planning and the allocation of resources.

This is in line with our commitment and determination to deal with the problem of poverty in all its forms. I am convinced that the index will be a powerful tool to achieve this goal and to realise our vision of a New Social Order.

POLICE HELICOPTER SQUADRON – HELICOPTER FLEET & PERSONNEL

(No. B/910) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second 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 Police Helicopter Squadron, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

(a) the number of helicopters currently available thereat, indicating the number of qualified and licensed pilots presently authorised to operate same;

(b) whether Government proposes to increase the number of helicopters within its fleet and, if so, the number thereof and expected timeline therefor,

(c) whether the recruitment of additional personnel, including pilots, maintenance staff and technical officers, is being envisaged.

Reply: The Police Helicopter Squadron (PHS) was established in 1974 through a Police Standing Order No. 102 as a unit of the Mauritius Police Force and is responsible for the operation and management of Police Helicopters.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the current fleet of the Police Helicopter Squadron comprises 8 helicopters as follows –

- 3 Dhruv Helicopters;
- 1 Fennec Helicopter, and
- 4 Chetak Helicopters.

2 helicopters, 1 Fennec and 1 Dhruv from the fleet are currently undergoing major overhaul in Airbus South Africa and in Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, India, respectively.

I am further informed that there are presently 10 qualified and trained pilots posted to the Police Helicopter Squadron, including 2 Indian Air Force Officers on deputation to the Government of Mauritius. They are all licensed and authorised to operate the Police Helicopters.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the present fleet of 8 helicopters adequately meets the Police operational requirements. It is therefore not envisaged, at this stage, to increase the number of helicopters.

However, in view of the ageing and the unavailability of maintenance support for the Chetak Helicopters beyond 2035, a replacement plan is being implemented whereby 4 Light Utility Helicopters will be acquired to replace the Chetak fleet under an Indian Special Economic Grant Package. As per the plan, 1 helicopter will be inducted in 2029, 2 in 2030, and the remaining in 2031 along with the gradual decommissioning of the Chetak Helicopters.

As regards part (c) of the question, recruitment of Cadet Officers (Graduates – Flying Branch, PHS) is carried out by the Disciplined Forces Service Commission. The last recruitment exercise was undertaken in 2022. On 25 August 2025, the Commissioner of

Police has recommended the enlistment of one trainee Cadet Officer to be trained overseas and locally as pilot.

I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that, as at 23 October 2025, there are 107 technicians posted at the PHS. The technicians are responsible for routine maintenance of the helicopters and their peripherals. Each year, an average of 8 suitable Police Officers are selected and trained locally as well as overseas to be posted at the PHS for maintenance duties.

SPECIAL STRIKING TEAM – INITIATED ENQUIRIES – CASES' DETAILS

(No. B/912) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port-Louis South & Port-Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the defunct Special Striking Team (SST) set up in August 2022, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of –

(a) enquiries initiated by the SST until its dissolution, indicating the number thereof on alleged cases illegal drug trafficking or drug offences;

(b) cases that involved seizure of money on premises during intervention, and

(c) cases discontinued for lack of evidence.

(Withdrawn)

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS SUSPENSION – 01 NOVEMBER 2024 – REASONS & IMPACT

(No. B/913) 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 suspension of the social media platforms on 01 November 2024 in Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

(a) reasons therefor and under whose directives same was carried out, and

(b) economic and social impact thereof.

(Withdrawn)

CASINOS OF MAURITIUS – PROPOSED RESTRUCTURING – TIMEFRAME

(No. B/914) 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 proposed restructuring of the Casinos of Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the expected timeframe for the implementation thereof, giving details thereof.

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUES – PORT MATHURIN PORT AREA – DEVELOPMENT WORKS

(No. B/915) Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Port Mathurin Port Area, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Ports Authority –

(a) information as to the development works, if any, currently being undertaken thereat and, if so –

  (i) give details thereof, and

  (ii) indicate whether these works have been subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment, Preliminary Environmental Report or Strategic Environmental Assessment and to table copies thereof, and

(b) copy of the Port Mathurin Port Master Plan 2024 or its Executive Summary, including details of its infrastructural requirements and table same.

Reply: I am informed by the Acting Director-General of the Mauritius Ports Authority that the latter organisation is presently not undertaking any development works at Port Mathurin.

However, I presume the hon. Member is referring to upgrading works of the slipway at Port Mathurin, carried out by the Mauritius Ports Authority and completed on 12 September 2025. This slipway, which was constructed in the year 1990, plays an essential role for the maintenance and repair of vessels, including the two tugs of the Mauritius Ports Authority operating thereat.

There was a need to carry out these upgrading works with a view to improving the safety and operational efficiency of the facility.

With regards to part (a) (i) of the question, I am informed that the contract to replace part of the rail used to haul the vessels, was awarded on 19 March 2025 at the quoted price of Rs6,817,200 inclusive of VAT.

With regard to part (a) (ii) of the question, such upgrading work is not a listed undertaking under the Sixth Schedule of the Environment Act. Accordingly, no Environment Impact Assessment, Preliminary Environmental Report or Strategic Environmental Assessment was required.

As regards part (b) of the question, the Executive Summary of the Port Master Plan 2024 for Port Mathurin recommending an investment of approximately Rs4.6 billion for the construction of a new commercial quay and associated terminal facilities in order to cater for the medium and long-term requirements is being placed in the Library of the National Assembly. The new development would include, *inter-alia*, the construction of a 175-metre-long commercial quay, dredging and reclamation, terminal pavement, utilities, lighting, port administration and passenger terminal building.

Government is deeply committed to develop the ports, including that of Port Mathurin with a view to increasing the competitiveness of our economy. In line with paragraph 71 of the Government Programme, there will be a total revamping of the port and other infrastructure. The recommendations of this Plan would accordingly be considered in this modernisation process.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION BILL – INTRODUCTION – WIDE PUBLIC CIRCULATION

(No. B/916) 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 proposed introduction of a Freedom of Information Bill in the Assembly, as announced in the Government Programme 2025-2029, he will state where matters stand, indicating if consideration will be given for the wide public circulation thereof prior thereto.

Reply: As announced in the Government Programme 2024-2029, a Freedom of Information Act will be introduced to provide for more transparency in relation to the decisions of public institutions.

I wish to apprise the House that my Government stands firmly by its commitment to come up with a Freedom of Information Act. However, the House will appreciate that a Freedom of Information Act is a complex and far-reaching piece of legislation, with significant legal and administrative implications. It is, therefore, important that such a piece of legislation be developed with due diligence and careful consideration.

I am informed by the Attorney-General's Office that exploratory work for the drafting of the Freedom of Information Bill has been initiated, which includes comparative research

into the models adopted by other jurisdictions, particularly in small island developing states and countries of the Sub-Saharan African region. It is also worth highlighting that a previous working draft of such a Bill is being reviewed by the Attorney-General's Office in light of recent developments both locally and internationally.

The House may wish to note that drafting of such an important Bill cannot be done in isolation. The Freedom of Information Bill is closely linked to the work of the Constitutional Review Commission, whose establishment is imminent. The Constitutional Review Commission's mandate will include the review and strengthening of fundamental rights, including new-generation rights relating to technology, privacy, and access to information. It is, therefore, essential that the constitutional framework first provide clear recognition and scope for this right, so that any ensuing legislation, such as the Freedom of Information Act, rests on a sound constitutional foundation.

The House will surely appreciate that both the recommendations of the Constitutional Review Commission and the proposal for a Freedom of Information Bill will entail wide and inclusive consultations with all relevant stakeholders, civil society, the media, and public institutions.

PUBLIC HOSPITALS – AUTOCLAVES & BOILERS – INSPECTION

(No. B/954) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port-Louis South & Port-Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to inspection of autoclaves and boilers at various public Hospitals sites, he will state –

(a) the names and qualifications of the registered boiler inspectors authorised to conduct same, and

(b) whether he has been made aware of any case of misrepresentation in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

SYNTHETIC DRUG ADDICTION – HOSPITAL CARE – DEATH RATE & RESEARCH STUDY

(No. B/956) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the high prevalence of synthetic drug addiction across the island, he will state the number of synthetic drug-dependent patients who have sought hospital care from 2019 to 2024, indicating –

(a) the number of individuals, including adolescents, who have passed away as a result thereof, and

(b) whether his Ministry will consider commissioning a research study on addiction rates to synthetic drugs among different age groups with a gender-based approach.

(Withdrawn)

POINTE DU DIABLE – ADDITIONAL PARKING FACILITIES – TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES

(No. B/957) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to Pointe du Diable near Bambous-Virieux, he will state –

(a) whether consideration will be given for the provision for additional parking facilities for visitors in view of the poor visibility along the main road thereat, and

(b) the measures being envisaged to ensure safe access and proper traffic management thereat, particularly during weekends.

(Withdrawn)

MORC. RAMLAGUN, VALLÉE DES PRÊTRES – FLOOD MITIGATION MEASURES

(No. B/958) 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)

POLICE STATION COMPOUNDS – ABANDONED/UNUSED/SEIZED VEHICLES – ENVISAGED MEASURES

(No. A/3) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member 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 abandoned/seized/unused vehicles lying in the compounds of Line Barracks, SMF Complex in Vacoas, Divisional Headquarters and Police Stations, he will, for the benefit of the House,

obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether he has been aware of the number thereof and the inconveniences being caused as a result thereof and, if so, indicate the measures being envisaged to address this situation –

Reply: A total of 484 vehicles, including motorcycles, are presently lying in the compounds of Line Barracks, the SMF Complex in Vacoas, Divisional Headquarters, and various Police Stations across the island. The details are as hereunder –

Compounds	Abandoned	Seized	Unused	Total
Line Barracks	Nil	83	72	155
SMF Complex, Vacoas	Nil	Nil	2	2
Divisional Headquarters	2	7	Nil	9
Police Stations around the Island	180	118	20	318
Total	**182**	**208**	**94**	**484**

These vehicles have either been involved in road accidents, secured as exhibits in criminal or drug-related cases, abandoned in public places, or are police vehicles beyond economical repair.

While these 484 vehicles cause certain inconveniences within the respective compounds, necessary actions are being taken to remove them to a secured location at Fort George. During previous exercises, a total of 560 vehicles have already been transferred to Fort George. These vehicles are securely kept thereat, pending disposal or return to their respective owners, where applicable.

The overall process of removing and disposing of these vehicles is inherently time-consuming due to the distinct procedures applicable to each category. Abandoned vehicles require identification, inspection, and multiple notifications to owners before any action can be taken.

Seized vehicles are retained as exhibits pending the completion of investigations or court proceedings, which can extend over long periods. In the case of unused vehicles, disposal can only proceed following assessments by mechanical engineers, completion of

board of survey reports, and subsequent auction procedures. These administrative and legal requirements contribute to the gradual pace at which the situation is being addressed.

DARUTY & VALE JUNCTION – TRAFFIC CONGESTION – SURVEY & MEASURES

(No. A/4) 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.

Reply: The junction of Mapou-Goodlands Road (A5 Road) and Vale Road (B12 Road) is a signalised T-junction.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that a survey conducted by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit (TMRSU) has revealed that during peak hours, there is a high volume of traffic coming from A5 Road and Goodlands Bypass (A13 Road) wishing to right turn to accede onto B12 Road. As such, the vehicles have to wait for a safe gap to perform this right turning movement or for vehicles coming from Motorway M2 to provide the right of way, as a courtesy, for vehicles on A5 to right turn onto B12 Road. In doing so, traffic queues quickly build up. This high volume of right turning traffic movement during peak hours is the primary cause of queueing at this signalised T-junction.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the TMRSU that as an immediate measure, it has provided an early cut-off for the traffic signal for the leg coming from Motorway M2, that is, stopping the vehicles along this leg and simultaneously increasing the green time for the traffic signal phasing along A5 Road, to cater for the high volume of right turning traffic movement.

This measure is intended to give the high volume of right-turning vehicles on A5 Road more time to clear the intersection and thus provide immediate relief for the queue build-up.

I am further informed that, as a short-term solution, the TMRSU has worked out the following options, for implementation by the Road Development Authority (RDA) –

(i) Providing a dedicated right turning lane along A5 Road for traffic right-turning onto B12 Road as well as the provision of left turning slip lanes, to reduce queueing by segregating turning traffic and through traffic.

(ii) Construction of a new link road from the existing roundabout at junction of A5 Road and A13 (Goodlands Bypass) Road up to the B12 Road, passing next to Daruty Cemetery. This measure is expected to reduce traffic volume at the signalised junction of A5/B12 by diverting traffic from Daruty to Petit Raffray/Goodlands and vice-versa.

I am informed by the RDA that as per the design submitted by the TMRSU for the provision of a slip lane from Mapou-Goodlands Road, A5 towards Vale Road, B12, land is to be acquired from Societe Rouillard. The land acquisition process has already been initiated and is currently ongoing.

The RDA intends to implement the project as soon as land acquisition procedures would be completed and financial clearance obtained from the Ministry of Finance.

FORBACH ROAD, FOND DU SAC – BUILDING CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

(No. A/5) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie &Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to a building constructed by the District Council of Pamplemousses at Forbach Road, Fond du Sac, he will state the –

(a) total cost of construction thereof, indicating the initial estimated cost and final cost thereof;

(b) date of completion thereof, and

(c) reasons why the building is not yet operational.

Reply: The District Council of Pamplemousses had initiated the construction of a building to be used as a hall in 2018/19. The building was of an extent of 213 m² consisting of the ground floor only.

The project was implemented into two phases, namely –

(i) Phase I - Construction of grey building only, and

(ii) Phase II - Completion of the finishing works.

The project value was set at Rs2.6 million for the setting up of the grey building only. However, the actual cost amounted to Rs2,719,500 due to the addition of two concrete steps, which was not initially included in the scope of works. This addition represented a variation of 4.5% of the original estimate. The works started on 01 August 2019 and was completed on 20 April 2020.

The implementation of the finishing works was to be carried out partly through contracting-out of the works relating to, but not limited, to tiling, plumbing, drainage, sewerage, while the painting works would be done by the in-house labour.

The cost estimates thereto amounted to Rs700,000. However, these works were completed within a total cost of Rs696,350. The works started on 11 March 2020 and were completed on 25 June 2020.

As regards the works to be completed by the in-house labour of the Council, these, as mentioned above, are related to painting of the building. However, due to the restrictions which were prevailing in the country up to 2022 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the painting works could not be completed.

During the Financial Year 2023/24, minor works were carried on site with a view of inaugurating the building. However, the District Council of Pamplemousses could not proceed with the works in 2024/25 due to financial constraints and the deployment of in-house labour to other priority works on other sites.

The Council is presently undertaking painting works at the building at Forbach by in-house labour. Once the works are completed, the District Council of Pamplemousses will carry out some upgrading and maintenance works on the adjoining infrastructures, namely the renovation of the mini-soccer pitch, the children's playground, the pétanque courts and the volleyball pitch.

The inauguration of the building is planned in February 2026, once all these renovation works are completed.

MAURITIUS TOURISM AUTHORITY – PLEASURE CRAFT LICENCES – LICENCE HOLDERS & DATE OF ISSUE

(**No. A/6) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to commercial pleasure craft licences, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Tourism Authority, information as to the number thereof issued during the period 2015 to 2024 for the coastal belt of Mont-Choisy to Poudre d'Or, indicating, in each case the name of the licence holder and date of issue thereof.

Reply: For period 2015-2024, the Mauritius Tourism Authority has issued a total of 186 commercial pleasure craft licences for the coastal belt of Mont-Choisy to Poudre d'Or as follows –

Year	No. of Licences issued
2015	18
2016	17

2017	23
2018	13
2019	11
2020	14
2021	14
2022	13
2023	29
2024	34
Total	**186**

The list of licence holders with corresponding date of issue of each licence is being placed in the Library of the National Assembly.