



EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 02 DECEMBER 2025

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(Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)

Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam,
GCSK, FRCP

Prime Minister,
Minister of Defence, Home Affairs
and External Communications,
Minister of Finance,
Minister for Rodrigues and Outer
Islands

Hon. Paul Raymond Bérenger, GCSK

Deputy Prime Minister

Hon. Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack
Mohamed

Minister of Housing and Lands

Hon. Rajesh Anand Bhagwan

Minister of Environment, Solid Waste
Management and Climate Change

Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, GOSK

Minister of Agro-Industry, Food
Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries

Hon. Govindranath Gunness

Minister of National Infrastructure

Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo, GOSK

Minister of Health and Wellness

Hon. Christian Harold Richard Duval

Minister of Tourism

Hon. Ashok Kumar Subron

Minister of Social Integration, Social
Security and National Solidarity

Hon. Gavin Patrick Cyril Glover, SC

Attorney-General

Dr. the Hon. Mrs Jyoti Jeetun

Minister of Financial Services and
Economic Planning

Hon. Patrick Gervais Assirvaden

Minister of Energy and Public Utilities

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

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Deputy Speaker	Hon. Vedasingam Vasudevachariar Baloomoody
Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Hon. Mohamed Ehsan Juman
Clerk of the National Assembly	Lotun, Mrs Bibi Safeena, CSK
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MAURITIUS

Eighth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 38 of 2025

Sitting of Tuesday 02 December 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)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OBITUARY

MR ISMAËL HASSENJEE NAWOOR

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, we have learnt of the demise of Mr Ismaël Hassenjee Nawoor, former Member of the Legislative Assembly, on Tuesday 25 November of this year, at the age of 86.

In 1983, Mr Nawoor contested the general elections under the banner of the Alliance MSM/Parti Travailleiste in Constituency No.3 (Port-Louis Maritime & Port-Louis East), but he was not elected. He was, however, allocated a seat under the Best Loser System to serve the then Legislative Assembly.

In 1984, Mr Nawoor was appointed as member to serve the Select Committee on Drug Addiction. He had some problems later regarding this issue.

Madam Speaker, may I kindly request you to direct the Clerk of the National Assembly to convey the condolences of the Assembly to the members of the bereaved family of late Mr Nawoor. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Opposition, I wish associate myself to the tribute paid by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister to late Mr Ismaël Hassenjee Nawoor. Madam Speaker, may I request you to direct the Clerk of the National Assembly to convey our deep condolences to the bereaved family. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I associate myself with the tribute paid to the memory of late Ismaël Hassenjee Nawoor, former Member of Parliament, by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Leader of the Opposition, and I direct the Clerk to convey the deep condolences of the Assembly to the bereaved family.

**SITTING 25 NOVEMBER 2025 – CONDUCT OF BUSINESS – RULINGS OF
SPEAKER**

Hon. Members, on 29 November 2024, you elected me unanimously as Speaker of the National Assembly, and last Saturday, therefore, I could mark my one full year in this position.

Last Tuesday, I had to suspend the Sitting as the aggressive behaviour of some Members had reached its peak, after I had already given two warnings that I would do so if there was no order in the Chamber.

I learnt in the meantime that hon. Adrien Duval accused me of being partial. He did this on Top FM Radio. On his Facebook page, which I read, he said that I was "*trop souvent dépassée par les événements*". Indeed, a journalist of Top FM asked me for a declaration, which I gave him very briefly, but I invited him to listen to my announcement which I am giving now.

I accepted this post, hon. Members, on the clear understanding that I would be totally independent, and I invite hon. A. Duval to raise his objections here about my partiality by way of a substantive motion and not just lightly. You can see Standing Order 40(5). He may not like the way that I have adopted for the past year. He is free to hold his opinions. But concerning the conduct of a Speaker, there are rules.

Now, hon. Members, I want to refer to the incident which made me suspend the Sitting. Everything is in the Hansard. By the way, now that we have direct broadcast, a very wide audience was also witness to the situation to see how it deteriorated. Any hon. Member will by now have had the same amount of time as me to read the Hansard and to understand how things happened. The decision to suspend the Sitting rather than order Members out was mine. I fully stand by that decision which is based on Standing Order 77, which gives me a wide power to regulate the conduct of business in the Assembly. I am not going to repeat negative decisions of the past by ordering Members out or naming anyone because the place of hon. Members is in the House and not anywhere else. This applies to Members on both sides of the House. And I count on all of you to help me to maintain the decorum of the House. Anyone who does not agree with what is going on is free to raise a point of order and ask for my ruling. But points of order must respect the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly. May I refer hon. Members to Standing Order 41.

Further, may I also remind you, once more that, sometimes I need to take time to give a ruling precisely as I must read the Hansard to understand clearly what happened. They say "fools rush in where angels fear to tread". It is better to take time in order to be fair and make a proper decision. But my decision cannot be questioned.

I also want to remind Members that at Question Time, we need questions and not statements from hon. Members. All the preliminaries are not permitted. In fact, it is easy with the English language to ask a question by incorporating the fact on which the question is based, rather than make a long-winded introduction which will clearly call for unpleasant remarks. This applies again to both sides of the House. I will not allow long introductory remarks anymore. And there is no need for Members to give rulings as if everyone is a Speaker in this House. Please, let me do what I am here for.

Now, for Ministers who are replying to a question, it is not acceptable to use 20 minutes out of 30 to answer a Private Notice Question. We will have to find a good solution on such issues.

Even for PQs, Ministers are invited to be precise in their answers. If not, an answer which requires a long explanation may be tabled. Then Members will have to put supplementary questions, if need be, or take notice of the reply and, in due course come back with a new question. Unless there is an urgency, of course.

As for the Private Notice Question, it is the time for the Leader of the Opposition, who exercises this right according to our Standing Orders, and it is a long tradition in our democracy based on the Westminster System. Any other Member who wishes to put a supplementary question must wait for the hon. Leader of the Opposition to finish with his supplementary questions before putting a question. Once a Member catches my eye, he/she must wait.

Last and not least, I will not tolerate any Member who addresses me in a sitting position.

Thank you.

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

Certificate of Urgency in respect of the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill (No. XXX of 2025) (In Original).

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

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Senior Citizens Council for the period July 2022 to June 2023.

C. Ministry of Education and Human Resource

The Annual Report of the Ministry of Education and Human Resource for the period 01 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

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

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you. Madam Speaker, I was waiting for your ‘go ahead’.

PAY RESEARCH BUREAU REPORT – UPCOMING PUBLICATION DATE – RECOMMENDED SALARY INCREASES PAYMENT

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 forthcoming Pay Research Bureau Report, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand regarding the preparation thereof, indicating the expected date of publication, and
- (b) state whether funds have been earmarked for the payment of the recommended salary increases, indicating –
 - (i) whether Government will bear the costs at one go;
 - (ii) whether it will be implemented with retroactive effect, and
 - (iii) as from when payments will be effected, including arrears, if any.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

Madam Speaker, as I stated in the House before, that is, since 1982, the Pay Research Bureau has conducted the General Review Exercise on pay and grading structures every five years except for the 2016 report. The 2016 report was published after a period of three years only. The 2016 PRB Report, however, re-established the periodicity of the general review exercise for five years and consequently, the last one was in 2021.

I am informed the preparation for the next report started in March 2023, according to a pre-set work plan.

Madam Speaker, it is worth to note that apart from Ministries/Departments, Local Authorities and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, there are some 125 Parastatal Bodies that fall under the purview of the Pay Research Bureau. The Bureau has to gather maximum information to facilitate interaction and exchange of views with all stakeholders.

So far, the Bureau has had more than 675 meetings with Staff Associations and Management of both Parastatal Bodies and the Civil Service. 1,710 interviews have been

conducted in relation to job description questionnaires and 17 site visits have been effected to examine alleged problem areas highlighted by stakeholders.

Madam Speaker, as the House is aware, the Report on the State of the Economy, which was published in December 2024, clearly demonstrated the precariousness of the economic situation. The previous Government left a much, much larger deficit than what had been announced. Public Sector debt had reached an unsustainable level, and all the macro-economic fundamentals were in the red. It is in this particularly difficult context that we have presented a budget which obviously required drastic measures to redress public finances. It is against this background that the PRB Report is being prepared.

As regards part (a) of the question, the preparation is at an advanced stage. As regards part (b) (i), (ii) and (iii) of the question, it is difficult for me at this stage to give an indication of the implementation of the PRB Report as the cost implications of the report are still unknown.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, first supplementary?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, Madam Speaker. Again, I see that Government is not keeping another electoral promise, which was to publish – because they said that before the elections – the report in December and payment to be effected by January next year.

Madam Speaker, there has been an erosion in the purchasing power of employees in general and in all sectors since the last budget. Will the hon. Prime Minister reassure the House that the PRB Report will redress this situation, at least in the public sector, Madam Speaker?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am not sure what the hon. Leader of the Opposition means when he says ‘address this situation’. The situation of the economic catastrophe that you have left and how we will address the issue?

Mr Lesjongard: No, I am asking about purchasing power.

The Prime Minister: Yes, purchasing power...

Madam Speaker: Not in a Sitting position!

Mr Lesjongard: He is talking to me...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Yes, please, sit down! Please, sit down! Hon. Prime Minister, please sit down. Now, you answer. Yes?

Mr Lesjongard: I put a question; I request an answer. I said loss of purchasing...

Madam Speaker: Don't speak... Yes?

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, my question is clear. It is with regard to the loss of purchasing power and I referred to the civil servants of this country.

Madam Speaker: Okay, hon. Prime Minister!

Mr Lesjongard: Will that be addressed?

The Prime Minister: As I said, Madam Speaker, we are working on it, but we have an unprecedented situation where the deficit – he knows – the debt is much higher than anyone expected. We knew they were cooking the books and the figures but we did not expect to see that kind of disaster that we have inherited. It is in that context that it is being prepared.

Madam Speaker: Second question!

Mr Lesjongard: The hon. Prime Minister is making reference to the State of the Economy. His Minister for Civil Service is not even in the country!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Lesjongard: He is travelling, Madam Speaker!

Madam Speaker: We just said that you will come with questions and not statements!

Mr Lesjongard: Now, if this is the case, Madam Speaker, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister to inform the House whether, the Pay Research Bureau has the capacity to carry out such an exercise with regard to the alignment of the salary structures and whether, he will ensure that there is a continual review of the pay grading structures, Madam Speaker?

The Prime Minister: Yes, they have the capacity and this is being done.

Madam Speaker: Third question, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, the Government recently modified...

Madam Speaker: No, no, question! Question!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, I am putting. Let me explain why I am putting the question.

Madam Speaker: Put your question!

Mr Lesjongard: The Government recently modified the criteria for promotion from O-level to A-level, that is, from five to three credits. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether, this measure has already been included in the recruitment exercise in the public sector?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: But this is PRB!

Mr Lesjongard: And may I remind the House, I had put the question to the Minister for Labour and he was agreeable to what I said at that time.

Madam Speaker: But we are talking on the PRB now.

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, but...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: It is not directly related to PRB, but yes, we are proud, in fact, that we are not leaving students who have had only three credits on the side of the road. We are taking them in. They are part of Mauritius and they have to be catered for.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, as a gesture of solidarity towards those who are today, facing difficulties in the country, can the hon. Prime Minister confirm whether, the salaries of elected Members of this House will not be increased in the forthcoming PRB Report?

The Prime Minister: It has not been increased – apparently – since 2016. Nothing has been done for salaries, but as I said, we look at the context and this is what we are working on.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, Government has recently introduced measures to reduce the number of vehicles on our roads by the introduction of taxes on certain vehicles. Will Government consider reviewing the facilities provided to elected Members and their respective political nominees on duty-free cars and other accessories in order to reduce expenses in the country?

Madam Speaker: You mean new ones, of course?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, new ones.

Madam Speaker: I am in a very old one.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: It has nothing to do with the PRB, but I might remind him that this, in fact, is the case and except when it is essential. Otherwise, no!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, can the hon. Prime Minister confirm to this House whether, the salary gap between the lowest earner, that is, for example, a General Worker and a Permanent Secretary will be reduced in the forthcoming PRB Report?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I just explained, Madam Speaker...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Can you answer this, hon. Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: Yes.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Of course, not! Yes, but he heard.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: He heard.

Madam Speaker: Yes, everybody heard.

Mr Lesjongard: And I saw the reactions also, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether the PRB Report will address certain working conditions, especially for posts which do not require a constant on-site presence, with a view to reducing road traffic, and can he confirm whether a study has been carried out?

The Prime Minister: I am not quite sure what he is referring to. Do you want people not to go on site at all?

Mr Lesjongard: I am saying work-from-home, hon. Prime Minister.

Madam Speaker: Do not speak!

The Prime Minister: So, they do not go and check things? They do it from home?

Madam Speaker: Do I understand, hon. Prime Minister that if work-from-home is possible, you have no objection?

The Prime Minister: Yes, of course not, but there are certain things that you have to go on site for to see what is happening.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, but that is why I am saying whether ...

Madam Speaker: Do not speak! Do not speak...

Mr Lesjongard: It is for this reason that I am asking whether a study has been carried out, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Has there been a study, hon. Prime Minister? Has there been a study?

The Prime Minister: We do not need a study. This is being done worldwide, in all democracies. I hope the hon. Leader of the Opposition is not saying we can do National Assembly from home; we have to be here!

Mr Lesjongard: We did during COVID-19!

The Prime Minister: We have, yes. COVID-19 was an exception.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, today you are speaking from a sitting position. You do not normally do that.

Mr Lesjongard: This is an important issue, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Normally, you respect me!

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Li ankor pe dormi sa kou la.*

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether the forthcoming PRB Report will address the lack of interest of our youth for jobs in the public sector?

The Prime Minister: This has nothing to do with the PRB Report, Madam Speaker. The PRB Report, as I said, is ongoing from 1982 and even when you were in Government.

Mr Lesjongard: Hon. Prime Minister, since you have been in power, there has been a trend of retired rank civil servants who made a comeback and are now heading certain departments. Will the hon. Prime Minister reassure the House that the forthcoming PRB Report will give clear guidelines to ensure that the exercise of promotion and ranks in the public service are respected?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: They are always respected, except we do take people on contract where we feel we need very able people, because over the last ten years, go and see how promotions were made in the civil service.

Madam Speaker: Next question! Do you still have a few questions?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, I have got two more questions, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr Lesjongard: In the same vein, will the hon. Prime Minister see to it that in the forthcoming PRB Report, provision is made, Madam Speaker, to make it compulsory that promotion exercises are conducted at specific intervals in the public sector?

Madam Speaker: Specific intervals for promotion.

The Prime Minister: Normally, I do not interfere in this. This is what happens when it has to happen.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Lesjongard: One last question. Madam Speaker, public servants will get their salary compensation and a review of their salary and working conditions with the PRB, and this will not be the case for their counterparts in the private sector. Will the hon. Prime Minister, at least, consider to make it mandatory for remuneration orders to be reviewed at least once every five years, as is the case in the public sector, Madam Speaker?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, we do not take decisions in isolation. Let me remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition that our sovereign rating from Moody's is at the lowest grade – Baa3.

Despite fiscal consolidation measures taken in the last budget, our public debt remains substantial because of the legacy of the previous government. This is what we have to deal with. Our sovereign rating is clearly at a tipping point.

Moody's is still watching. We are not beyond the possibility of a downgrade. This is what we want to prevent at all cost. This is why we took difficult decisions. We had to! We must act responsibly. We will ensure that our actions reverse the situation that we have inherited, and put our finances on a more resilient path in line with the commitments taken in the Public Debt Management Act.

Madam Speaker: It is just that the question, hon. Prime Minister, was about the private sector and remuneration orders being reviewed every five years. Can you give us a reply on this?

The Prime Minister: We are looking into this. It is a global picture that we have to look at.

Madam Speaker: I am sure, yes. Hon. A. Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister how does he intend to boost up morale in the civil service, especially in the Police Force, when he has reneged on his promise to pay back PRB whilst he made it a top priority to triple the salaries and benefits of Advisers/Senior Advisers who were earning Rs90,000, and now the top ones, including the Ministry of Finance – including gratuity – Rs240,000?

The Prime Minister: That is not the case, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Thank you very much everyone.

Now, we go to Prime Minister's Question Time.

Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ B/1126 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade.

I, now, therefore, call the hon. Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière, Mr Quirin!

COIREC LTD – BOARD COMPOSITION & FEES

(No. B/1108) 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 Côte d’Or International Racecourse and Entertainment Complex Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) composition of the Board thereof, indicating the salaries and benefits drawn by the Chairperson and other members;
- (b) role and responsibilities thereof in managing and upgrading the Champ de Mars racetrack;
- (c) fees imposed on the MTC Jockey Club for each race meeting for the 2025 Racing Season, and
- (d) other fees, if any, levied on operators at the Champ de Mars for each Race Meeting.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the previous MSM government did everything – and I mean everything – to undermine the horseracing industry and to weaken the MTC. All that was done on purpose to favour private, shady interests. It was in that context that COIREC was set up to fulfil their ambitions.

During the election campaign, we had vowed to restore public trust in Mauritius’ historic horseracing industry, which has been part of the island’s culture for the last 200 years.

As enunciated in our Government Programme 2025-2029, this Government has successfully restored public confidence in the horseracing industry, as witnessed from the first racing day held on 26 July 2025 at the Champ de Mars and also, at the recent one, the Maiden Cup. Under the previous government, the horseracing industry was being driven towards its demise. That was the purpose of what they tried to do.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by COIREC that the Board currently comprises the following ex-officio members –

Acting Chairperson	Mr A. Acharuz	Financial Secretary
Directors	Mr R. Baungally	Assistant Solicitor General, Attorney General's Office
	Mr D. Mohabeer	Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Economic Development Board
	Mr A. K. Seetaram	Director, Tourism, Ministry of Tourism
	Ms H. Y. Sharon Yong-Tit-Kow	Assistant Permanent Secretary, Prime Minister's Office

The monthly fees payable to the Chairperson and Directors are Rs42,000 and Rs15,750, respectively.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I am informed that following amendments to section 29 of the State Lands Act in the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2022, COIREC was, as from May 2022, entrusted with the control and maintenance of the State Land at Champ de Mars. Accordingly, on 01 July 2025, a lease agreement was signed between the MTC Jockey Club Ltd. and COIREC for a period of 10 years, that is, up to 2034. Of course, the MTC then had to oblige because this was the plan.

Under this lease agreement, the responsibility for the management, maintenance and upgrading of the racetracks falls under the responsibility of the MTC Jockey Club Ltd. throughout the lease period, which as I said, I think, ends in 2035.

As regard parts (c) & (d) of the question, I am informed that a rental fee of Rs250,000 per race meeting, excluding VAT, is payable by MTC Jockey Club Ltd. to COIREC. Provisions have been made in the lease agreement for a yearly increase of 5% in the fee payable. MTC Jockey Club Ltd. has the right to commercially exploit the Champ de Mars,

including the collection of rentals and any other income derived thereof, subject to the consent of the lessor.

Madam Speaker, in July 2025, amendments were brought, *inter alia*, to sections 31 and 32 of the Gambling Regulatory (Amendment) Act 2025 and provision was made for any statutory body or government owned company to take control and maintenance of the Champ de Mars. Accordingly, COIREC is being wound up. All its activities, assets, liabilities and obligations are being transferred to a specific entity operating under Landscape Mauritius, with clearly defined governance structure.

During this transitional period, the Board is overseeing ongoing operations, ensuring compliance with all statutory obligations, and approving all matters necessary to facilitate an orderly winding-down and closure of the company.

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

CIVIL STATUS OFFICE, OLD GRAND PORT – REOPENING

(No. B/1109) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Civil Status Office at Old Grand Port, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the reasons for its closure, indicating since when it is closed and whether consideration will be given for the reopening thereof to facilitate access to vital registration services for residents of Grand Sable, Old Grand Port, Bambous Virieux and surrounding areas.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed that the Old Grand Port Civil Status Office was opened in December 1984 and was operational twice weekly on Tuesdays and Thursdays, because of the low frequency of members of the public requiring civil status services.

The Old Grand Port Civil Status Office was closed in July 2013. Since then, the residents of Grand Sable, Old Grand Port, Bambous Virieux and surrounding areas were availing of the civil status services at the Mahebourg, Rose Belle, Plaine Magnien and Bel Air Rivière Sèche. The Mahebourg Civil Status Office is the closest alternate office, easily accessible to the inhabitants of Grand Port and is fully operational for five days a week.

However, Madam Speaker, I am further informed that the renovation works for the Old Grand Port Civil Status Office is being done and will be completed by next month. The recruitment exercise to fill vacancies for 13 Civil Status Officers is ongoing. Thereafter, the Old Grand Port Civil Status Office will be reopened, hopefully, by March 2026.

Madam Speaker: Mr Ramdass, you are alright?

The hon. Second Member for Rodrigues, Mr François!

FCC SUB-OFFICE, RODRIGUES – STAFF, OFFICE ACCOMMODATION & COMPLETED CASES

(No. B/1110) Mr F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the sub-office of the Financial Crimes Commission at Camp Du Roi in Rodrigues Island, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) the number of staff members posted thereat;
- (b) whether it is adequately equipped to operate at full capacity and to expedite the handling of complaints while ensuring an active and responsive presence on the ground in Rodrigues, and
- (c) number of completed cases as at date from Rodrigues.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, let me first inform the House that the sub-office of the Financial Crimes Commission in Rodrigues has now moved from Camp du Roi to Rue La Solidarité in Port Mathurin.

Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Financial Crimes Commission that the sub-office is manned by two investigators and one Woman Police Officer. In addition, the operations of the sub-office are under the supervision of one Chief Investigator from the Financial Crimes Commission based in Mauritius.

In relation to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the Sub-office is equipped with all the necessary facilities for its operations and arrangements are also made for officers

of the Financial Crimes Commission based in Mauritius to proceed to Rodrigues for interrogation of suspects in high profile cases as and when required.

As regards part (c) of the question, 52 cases have been registered at the Sub-office in Rodrigues during period March 2024 to-date. Out of these, 32 cases have been completed and 20 are still under investigation.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Prime Minister!

Yes, the hon. Second Member for Grand’Baie and Poudre d’Or, Mr Beejan!

MR R. Y., BARRISTER AT LAW – FEES & ALLOWANCES – 2017-2025

(No. B/1111) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre D’or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to Mr. R. Y., Barrister at Law, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the detailed quantum of fees and allowances paid out thereto, together with the other fringe benefits to which he was entitled over the period 2017 to 2025 in his capacity as legal representative, chairperson, board member and any other legal services rendered to each of the different Ministries, parastatal bodies and State-Owned Companies.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, as per information gathered, Mr Ravi Yerrigadoo, Barrister-at-Law, provided legal services for the following public institutions and has received fees as stated below –

- (i) Rs10.9 million from the SBM Group for period 2017 to 2024;
- (ii) Rs10.7 million from the SIC Group for period 2017 to 2024;
- (iii) Rs4 million from the GRA for the period 2019 to 2024;
- (iv) Rs2.4 million from the Maubank Group for period 2017 to 2025;
- (v) Rs1.1 million from the Bank of Mauritius in June 2022;
- (vi) Rs920,000 from ICTA for the period 2022 to 2024;
- (vii) Rs637,850 from Airports of Mauritius Co Ltd in 2022 and 2024;

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, please!

The Prime Minister:

- (viii) Rs603,750 from the Mauritius Police Force, during the tenure of the former Commissioner of Police, for the period 2023 to 2024;
- (ix) Rs393,300 from Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Co Ltd in 2023 and 2024;
- (x) Rs320,000 from the ex-Investment Support Programme Ltd;
- (xi) Rs204,960 from the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd for the period of 2018 to 2019, and
- (xii) Rs39,200 from the Mauritius Society of Authors during period the 2019 to 2020.

Madam Speaker, Mr Yerrigadoo, another blue-eyed boy of the previous regime who enjoyed... Hon. Duval asked me a question about advisors. Look, how much money was given at that time! He enjoyed extreme largesse as he was providing legal services to not less than 12 government entities from 2017 to 2025. He has, during that period, received fees, Madam Speaker, totalling Rs32.2 million from various institutions.

Ms Anquetil: Oh là là ! C'est scandaleux !

An hon. Member: Shame!

The Prime Minister: That is a scandal. I wish you had asked the question then.

In view of some disturbing facts that have emerged from the circumstances under which the services of Mr Yerrigadoo have been enlisted as legal adviser and the quantum of fees paid, an enquiry will be initiated.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Yes, the hon. Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière, Mr Quirin!

SMALL BUSINESSES – VAT REGISTRATION THRESHOLD — AMNESTY ON FINES

(No. B/1112) 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 recent lowering of the Value Added Tax registration threshold for businesses with a turnover exceeding Rs 3 million, as announced in the Budget Speech 2025/26 and effective as from 01

October 2025, he will state if he will consider granting an amnesty on fines applicable to small businesses and entrepreneurs to encourage them to properly prepare and file their first VAT return, whilst ensuring fairness and promoting compliance.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in accordance with the Value Added Tax Act, small businesses and entrepreneurs whose turnover are between Rs3 million and Rs6 million are required to file their first VAT return on or before 31 January 2026 in respect to the period 01 October 2025 to 31 December 2025.

A small business or entrepreneur submitting the VAT return after the 31 January 2026 will be liable to pay a penalty for non-submission of VAT return and no-payment of VAT.

Madam Speaker, there is no amnesty provided on tax due by tax payers. However, small businesses and entrepreneurs will be given one month extension of time, that is, up-to the 28 February 2026, to submit their return and pay their VAT, without being liable to penalty or fines.

Following the announcement in June 2025 in the Budget Speech 2025-2026 to reduce the VAT registration threshold from Rs6 million to Rs3 million, MRA has taken a series of measures to assist small businesses and entrepreneurs to properly prepare and file their VAT return, namely –

- a) a Communiqué was issued on 12 September 2025 requesting persons required to be registered and who need assistance to phone on the MRA hotline, or to use the MRA e-appointment facility;
- b) dedicated customer service desks for the SMEs requiring assistance have been put in place at the MRA Head Office;
- c) simplified VAT Registration System has been put in place;
- d) a Guide on Simplified VAT Registration is published on the MRA website;
- e) a guide on simplified record keeping has also been prepared by the MRA, and
- f) the MRA has invited the newly VAT registered persons to attend dedicated education sessions.

Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Mauritius Revenue Authority that as at 27 November 2025, a total of 6,518 VAT registration applications has already been received by the MRA compared to the estimated number of 6,900 new tax payers for the financial year.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Yes, Mr Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Merci, Madame la présidente ! Le Premier ministre peut-il informer la Chambre si le gouvernement pourrait envisager d'accorder une exonération tout du moins, un moratoire de six mois au lieu d'un mois comme il l'a mentionné afin de permettre à ces entreprises de s'acquitter de leur premier versement de la TVA dans des conditions soutenables ?

The Prime Minister: It is going to be very difficult to do that, Madam Speaker, for the reasons I gave earlier on. We have to be sure that we collect the taxes. We have given an extension, that's what we are sticking to.

Madam Speaker: Okay!

Mr A. Duval, you wanted one?

Mr A. Duval: Yes. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will consider exempting those persons who offer services in coaching, sports, training, academies, etc.? My understanding is that they are subject to payment of VAT whilst they are promoting a healthier living. So, could he review at least that aspect to look at promoting healthier lifestyles, exempting those companies and entrepreneurs from payment of VAT?

Mr Ameer Meea: All services are taxed.

Mr A. Duval: Yes, that's why I am asking!

The Prime Minister: All services! Because, you know, the minute we make exceptions, you will see other people will ask for exceptions. We have to ensure and act responsibly that we do not allow the public debt to increase and we get what we are supposed to get in the coffers of the Government so that we can address the issue that Moody's is looking at very carefully.

Madam Speaker: Okay! Next question, Mr Lobine!

CARGO HANDLING CORPORATION – CONTAINERS DELIVERY – DELAYS COMPLAINTS

(No. B/1113) 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 Container Terminal at the Port Louis Harbour, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Cargo Handling Corporation, information as to whether there have been complaints of delays in the delivery of containers to importers of goods, particularly entrepreneurs and, if so, the reasons therefor.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Mauritius Ports Authority and the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd that representations have been made in writing on 20 August and 10 September 2025 and also verbally on a few occasions by the Mauritius Export Association and the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry, on behalf of their members regarding delays in the delivery of containers, thus impacting on the business community.

Such delays occur mainly after adverse weather conditions, during which container handling operations are suspended for safety and security reasons. The operations of the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd are further affected through the shortage of Rubber Tyred Gantry Crane Operators and insufficient Ship-to-Shore Cranes. The Corporation has presently five such cranes which are already operating at full capacity.

I wish to inform the House that three out of the eight Ship-to-Shore Cranes having reached the end of their economic useful lives, were removed from operations since February 2023 and were not replaced. These factors slow down vessel performance and affect productivity negatively.

Owing to these delays, 10 container vessels carrying a total of 4,396 import containers, skipped their calls at Port Louis Harbour for the period June to August 2025, and this has repercussions on the local market. These ships have been diverted to other regional ports and the containers ultimately reached Port Louis with significant delays ranging from four to eight weeks.

To address this issue, the Mauritius Ports Authority had a meeting on 22 August 2025, with the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd, the Mauritius Export Association, the Mauritius

Chamber of Commerce and Industry as well as the Shipping Lines to identify and implement remedial actions. Consequently, the situation has improved with all diverted containers reaching Port Louis albeit with some delays; but not such long delays.

Madam Speaker, to further improve its services, Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd has started the training of 32 employees as Rubber Tyred Gantry Operators since last month. In addition, the Government of India is providing, free of cost, a Cargo Handling Equipment Training Simulator for hands-on training. The Government of India would concurrently depute a technical expert for a period of two years for the training of operators. Delivery of the Simulator is expected by the end of this year.

Madam Speaker, in reply to Parliamentary Question B/471 at our Sitting of 13 May 2025, the House was informed that to enhance efficiency and competitiveness, the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd was proceeding with the implementation of its Business Plan at the cost of Rs5.3 billion with the acquisition of state-of-the-art equipment, implementation of green initiatives, capacity building and digitalisation of operations. This plan is being implemented in two phases and the first phase, over a period of two years, comprises the acquisition of the following cargo handling equipment at the cost of Rs2.77 billion to be financed by the Corporation's own funds –

- (a) acquisition of two Super Post Panamax Ship-to-Shore Cranes;
- (b) acquisition of five hybrid Rubber-Tyred Gantry Cranes, and
- (c) procurement of 15 Tractors and Trailers and other associated yard equipment.

Action is also being taken by the Central Procurement Board for the floating of international tenders.

As regards the second phase, I wish to inform the House that, the Government of India has extended a grant for the acquisition of port equipment by the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd to the tune of Rs3.3 billion which would include the procurement of one Super Post-Panamax crane, eight Rubber Tyred Gantry cranes and other associated yard equipment. In this context, the Ministry of Finance is in the process of signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of India.

As I have stated in the House, Madam Speaker, a total revamping of the port and other infrastructure to support maritime economic activities is being envisaged. In this context,

following my State visit to India last September, the Indian Authorities have agreed, in principle, on the strategic side, for the redevelopment and restructuring of Port in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, Dr. Aumeer.

ROAD ACCIDENTS – IMPAIRED DRIVERS – VALID LICENSE HOLDERS

(No. B/1114) 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 road traffic accidents, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof wherein drivers involved therein were found to be driving under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs/substances and/or without holding valid driving licences over the past three years, indicating in each case the number of –

- (a) fatalities that ensued, and
- (b) vehicles involved that were rented as contract cars and those which were rented illegally.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the Question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that from 01 January 2022 to 28 November 2025, 806 cases of road traffic accidents due to driving under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or without holding a valid driving licence, were reported to the Police. Out of those 806 cases, 287 were fatal road accidents. Out of which –

- (a) 25 cases concern driving under the influence of alcohol;
- (b) 8 cases involve driving under the influence of drugs or intoxicating substances, and
- (c) 8 cases concern driving without a driving licence.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that 110 vehicles rented as contract cars were involved in road accidents, among which, 4 were illegally rented cars. Out of the 110 rented vehicles, two were involved in fatal road accidents while driving under the influence of alcohol, and one under the influence of drugs or other intoxicating substances.

These figures, Madam Speaker, are a stark reminder that reckless and unlawful driving behaviours, be it under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or without a licence, continue to

claim lives on our roads. Government remains fully committed to reversing that trend through stronger enforcement, enhanced legislation and smarter technology.

In this regard, amendments to the Road Traffic Act are being introduced, in fact, this evening in this Assembly. The amendments will reinforce deterrence and ensure that our legal framework keeps pace with evolving road safety challenges

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Dr. Aumeer.

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, hon. Prime Minister. With regard to the forthcoming legislation for what we call '*permis à points*', may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether, consideration will be given for those that have resulted in fatalities where there has been drink-driving and illegal consumption of drugs, that the very harshest penalties be considered such as full suspension of their license for life?

Thank you.

The Prime Minister: I think this is already taken care of in the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill.

Madam Speaker: It is taken care of.

Dr. Aumeer: One more, please.

Madam Speaker: One more and then your next question.

Dr. Aumeer: Sure. Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I also ask the hon. Prime Minister whether, he will use his good office so that the court system in this country introduces a fast-track system whereby there have been fatalities, secondary once again, to drugged driving or illegal consumption of drugs so that the chances of being released on bail, which cause so much discomfort to bereaved families, are minimised and these people are put behind bars at the quickest opportunity that the court can find?

Madam Speaker: But that depends on the court.

The Prime Minister: Yes, but I can say that the hon. Attorney General, in fact, is looking at all these measures. There are some oppositions to it, I must say, but we are going to go ahead with that. We need to have a fast-track justice wherever there are problems like this. We cannot wait for 6 months, one year or two years.

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Interesting!

Dr. Aumeer, your next question!

**WHITE COLLAR CRIMES – ARRESTS UNDER PROVISIONAL CHARGES –
MEDICAL ASSISTANCE & BAIL**

(No. B/1115) 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 white collar crimes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Crimes Commission, information as to the number of suspects arrested under provisional charges since November 2024 to date in relation thereto, indicating the –

- (a) charges preferred in each case, and
- (b) number thereof who –
 - (i) needed medical attention and proceeded to private clinics and public hospitals, respectively;
 - (ii) obtained bail whilst under medical care, and
 - (iii) spent time in police custody pending release on bail.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Financial Crimes Commission that 88 suspects have been arrested under provisional charges since November 2024 to-date.

In relation to the information regarding charges levelled against each suspect, the Financial Crimes Commission has advised that by virtue of section 161 of the Financial Crimes Commission Act, no information relating to any investigation can be divulged.

Madam Speaker, as regards to part (b)(i) of the question, I am informed by the Financial Crimes Commission that 8 suspects needed medical attention and proceeded to private clinics and/or public hospital. I am tabling the details of the 8 suspects who needed medical attention.

Out of the 8 suspects, one obtained bail whilst under medical care.

As regards part (b) (iii) of the question, 3 suspects spent time both in police custody and in private clinics pending their release on bail.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes.

Two questions!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am sure what I am going to say the whole House is aware of. Keeping in mind that the hon. Prime Minister himself, while he was under vile prosecution and persecution, he did not, at any time, attempt to replace prison with luxury confinement but faced the music and went to Moka Detention Centre.

Madam Speaker: You are supposed to...

Dr. Aumeer: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will consider that a medical unit be made available either in Melrose Clinic or at the FCC, particularly with specialised care in cardiology, because most of them have cardiac issues, to avoid the tactical use of medical conditions to remain in such hospital institutions?

Ms Savabaddy: Very good!

The Prime Minister: I totally agree with the hon. Member and I can tell him and the House that this, in fact, is being considered by the hon. Attorney General and we are going to come with legislation addressing this issue.

Dr. Aumeer: Last question?

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I know I am taking a lot time today, but it is my speciality, my expertise.

Madam Speaker: Don't waste time then!

Dr. Aumeer: Will the hon. Prime Minister use his good office to advise the Ministry of Health to allow Specialists or Senior Specialists in subspeciality care to visit suspected people who have been conveyed by the FCC or Central CID at public hospitals and give them the authority to liaise with them to provide the best medical attention so that, once again, the use of private institutions cannot be used as an attempt to show *justice à deux vitesses*? Thank you.

The Prime Minister: Yes, again, I totally agree with the hon. Member, and we are addressing this issue. We have public hospitals – why the hell do they have to go to private clinics and stay in comfort? No, this is going to be addressed.

Mr Jhummun: *Ar nou non!*

An hon. Member: Bravo! Bravo!

Madam Speaker: Thank you. I will allow hon. Jhummun a last question and I will give you your supplementary as well.

Mr Jhummun: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

SILVER BANK LTD – GRANT THORNTON FEES – TOXIC LOANS RECOVERY

(No. B/1116) 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 Silver Bank Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to the amount of –

- (a) fees paid to –
 - (i) Grant Thornton;
 - (ii) Mr A. K. G., and
 - (iii) any other firm or individual acting as Conservator therefor since 13 February 2024 to date, and
- (b) toxic loans recovered therefrom since February 2024 to date.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in my reply to PQ B/405 on 06 May 2025, I informed the House that an amount Rs3.55 billion was deposited by government-related entities in Silver Bank Limited. This was purposely done to create a misleading enhancement of the bank's balance sheet.

The decision to invest so much money in such a dubious bank with no track record was outright incompetence bordering, I should say, on criminal offence in the exercise of the previous administration's duty in safeguarding public funds. So much was invested in the Silver Bank Limited despite the then government themselves issuing a circular requesting government-related entities to invest their surplus cash balances into the Treasury Certificates, which are much safer.

They issued the circular, and yet, this is what they did with Silver Bank! Stealing public money – that is what they were doing! As at date, more than Rs900 million are still due to these government-related entities.

I am informed that the Bank of Mauritius, by virtue of section 65 of the Banking Act 2004, appointed Mr Arvindsingh K. Gokhool as Conservator of Silver Bank Limited on 13 February 2024. And believe it or not, a monthly fee of Rs3.5 million was payable as conservation fee.

Since Mr Gokhool was a Director of Advisory Services at Grant Thornton (Advisory Services) Ltd., the monthly fee was payable to the company.

As from 16 November 2024, the Bank of Mauritius negotiated the fee and it was revised downward to Rs2.5 million per month.

I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that the current management retained the services of Mr Gokhool as it would have been costly to replace him.

However, the new management decided that even the Rs2.5 million was too high and reduced it to Rs1.5 million as from 18 December 2024.

Due to the substantial delay in finalising the proposed sale of Silver Bank Limited, the new management of the Bank of Mauritius further reduced the fee to Rs300,000 per month with effect as from 01 February 2025.

With regard to part (a) (i) of the question, I am informed that the Bank of Mauritius, for the period from 13 February 2024 to March 2025, has paid a sum of Rs39.7 million to Grant Thornton (Advisory Services) Ltd. who is the employer of Mr Arvindsingh Gokhool.

As regards part (a) (ii) of the question, I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that on 31 March 2025, Mr Gokhool resigned from Grant Thornton (Advisory Services) Ltd., but the conservation fee of Rs300,000 per month is now being paid to Vedaanta A&A Services Ltd., of which, the same Mr Gokhool is the sole shareholder and director. An amount of Rs2.3 million has been paid to Vedaanta A&A Services Ltd. from April 2025 to date.

With regard to part (a) (iii) of the question, I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that no other firm or individual, except Mr Gokhool, has served as Conservator of Silver Bank Limited since 13 February 2024.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that, for the period of February 2024 to 27 November 2025, only Rs206.3 million have been recovered out of the total loan portfolio of Rs8.2 billion of Silver Bank Limited. This, Madam Speaker, represents only 2.5 percent of the total portfolio.

This gives us a stark indication of just how toxic the Silver Bank's loan portfolio is. The toxicity of the loan portfolio was directly exacerbated by the influence of the previous government.

I must say to the House that it is a shame that he is still there! But there are reasons that they have given me because of the cost of paying compensation and all those things. But all of this will be subject to an inquiry.

Madam Speaker: Mr Jhummun, time is up. I said I would give him one, but time is already up.

The Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/1119, B/1120, B/1121, B/1122, B/1123 and B/1125. Thank you.

Now, we go to questions to Ministers. Hon. Caserne!

MAUPASS – REGISTERED USERS & ENROLMENT STRATEGIES

(No. B/1128) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to MauPass application, he will state the current number of registered users thereof, indicating –

- (a) the measures being envisaged to reach a maximum number of persons, and
- (b) if consideration will be given for citizens reaching the age of eighteen and applying for the National Identity Card to be automatically registered thereto.

Dr. Ramtohol: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. Member for this question. The MauPass application is a single sign-on platform which creates the bridge between the physical world and the virtual world. So, it helps the Government identify citizens using services which are deployed on the internet deployed by the Government. It is a very critical application. Hence, I understand the question.

Services that are available today for which we have to authenticate through MauPass include applications for jobs with the Public Service Commission, downloading birth certificates and marriage certificates, renewal of motor vehicle licences, application for Certificate of Character. So, we can count more than hundred, Madam Speaker.

As regards to part one of the question, the MauPass application has, as at 01 December 2025, 427,467 users or Mauritians registered on that system.

As the House is aware, on 26 May 2025, we actually published the blueprint, and the blueprint takes into consideration the usage of MauPass and the promotion of that usage. My Ministry has, therefore, embarked on a massive onboarding process to increase the number of MauPass users. During the period of July to August 2025, eight awareness sessions were conducted at different malls across the island mainly during weekends to educate citizens on MauPass platform and to help them create their MauPass accounts. The post office as well is also engaged in that activity.

We are also using the social welfare centres. We touched around 1,866 citizens with that. These efforts yielded 12,934 new registrations of citizens on MauPass platform. So, Madam Speaker, the initiatives that have been undertaken by my Ministry to reach a maximum number of users have been ongoing. To reach further citizens, a team from my Ministry trained around 209 officers at eight community centres and 25 officers working in the social welfare centres on the creation of MauPass accounts. Similar activities will now be undertaken with the Citizen's Advice Bureaus.

With respect to part (b) of the question, Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that as per paragraph 6 of the National Identity Card Regulations 2024, an applicant for a new identity card may opt for the creation of a MauPass account and the installation of digital certificates on his/her identity card.

Since the implementation of the new identity card in February 2024, 146,771 citizens have opted for a MauPass account while applying for a new identity card. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ B/1133 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity. PQ B/1150 will be replied by the hon. Minister of National Infrastructure.

Now, we proceed with the hon. Third Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle!

RIVIERE DES CREOLES & NOUVELLE FRANCE – COASTAL REGION – FLOODING PRONE AREAS – MEASURES

(No. B/1129) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the coastal region of Rivière des Créoles and to Nouvelle France, classified red zones in terms of flooding, he will

state the emergency measures, if any, taken by his Ministry ahead of the forthcoming rainy season.

Mr Gunness: Madam Speaker, I am informed that the drain works in the South-East region concern six villages namely, Rivière des Créoles, Vieux Grand Port, Bois des Amourettes, Anse Jonché, Providence, Petit Sable, Grand Sable and Bambous Virieux.

With a view to mitigating flooding in the region, the NDU has appointed consultant Servansingh Jadav & Partners Consulting Engineers Ltd for a thorough study of the whole region.

Geotechnical investigation has also been carried out to assess soil stabilisation measures along track roads and mountain slopes before proceeding with the construction of major cut-off drains in all the six villages. The detailed design report has already been finalised and the whole project is estimated to cost some Rs576.15 million including VAT and contingencies.

The consultant has been requested to advise on immediate short-term measures which may be implemented to bring relief to the inhabitants, pending implementation of the drain project holistically.

Madam Speaker, the Road Development Authority has also implemented two projects at Rivière des Créoles, as follows –

1. Construction of a reinforced concrete parapet wall along diverted drainage path at Rivière des Créoles near under path at Rivière des Créoles.
2. Stabilisation works, design and built on turnkey basis at Rivière des Créoles along South Eastern Highway A15.

Madam Speaker, with regards to the region of Nouvelle France, I have to inform the House that the NDU has already implemented drain projects in different alignments as follows –

- (i) Alignment 3 – drain works along A9 road;
- (ii) Alignment 3.1 to 3.3 upstream of A9, and Alignment 6 from Kovil to near Community Centre;
- (iii) Construction of retention basin Pond C in the region of Kanpur, Nouvelle France, and

(iv) Desilting of River La Chaux, 1 km stretch.

And other flood mitigating projects undertaken by RDA include –

- (i) redesigned of Nouvelle France roundabout on motorway M1,
- (ii) drain works along A10 at Nouvelle France at the level of Nouvelle France police station to roundabout of motorway M1, and
- (iii) alignment 6.1 drain works along A10.

Madam Speaker, as advised by the LDA, the NDU has also embarked on the construction of retention basins and drainage alignment along the upstream of Save Mart, Comlone region and Savanne Link Road.

The design was approved by the LDA on 30 September 2025 and action is being initiated for land acquisition and way leaves.

Madam Speaker, as immediate measures both the Road Development Authority and the District Council of Grand Port have been requested to proceed with the cleaning of drains and culverts within their jurisdiction in the villages of Rivière des Créoles and Nouvelle France as per the maintenance plan approved by the LDA.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, hon. Ramdass!

Mr Ramdass: Madam Speaker, is the hon. Minister aware of a number of inhabitants in respect of the Rivière des Créoles area of the number of inhabitants affected by the floods and is he also aware that certain families has had to leave their houses to seek refuge elsewhere in times of flooding?

Mr Gunness: Madam Speaker, I am aware that is why we say we are working on short-term immediate measures and long-term as a holistic measure and the consultant are working and I have even given the cost of a holistic project where Rs576 million; we know in which financial situation we are. We are trying to get financial clearance so as to do the project holistically.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Ramdass: You see, I take note of the cost to the tune of Rs576 million. May we have an indication from the hon. Minister as to when the works may be expected to start and if at all, it can be considered in stages at least to alleviate the suffering of these people in these areas?

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister. Can you give that undertaking?

Mr Gunness: I think, I have said in my answer that the consultant has been requested to advise on immediate short-term measures which may be implemented to bring relief to the inhabitants pending implementation of the drain project holistically. So, we wait for the consultant to give us the short-term measures that have to be done.

Madam Speaker: Okay, I think that should be all right. You still want to ? No!

Hon. Dr. Ms B. Thannoo, please! The Hon. Second Member for Quartier Militaire. Yes!

LANDSLIDES & EROSION – FLOOD-PRONE SEASONS – DAMAGED HOUSES – EVACUATION ORDERS & MEASURES

(No. B/1130) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands Whether, in regard to the dwellings severely endangered by landslides and erosion over the period 2019 to 2024 during the flood-prone seasons, he will state the number of occupiers thereof who were served an "order to evacuate", indicating the number of such dwellings which are still occupied as at date and the measures being envisaged to ensure the safety of the occupiers thereof ahead of the 2025-2026 flood season.

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for this question. At the outset, however, I wish to clarify that my Ministry is not responsible for issuing of evacuation orders for dwellings exposed to landslides, erosion or flooding.

Evacuation orders are issued by the National Crisis Committee in accordance with section 16(2) of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Act of 2016, directing any person to evacuate their premises or any public place or directing any person in a particular area to be evacuated within a certain specific time.

I am informed that so far one evacuation order was issued at Rivière des Créoles, five evacuation orders were issued in the region of St Pierre and Verdun and six evacuation orders were issued in Souillac during the period 2019 to 2024.

Furthermore, the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Centre has informed that some 86 families are still residing in their dwellings located at areas classified as being at risk of landslides and erosion. Surveys are also ongoing in other areas such as Crève Coeur and St Pierre particularly along the Rivière Profonde stretch.

As regards, the measures, Madam Speaker, already in place and those planned to safeguard residents living in high-risk zones ahead of 2025-2026 flood season, I am informed that regular simulation exercises, sensitisation campaigns and awareness initiatives are being carried out jointly with the local authorities.

In addition, during the rainy and cyclonic periods, the following actions are, *inter alia*, undertaken –

1. Continuous monitoring of vulnerable sites;
2. Regular police patrols;
3. Issuance of alerts to expose families to the National Multi-Hazard Early Alert Systems, and
4. Prepositioning and deployment of first responders including the SMF, the Mauritius Fire Rescue Services and the Special Support Unit and the regular police.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister.

Yes, hon. Ms Thannoo!

Dr. Ms Thannoo: Thank you, hon. Minister. Are Japanese experts currently involved in the geotechnical approach to the surveys, please? I know the experts are currently employed at the Ministry of Infrastructure. Thank you.

Mr Mohamed: As I have said at the very outset of my answer. My Ministry is not responsible for evacuation orders.

I gave the information that I obtained from all other ministries as to what work is being done. Now, as far as specifics are concerned, I would invite the hon. Member, Madam Speaker, to put a question to the substantive Minister responsible for such geotechnical investigations.

It would not be within the ambit of my portfolio and, therefore, I would not be able to give the answer to the hon. Member.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Member, you will do that, I am sure.

Now, I have the hon. Member for Port-Louis North and Montagne Longue!

Yes, hon. A. Duval!

MAURITIUS TAMIL CULTURAL CENTRE TRUST – CULTURAL CENTRE BUILDING CONSTRUCTION - RÉDUIT TRIANGLE – FINANCIAL SUPPORT

(No. B/1131) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust, he will state if financial support from Government is being envisaged for the construction of a Cultural Centre building at Réduit Triangle, as pledged by L'Alliance du Changement during the 2024 General Elections.

Mr Gondeea: Madam Speaker, with due respect, before addressing the question on funding, it is important to this House will recall the circumstances surrounding the land allocated to the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust.

The land at Réduit Triangle, Moka, was originally leased to the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust in August 2010 together with the Hindi Speaking Union and the Urdu Speaking Union under the prime ministership of Dr. the hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam.

This was done in recognition of the long-standing cultural contribution of these communities and as part of a coherent national vision to support and strengthen our multicultural identity.

However, in April 2023, the previous government cancelled that lease. Madam Speaker, it is publicly known that this decision was taken at a time when attempts were being made to divert the land to individuals closely connected to those in power. Such actions understandably generated deep resentment within the Tamil community and raised legitimate concerns about fairness and preferential treatment.

Madam Speaker, the retrieval of the land was regarded by the Tamil community as a profound injustice. In August 2024, members of the community, together with the *Rann Nou Later* movement, organised a peaceful march to defend their legitimate rights. Unfortunately, this peaceful mobilisation was met with arbitrary arrest. This caused further distress and raised serious concerns among Mauritians regarding dignity, justice and the protection of fundamental freedom.

What was equally troubling, Madam Speaker, is that after nearly ten years of inaction, the previous Government suddenly announced almost on the eve of the 2024 general elections, that it would construct buildings for the three organisations whose leases had been cancelled. These organisations had been shifted to Côte d'Or. The timing and manner of this announcement strongly suggest that it was motivated more by political mileage than by any genuine project supported by planning, funding or long-term commitment.

Madam Speaker, upon returning to office in November 2024, this Government moved swiftly and responsibly to correct this injustice created. We honoured our commitment to the Tamil community by restoring the land at Réduit Triangle. A new lease agreement was signed on 20 May 2025, restating the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust legitimate rights and rectifying the unfairness that had been inflicted.

Turning now to the specific question of funding raised by the hon. Member, I wish to clearly state that *l'Alliance du Changement* never pledged to provide financial support for the construction of a cultural centre building for the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust.

Furthermore, this Government is not constructing any cultural centre building for any community at this stage. The economic situation inherited by this Government has been nothing short of catastrophic. We are therefore required to prioritise essential national obligations such as stabilising public finances, reinforcing social protection systems and meeting urgent service delivery needs. In this context, embarking on new capital incentives, cultural infrastructure projects would not be responsible or sustainable at the moment. This, in no way, diminishes our unwavering commitment to promote and safeguard the culture and heritage of all communities, including the Tamil community. It simply reflects the fiscal reality that this Government must manage responsibly.

Madam Speaker, this Government remains firmly committed to fairness, transparency and respect for all communities. We will continue to act responsibly and with full regard to fiscal discipline, transparency and long-term sustainability in the cultural sector, unlike our predecessor. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes?

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, in fact, promises had been made during the campaign; maybe the Minister will not recall. I can tell you the names of Members who have...

Madam Speaker: Question, please! Question!

Mr A. Duval: ...gone as far at the radio to say so. Well, I will ask the hon. Minister whether, there has been any representation with his Ministry with regard to financial support for the construction which is pending there for more than 20 years now?

Mr Gondeea: I think that I have already replied to the question. We have not committed ourselves.

Mr A. Duval: No, no, representations.

Madam Speaker: No, whether there were representations.

Mr Gondeea: No, nothing at all.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr A. Duval: May I have a second question?

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr A. Duval: May I ask whether he is prepared to receive representations from the MTCC with regard to constructions given that the promise has been made and...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Member!

Mr A. Duval: I maintain...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Member!

Mr A. Duval: I maintain and that, therefore the subject matter ought to be discussed with them?

Madam Speaker: The hon. Minister said that there was no promise. You are asking him if he will meet representatives. Maybe you can meet representatives, hon. Minister. Yes?

The Deputy Prime Minister: He must give evidence!

Madam Speaker: But maybe the hon. Minister can meet representatives, not necessarily for what he says.

Mr Gondeea: Why should we meet if we are not going to...

Madam Speaker: If nobody asked?

Mr Gondeea: Yes.

Madam Speaker: But if somebody asks you?

Mr Gondeea: If they ask, yes, of course, we will meet them.

Madam Speaker: You would meet them. *On est à Maurice!*

Mr Gondeea: With pleasure, we will meet them, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: *On est à Maurice, on est bien élevé. Allez,* now I have a few minutes.

Hon. Second Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien, Mr Apollon!

MAHEBOURG MARKET FAIR – PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION – EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE

(No. B/1132) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a

Market Fair near the Youth Centre in Mahebourg, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the District Council of Grand Port, information as to where matters stand, indicating the expected completion date thereof.

(Withdrawn)

Madam Speaker: This question has been withdrawn. *J'ai beaucoup de mal à suivre.* This question has been withdrawn. *On m'envoie des tas de petits papiers. Il va falloir trouver un meilleur système.*

Okay, so if the question has been withdrawn, I propose that we break for lunch!

At 12.52 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.35 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Please be seated! Hon. Rookny!

FREE INTERNET SCHEME – BENEFICIARIES, PAYMENT & IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

(No. B/1133) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, with regard to the sum of Rs 84 million allocated in the 2025–2026 National Budget for the scheme providing free internet to families registered on the Social Register, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand, indicating the –

- (a) number of families already benefitting therefrom and the average monthly cost per connection borne by Government;
- (b) sum already disbursed and the disbursement schedule for the remaining amount thereof, and
- (c) expected timeline for full rollout to all eligible families.

The Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity (Mr A. Subron): Madam Speaker, please allow me to provide the reply to this question as the budget measure 295 concerns my Ministry.

From the outset, let me convey to my colleague, hon. Members, and the House the following –

- (i) With regard to parts (a) and (c) of the question, the scheme is expected to be implemented as from the end of this year and fully rolled out by the first quarter of 2026. In this context, provision is being made to fully cover 7,468 households and families on the SRM in both Mauritius and Rodrigues to benefit from this budget measure.
- (ii) With regard part (b) of the question, payment will be made to internet service providers upon provision of the internet to SRM households who applied and are provided with same.

Madam Speaker, following the announcement of this budgetary measure, the National Empowerment Foundation (NEF) carried out a survey amongst its beneficiaries who consist of persons of the Social Register of Mauritius (SRM) and have signed a social contract to benefit from its services. The surveys pointed out that only around an estimated 10% of the families of the Social Register of Mauritius presently have a home-based internet connection. Around 90% have expressed interest to avail of the free internet connection.

My Ministry then engaged in consultations with relevant stakeholders, namely the Ministry of Finance, the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (ICTA) and the National Empowerment Foundation to work out modalities for the implementation of this budgetary measure. Consultations were also held with the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) to understand the mechanism in place for persons to benefit from the 18-25 free mobile phone scheme.

After thorough reflections emanating from these consultations, my Ministry has decided that eligible SRM beneficiaries will have the choice to select from the three available commercial packages, as per the recommendation of the ICTA, offered by the three internet service providers, that is, Mauritius Telecom, Emtel Ltd and Mahanagar Telephone Mauritius Limited (MTML). Thus, the 7,468 households will have the possibility of making their own choices and no specific ISP will be designated. So, the new provision will be a people's choice-based system.

In this context, the State Informatics Limited (SIL) is working on an online platform with the assistance of the Mauritius Revenue Authority to translate this people's choice-based system to ensure efficient implementation and monitoring of the scheme and ensure effective communication between the Ministry and the internet service providers.

Once the SIL online platform is finalised, NEF will issue notices to all SRM eligible households to inform of the packages available and of the modalities to avail of same. The head of the household will have to apply for his or her chosen package directly from the selected ISP and its respective outlets, similar to any citizen applying to benefit from any given internet package.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform that the Government has provided, in fact, Rs85 million yearly over a period of three years each for this particular scheme under the National Resilience Fund. Let me reassure the hon. Member and the House that the three years' period will start as from the date on which the measures become effective so that no prejudice is caused to any of the registered poor family of the country.

My Ministry is committed, as is this caring government, to ensure the implementation of this measure to provide some 7,500 families and 27,000 people with internet connection so as to be digitally connected and avail of the facilities linked thereto, particularly for educational purposes. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister. Yes, hon. Rookny!

Mr Rookny: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. Minister if he could advise, of the Rs85 million earmarked per financial year, and given that the project would be fully rolled out at the end of the first quarter of 2026, how much of the said sum will be spent in the first financial year?

Mr Subron: As I have just stated, as from the date of the implementation of the project, the three years budget will be applied, that is, the three years that have been earmarked, irrespective of the start date of the implementation. So, up to now, no money has been spent. It will be spent either in December for the first three years from next year, and then the three years will apply for all those eligible to the package.

RAINWATER HARVESTING SYSTEMS – ACCESSIBILITY & SCHEMES

(No. B/1134) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to rainwater harvesting systems, he will state whether, with a view to alleviating water stress that impacts on daily functioning and sanitary requirements, his Ministry will consider –

- (a) imposing a profit ceiling thereon to increase the accessibility thereof for domestic usage, and
- (b) implementing viable schemes therefor in favour of public institutions.

(Withdrawn)

Madam Speaker: So, now, the First Member for Savanne and Black River, Mr Babajee.

CYBERBULLYING, ONLINE HARASSMENT/DIGITAL VIOLENCE – ONLINE SAFETY REGULATOR & SOCIAL MEDIA RESTRICTIONS

(No. B/1135) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to online risks, harms, cyberbullying and harassments and victims thereof attempting/committing suicide, he will state whether consideration will be given for the –

- (a) establishment of an independent online safety regulator with a highly qualified commissioner at the head thereof, and
- (b) banning of social media to those under 16 years old.

Dr. Ramtohul: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. Member for this question.

This Government recognises that online harms, particularly those affecting children and vulnerable persons demand a structured and specialised institutional response and also because of the incidence that took place lately, including attempts to and cases of suicide. I am tabling some...

Madam Speaker: I am sorry. Including one today, I understand.

Dr. Ramtohum: Sorry?

Madam Speaker: Apparently, there has been one today as well.

Dr. Ramtohum: Yesterday.

Madam Speaker: Yes, yesterday.

Dr. Ramtohum: And it was very, very sad.

Madam Speaker: I am sorry.

Dr. Ramtohum: Over the last three years, Madam Speaker, there has been an increasing number of cases of cyberbullying, online harassment and other forms of digital violence, especially against women. When we look at the statistics, which I will be tabling, those statistics reveal numbers that speak loudly about the fact that women are more exposed to digital violence.

Even though the Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Act 2021 already provides deterrent legal provisions, my Ministry is actively working on amendments to the legislation to further strengthen the protections, given the fast-evolving nature of online harms.

Again, for three consecutive years, Madam Speaker, cybercrime has been on the rise. The data was there. Parents were reporting cases, but the former government took no action. No proposed amendments to the legislations.

Regarding part (a) of the question, Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Attorney General's Office that the establishment of an independent online safety regulator, in line with international best practices such as the eSafety Commissioner of Australia, the Online Safety Commissioner in Ireland and the UK's Online Safety Act under Ofcom, is under examination.

It is important to highlight that our current online safety ecosystem already includes several institutions, namely the ICTA, the Data Protection Commissioner's Office, the Police Cybercrime Unit and the Child Development Unit along with the Computer Emergency Response Team. Together, these institutions play a critical role in protecting our children and all the users online.

Nevertheless, preliminary consultations with stakeholders are being held to determine the most appropriate mechanism and options including the creation of an independent statutory office headed by a highly qualified commissioner or the establishment of an online safety unit within an existing regulator with guaranteed independence.

As regards part (b) of the question, concerning the proposed ban on social media access for persons under 16 years old, Government is monitoring international developments carefully, including Australia's pioneering but technically challenging nation-wide restriction accompanied by an age assurance technology trial.

The Australian experience, Madam Speaker, reveals issues related to technical accuracy, privacy risks, implementation challenges and enforcement complexities that question the practicality of such a ban. In line with section 12 of our Constitution, which protects freedom of expression and considers the digital rights and inclusion of minors, a full prohibition does not seem to be the solution. Similarly, there is also concern that a ban may push minors to unregulated platforms, potentially increasing risks.

The former government treated cyber security as a side issue. Today, we are correcting a decade of dangerous complacency, Madam Speaker. This Government instead prioritises a holistic approach that includes strengthened digital safety education and enhanced parent control mechanisms including the imminent roll out of a set of child protection measures online.

The House may wish to note that the ICTA is currently working on directives which are expected to be issued in a matter of days. This measure, while being optional, allows parental control through mobile devices in a first phase and control over Wi-Fi home routers in a second. The directives will mandate licensees to, *inter alia*, take necessary measures to curtail harmful and illegal content for protecting children online.

Moreover, the government intends to actively engage with regional international bodies, namely –

- the SADC;
- the COMESA, and

- the African Union, in order to establish structured channels of corporation with major online platforms most of which do not have a physical presence in Mauritius.

This approach aims at improving platform accountability for the contents that are being hosted by those companies.

I also wish to inform the House that amendments to the Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Act 2021 are being prepared to, *inter alia*, establish a national cyber resilience and cyber security agency which will have as one of its key functions: online safety. Whether the independent online safety regulators functions will be incorporated into this framework or not, will depend on the outcomes of the ongoing assessments.

Madam Speaker, it is known to one and all that our economic stability now depends upon our social as well as digital stability. It is therefore imperative that we ensure that electronic platforms are safe and secure enough to protect our people. The past regime politicized people's safety. We are taking responsibilities. They stood by as families, women and young people suffered digital violence. We, on the other hand, are coming with bold measures: legislative, institutional, operational and educational.

On a conclusive note, Madam Speaker, this Government is fully conscious of the increase in online risks and the corresponding rise in the number of victims. This is why it is resolutely committed to protecting our population, especially children and vulnerable persons from online harms through legislation, institutional reform, education, technology and international corporation while at the same time upholding the constitutional rights.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister!

Mr Babajee, yes!

Mr Babajee: Will the hon. Minister consider introducing a 24/7 counselling and support services? As we saw, yesterday, someone committed suicide live and there was a gap between that, we could have contacted that institution?

Dr. Ramtohul: Thank you, hon. Member. We are looking at the problem from a holistic perspective. You would recall the Prime Minister's visit to India and as a result, we are engaging with the Maharashtra Government for the establishment of certain services that

will include services from Ministry of Gender for Family Support as well and for support of victims who are going through digital violence.

Madam Speaker: Yes, alright.

Hon. Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière!

NEW GEORGE V STADIUM & ANJALAY COOPEN STADIUM – HOMOLOGATION REQUIREMENTS

(No. B/1136) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether in regard to the New George V Stadium in Curepipe and the Anjalay Coopen Stadium in Belle Vue Harel, he will state whether his Ministry has applied for the homologation thereof, indicating the requirements therefor.

Mr Nagalingum: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that it is the Mauritius Football Association which is responsible for applying for homologation of a stadium in Mauritius. In order for a stadium to host international football matches, they need to get homologation by the *Confédération Africaine de Football*. The CAF is the governing body for football in Africa and is one of the six continental confederations that make up the Fédération Internationale de Football Association, that is, FIFA.

The mandatory requirement to get homologation includes compliance with, *inter alia* –

- administration, documentation;
- pitch or field of play;
- technical areas of equipment;
- dressing room;
- team and official facilities;
- match official;
- doping and Video Assistant Referee (VAR);
- spectator areas and seating;
- safety, security and emergency services;
- media, press and broadcast and lighting power, and

- communication.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry is working in close collaboration with the MFA towards the homologation of two stadiums. It was in this endeavour that inspection of both the New George V Stadium and the Anjalay Coopen Stadium was carried out by Mr Joshua Knipp, CAF Stadium Inspector, during his mission to Mauritius from 27 to 29 June 2025.

Following the CAF inspection, the MFA was informed that both the Anjalay Coopen Stadium and New George V Stadium currently do not meet the minimum CAF Stadium requirement to host international matches. The CAF Inspector highlighted that the Anjalay Coopen Stadium requires major upgrading works in several areas to meet homologation requirement. The report also stated that the New George V Stadium would require a full revamp and redesigned to comply with CAF Stadium standard.

Madam Speaker, I wish to highlight that the absence of a homologation does not prevent the playing of local football matches in these stadiums. Nevertheless, my Ministry has worked out a costing of the project and it goes without saying that significant fund will be required for such work. The upgrading works have already started on both stadium and will be carried out in phases. My Ministry will continue to collaborate with the MFA and all relevant stakeholders to ensure that the upgrading works meet CAF standard and fully the requirement for homologation. A fresh inspection for the homologation process will be initiated once the required works have been completed.

Madam Speaker: Yes, one question!

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, je vous remercie. Peut-on déduire de par la réponse de l'honorable ministre que son ministère de même que la MFA vont faire de l'homologation de ces deux stades une priorité de façon à ce que les matches de la sélection nationale ne se jouent pas uniquement au stade de Côte d'Or devant moins de cinq mille spectateurs ? Alors ma question est : est-ce que l'honorable ministre est en train de donner une priorité à ces deux stades pour être homologués dans un proche avenir ?

Mr Nagalingum: Madam Speaker, like I said in my reply, the answer is here. We are doing our best so that the two stadiums be homologated in the near future.

Madam Speaker: And upgraded. Okay.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, rapidement, une dernière question.

L'honorable ministre est sans doute au courant que par rapport aux deux derniers jeux des îles qui ont été organisés ici à Maurice, l'État a dépensé plus de R 230 million pour la rénovation du stade George V.

Donc, peut-on savoir depuis son entrée en fonction en tant que ministre de Sport...

Madam Speaker: Là, vous parlez d'un autre stade ?

Mr Quirin: Non, George V. C'est le même.

Peut-on savoir quelles sont les mesures qu'il a prises pour rénover et s'il y a eu effectivement des rénovations qui ont été effectuées au stade George V ?

Mr Nagalingum: Madam Speaker, we have waited for ten years. I have said in my reply that we are going by phases and the hon. Member should follow what the answer was. We are doing our best.

Madam Speaker: For both stadiums.

Mr Nagalingum: For both stadiums.

Madam Speaker: Yes, alright. Next question.

LAND DRAINAGE MASTERPLAN – BUILDING AND LAND USE PERMITS – APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME

(No. B/1137) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the Land Drainage Masterplan, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Land Drainage Authority (LDA), information as to the number of Building and Land Use Permit applications referred to the LDA by the local authorities following the publication thereof, indicating the time taken for the processing thereof.

Mr Gunness: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that the Land Drainage Masterplan, commissioned by the Land Drainage Authority, was published on 25 August 2025 following Cabinet approval. A technical committee was set up in February 2025 to review the document. Following its recommendations, the Masterplan, together with the associated maps and data sets, were published in its entirety. The digital elevation model was also made accessible to the public.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that since the public release of the Land Drainage Masterplan, and up to 28 November 2025, a total of 358 Building and Land Use Permit applications have been referred to the Land Drainage Authority by the local authorities.

Madam Speaker, I am also informed that the time required to process Building and Land Use Permit applications depends mainly on –

1. The submission of a complete set of documents, including site plans, drawings of the proposed development, the computer-aided design file in required format and Storm Water Drainage reports where applicable;
2. The complexity of the proposed development, and
3. The examination of Storm Water Drainage reports where warranted.

Currently, the average processing time ranges from one working day to approximately two months depending on the complexity of the case and the completeness of the submissions. Incomplete submissions or the omission of required documents inevitably delays the processing of applications.

Madam Speaker, I must admit that there have been considerable delays in the processing of Building and Land Use Permit applications and I am personally not satisfied with this situation. Therefore, in order to prevent undue delays in the examination of documents and the issuance of permits, a dedicated team of four officers has been constituted to work on backlog and expedite matters.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Ms Savabaddy: Je remercie l'honorable ministre pour sa réponse. Peut-il expliquer ce qui sera fait pour ramener, j'ai bien compris la réponse, le long délai avant que la LDA ne tranche sur une application ? Merci.

Mr Gunness: Madam Speaker, as I just said, I was myself not satisfied. There was only one officer working on all the documents and everything. Now, I have set up a dedicated team of four officers and an Engineer is heading it. So, I am sure that we will be expediting matters for the permits.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Ms Savabaddy: En ce qui concerne les demandes de permis pour des constructions qui se trouvent hors de la *red zone* du Masterplan, pourquoi dans des cas également, la LDA

n'arrive pas à statuer et cela bloque les collectivités locales dans l'octroi du Building and Land Use Permit ?

Mr Gunness: All these will be things of the past.

Madam Speaker: Yes. You are happy now, Ms Savabaddy?

Ms Savabaddy: I am waiting for the results.

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

VACOAS POPULAR MULTIPURPOSE COOPERATIVES SOCIETY – REPRESENTATIONS – IRREGULAR SALES OF LAND

(No. B/1138) **Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the Vacoas Popular Multipurpose Cooperatives Society, he will –

- (a) state if he has received representations from members thereof for a meeting and, if so, indicate if same was acceded to;
- (b) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand with regard to reported cases of mismanagement over the years thereat, and
- (c) state whether he has taken cognizance of the communiqué issued by this Society for the sale of a plot of land at Flic en Flac to the tune of Rs 560 million.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, the Vacoas Popular Multipurpose Cooperatives Society Ltd was registered in 1977 and operates as a cooperative credit union with 4591 active members. Its core activities include promoting savings, issuing secured loans and undertaking property-related projects.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that the affairs of the society have been managed by a caretaker board for ten years until 13 July 2024 when a Board of Directors was elected democratically. The current board was constituted on 15 July 2024.

Regarding part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that I have received two separate letters, both highlighting long standing issues with the Vacoas Popular Multipurpose Cooperatives Society. The first and undated letter was received on 28 February 2025. The second, also undated and received on 23 April 2025, was addressed to the Ag. Director General of the Financial Crimes Commission and copied to the hon. Prime Minister and myself, contained serious and disturbing allegations about the society's governance. Given

the gravity of these claims, I immediately instructed my officers to initiate an enquiry following which, a comprehensive report was produced and submitted to the relevant authorities.

Concerning part (b) of the question, I am informed that several cases of alleged mismanagement at the society have been referred to the police whilst others are presently pending before courts down the years.

Madam Speaker, as regard to part (c), I wish to inform the House that I have taken cognizance of the communiqué issued on 19 November 2025 regarding the proposed R560 million sales of 27 arpents 15 perches of land at Flic en Flac. The communiqué was signed by the Manager and the Treasurer whereas such a decision must be approved and issued by the board through duly authorised office bearers as required under the society's rule. The process was therefore irregular from the outset.

My Ministry had already issued directive before the communiqué on 18 November and a second directive on 25 November this year instructing the society to halt the process and reminding it that any disposal of immovable property requires proper board approval/member's authorisation at a general meeting and more importantly, a transparent and competitive bidding exercise, which was not followed.

We further reiterated the society's AML CFTs obligations including full customer due diligence. As the society initially failed to comply, all eight of its bank accounts across five banks were placed under stricter transaction control as provided by the law with any payment now subject to prior vetting by my officers.

Madam Speaker, on Saturday 29 November 2025, the society formally informed my Ministry that the proposed sale has been halted and it would fully adhere to my Ministry's directives including conducting an open bidding exercise and submitting the selected bidder to a special general meeting for approval. The matter is currently being followed up by my Ministry.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lobine, you are alright?

Now, hon. Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle!

BOIS DES AMOURETTES-QUATRE SŒURS COASTAL ROAD – PUBLIC BEACH PROCLAMATION

(No. B/1139) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the newly constructed waterfront along the Coastal Road from Bois des Amourettes to Quatre Sœurs, he will state if consideration will be given for the proclamation thereof as public beach with a view to entrusting same to the Beach Authority for regular maintenance, cleanliness, and embellishment, including the planting and upkeep of appropriate coastal vegetation and, if so, when.

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, all beaches along the coastal road from Bois des Amourettes to Quatre Sœurs have been proclaimed as public beaches. On 22 January 2025, the said public beaches were vested with the Beach Authority.

I am informed by the Beach Authority that cleaning and maintenance of these public beaches are carried out twice weekly in collaboration with Mauri-Facilities Management Company Ltd. This includes the collection and removal of wastes from the beach and rock revetment as well as regular grass cutting. Embellishment works are already undertaken at Bambous Virieux, Pointes aux Feuilles and Anse Jonchee public beaches.

Further enhancement and the planting of additional coastal vegetation will be considered subject to clearances being obtained from the Conservator of Forests.

That is my answer, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Lobine!

HIGHLANDS – INCINERATOR – OPERATIONALITY

(No. B/1140) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the incinerator at Highlands, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to when same will become operational, indicating the reasons for the delay therefor.

The Minister of Health and Wellness (Mr A. Bachoo): Madam Speaker, I have been apprised that the incinerator at Highlands was repaired, commissioned and handed over to the council on 31 July 2025 by the contractor Steam House Ltd.

I am further informed that the council has already initiated procedures for the obtention of a fire certificate. Once the fire certificate has been issued by the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service, the incinerator will be made operational and available to members of the public.

Mr Lobine: Madam Speaker, one supplementary question.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: You see, it is all about PQs being withdrawn. My time is consumed with that. I am so sorry.

Go ahead!

Mr Lobine: May I ask the hon. Minister – I know he is not the substantive Minister for this question – do we have a timeframe as to when this fire certificate will be issued? We have already visited this place on several occasions whereby we were being told that it will be operational in a few days or very soon. But it is nearly four months and inhabitants over there are facing serious difficulties.

Mr Bachoo: Unfortunately, the requirements of the fire services have not been met. For example, they have asked for the replacement of PVC tubing used to feed the water spray system with galvanised iron or steel tubing. These have not yet been done. I hope that in the days to come, this will be accomplished.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister.

Hon. Dr. Prayag!

RIVIERE DU REMPART SWIMMING POOL – SURVEY

(No. B/1141) Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Rivière du Rempart Swimming Pool, he will state whether a survey of the state of the facilities thereof, including the pumps, changing rooms and tiers has been carried out, indicating whether consideration will be given for the urgent reinstatement thereof.

Mr Nagalingum: Madam Speaker, as I had already indicated since my taking of office, several sports infrastructure all over the island are either out of use or in a bad state. The Rivière du Rempart Swimming Pool, which is managed and maintained by the Mauritius Sports Council since 01 July 2022, forms part of those infrastructures which are in a bad state, although in a lower scale.

I am informed by the Mauritius Sports Council that the Riviere du Rempart Swimming Pool is operational and it is manned by some 15 persons. It is being used on average by some 100 users on a daily basis. A recent survey and safety and health inspection have revealed that only one of the three water pumps is in operation. A door was damaged in the changing room and a chemical which is currently stored in the pump room should be relocated outside.

The scope of work for the repairs of the water pump is being prepared while that of the construction of a storage facility has been finalised and tender will be launched shortly. The damaged door has already been repaired.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Now, PQs B/1126, B/1142, B/1153, B/1167, and B/1169 have been withdrawn. I am going to try and follow.

INTERTOWN GAMES – MUNICIPAL COUNCILS' ENGAGEMENT

(No. B/1142) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Intertown Games currently being held, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain the list of the –

- (a) Municipal Councils having enlisted and those not having enlisted athletes to participate therein, indicating the reasons therefor in the latter case, and
- (b) measures being envisaged to help urban authorities to make such an event more successful.

(Withdrawn)

Madam Speaker: So, I will call PQ B/1143. Hon. Dr. Prayag, I am sorry, there were two questions for you. I missed one. *C'est un grand désordre !*

CPAP MACHINES – DISTRIBUTION

(No. B/1143) Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the 500 Continuous Positive Airway Pressure machines donated through the “Gift of Givers NGO”, from South Africa, in August 2022, he will state how same were distributed among the public health institutions.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that in November in 2021, Gift of the Givers Foundation, which is the largest disaster response non-governmental organisation of African origin on the African continent, informed this Ministry through the

Prime Minister's Office that they were in the capacity to donate Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) machines to Mauritius.

It is good to note that an evaluation committee set up at the Ministry reported that the CPAP machine granted as CSIR L.I.F.E. was a very basic device.

It was a non-invasive ventilator which was not registered with the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority. It was authorised to be used only for emergency ventilation during the COVID-19 pandemic, but was not appropriate for use in COVID High Dependency Unit or COVID Intensive Care Units, but could be used in COVID wards in the general hospitals.

Madam Speaker, after complying with the requirement for the donation, the South African Government's National Development of Health was agreeable to donate 500 CPAP machines to Gift of the Givers for onward donations to Mauritius.

The foundation later informed that the final donation would contain 501 CPAP machines and 2,500 spare circuits packed in 167 boxes.

The Ministry was expected to cover the cost of the shipment from OR Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg, South Africa to SSR International Airport, arrange for customs clearance and bear the logistic costs for the storage, transportation and distribution of the machines in public hospitals in Mauritius.

At the time of shipment, the agent reported that the donor informed that out of 167 boxes expected for donation, 14 boxes were damaged and a further two could not be sent since the serial number of the machine did not match those on the packing list. Eventually, only 135 boxes were shipped to Mauritius at a total cost of Rs318,449.07, excluding VAT.

The shipment reached Mauritius on or about 01 July 2022 and was delivered to Central Supply Division, Castel of the Ministry of Health and Wellness for storage and distribution. The 139 boxes were verified with the procurement officer of the CSD and were reported to contain a total of 415 CPAP machines with an expiry date of October 2022 instead January 2023 as labelled on the boxes.

Madam Speaker, 354 out of 415 CPAP were distributed among public health institutions. One was issued to the High Commissioner's Office of the South African High Commission, and 16 units have been expired and are still stocked at the CSD.

With your permission, Madam Speaker, a detailed distribution list is being tabled.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Dr. Prayag, good?

Now, the Fourth Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue, hon. A. Duval!

BIRCHAM INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY – RECOGNITION & ACCREDITATION

(No. B/1144) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research whether, in regard to Bircham International University (Spain), he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Higher Education Commission, information as to whether it is a recognised and accredited tertiary education institution in Mauritius.

Dr. Sukon: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that under section 14 of the Higher Education Act, any institution that establishes itself in Mauritius and offers higher education courses is required to be registered with the Higher Education Commission before it can update or advertise programmes locally.

In regard to Bircham International University (Spain), I am advised by HEC as follows

—

- BIU is not registered in Mauritius as a higher education institution;
- It has never submitted an application for registration to HEC;
- Consequently, it does not appear on the official register of the Higher Education Institution maintained by HEC under the Act;

Consequently, for overseas institutions that are not on the registered list established by HEC, HEC relies on the structured process for determining whether the qualifications may be recognised.

First, the Higher Education Commission checks its database of overseas universities and institutions whose qualifications have been evaluated and recognised previously. If the institution does not appear in the database, then HEC formally conserves the competent authorities in the country where the institution claims to be established; normally, the National QA Accreditation or Higher Education Authority. In the specific case of the BIU, I am informed by the Higher Education Commission that it is neither registered in Mauritius nor is it on the existing list of overseas institutions already recognised by HEC.

Consequently, HEC has written to the relevant Spanish Authorities to seek formal confirmation of the legal status and recognition of BIU in Spain. At this point in time, the Commission is awaiting a written reply.

Madam Speaker: Yes, now, we have hon. Seeburn.

**BAMBOUS VIRIEUX TO POINTE DU DIABLE – RESURFACING WORKS –
GEOTECHNICAL/DRAINAGE ASSESSMENT**

(No. B/1145) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the segment of the road stretching from Bambous Virieux to Pointe Diable along which resurfacing works are ongoing, he will state if any geotechnical or drainage assessment was carried out prior thereto and, if not, indicate whether consideration will be given for the –

- (a) provision of drainage facilities thereat to prevent soil erosion and water accumulation, and
- (b) construction of a retaining wall or protective structure to stabilise the slope and safeguard the newly resurfaced road.

Mr Gunness: Madam Speaker, I would like to refer the hon. Member to the replies I made PQ B/223 on 25 March 2025 and to PQ B/616 on 08 July 2025 wherein I informed the House that the Flacq/Mahebourg B28 Road had been severely affected following the pipelaying works undertaken by the Central Water Authority.

The resurfacing works which are currently ongoing along the stretch from Bambous Virieux to Pointe du Diable are being carried out by CWA in accordance to the wayleave conditions issued by the Road Development Authority to reinstate the road after the trenching and excavation works.

Madam Speaker, the South-East regions including Bambous Virieux, Anse Jonchee, Bois des Amourettes, Vieux Grand Port, Rivère Des Créoles, Petit Bel Air and Grand Bel Air were declared by the Land Drainage Authority as high-risk flood prone areas since April 2021.

The study and implementation of flood mitigation measures in the region of Bambous Virieux were entrusted to the National Development Unit in 2021. The preliminary design report for the flood mitigation measures in the Bambous Virieux region was prepared by Servansingh Jadav & Partners Consulting Engineers Ltd and submitted to the LDA in August 2022.

Subsequently, geotechnical investigations were carried out along the proposed cut-off drain alignment in September 2023. Based on these findings, the Consultant prepared and submitted a detailed design report which was approved by the LDA in January 2024.

The scope of works under the approved DDR includes the following –

1. Provision of cut-off drain 1m to 2 m wide and 0.7m to 1.5m deep to intercept flows from the mountain slopes;
2. Construction of a new culvert and upgrading of existing culverts along B28 Road in Bambous Virieux region;
3. Raising and the realignment of the B28 Road, and
4. Upgrading of Feeder Antoine, Feeder Sookun and Rivulet Bambous.

Madam Speaker, regarding part (a) of the question, I am informed that in view of extensive land acquisition requirements, the following two projects along the stretch from Bambous Virieux to Pointe du Diable were entrusted to the Drain Infrastructure Construction Ltd in March 2024 for implementation –

1. Flood mitigation measures at Bambous Virieux, and
2. Flood mitigation measures at Petit Sable and Grand Sable.

Flood mitigation measures at Bambous Virieux – I am further informed by the DICL that a first procurement exercise for Bambous Virieux project was launch on 03 September 2024 through an open advertised bidding process.

However, the exercise was not conclusive due to the high bid prices. Accordingly, the DICL Board recommended that the bids be relaunched at a later stage upon securing financial clearance for a revised cost estimate. Funds for preparation of the project has been earmarked under the Climate and Sustainability Fund. The bid documents are ready. Once financial clearance is obtained for the revised cost estimate, the bidding exercise will be relaunched.

As regards the project at Petit Sable and Grand Sable, DCIL issued a Work's Order in November 2022 to Servansingh Jadav & Partners Consulting Engineers Ltd for, *inter alia*, the preparation of the bidding document. Geotechnical investigations were subsequently undertaken and the findings were incorporated into the DDR which were submitted in May 2024 together with the LDA's clearance.

Following a technical meeting in July 2024, the draft bidding document and cost estimate were finalised and subsequently in October 2024. However, under the Climate and

Sustainability Fund, no funds have been earmarked in the current Financial Year 2025/2026 for the implementation of the project.

Funds have been earmarked only for the preparation of the project and as such, DICL cannot initiate the Land Acquisition Procedures or launch the bid during this financial year. My Ministry will make arrangement for funds to be made available for implementation of the projects in the next financial year.

Madam Speaker, in parallel, the RDA has, in the pipeline, the project for the upgrading of the B28 Road from Ville Noire to Anse Jonchée and from Anse Jonchée to Deux Frères which makes provision for the rehabilitation and construction of drains, culverts and bridges.

The design for these sections had already been completed and the RDA will submit the appropriate budgetary proposals in due course. In addition, the RDA has already completed the following –

1. The construction of four culverts and slopes stabilisation works over a length of 200 m under the project upgrading of B28 Road from Deux Frères to Bel Air, phase 1;
2. The construction of four culverts and two bridges under the project flood mitigation measures at Anse Jonchée along B28 Road, and
3. The upgrading of existing road side drains and the construction of new drains under the project upgrading of B28 Road, lot 3 from Deux Frères to Bel Air, phase 2.

In the meantime, the RDA continues to carry out regular inspection to ensure the cleanliness and functioning of the existing drains along B28 Road. A survey has already been completed and Work's Orders will shortly be issued to contractors under the framework agreement for cleaning, desilting and minor upgrading works.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister.

Yes, hon. Rookny!

GLOBAL BUSINESS COMPANIES – PENDING APPLICATIONS – NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS – RENEWAL OF DIRECTORS

(No. B/1146) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplémousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning whether, in regard to the Global Business Companies, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Services Commission, information as to the –

- (a) date of submission of the pending applications for the issue of licences therefor as at 15 November 2025;
- (b) average time taken to approve the appointment or renewal of directors, and
- (c) number of complaints received from management companies in respect of excessive delays in –
 - (i) processing licence applications, and
 - (ii) approving the appointment of directors over the past three years.

Dr. Ms Jeetun: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Financial Services Commission that on average, the FSC receives around 2400 global business company's applications annually.

As regards the date of submission of pending applications for GBCs, as at 15 November 2025, there are currently 120 applications pending; the oldest one dating back to April 2023.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that it is for GBC's engaged in financial services activities that prior approval of the FSC is required for the appointment or renewal of directors. The average time taken for the approval or renewal of directors is 14 days.

As regards part (c) (i) of the question, the FSC has received 62 complaints over the last two years for excessive delays for processing application of GBCs and domestic companies. Out of these complaints, 6 concerned domestic companies and 56 concerned GBCs.

As regards part (c) (ii) of the question, I am informed by the FSC that as at date, no formal complaint has been received in respect of delays in the processing of Directors' appointment or renewal.

Madam Speaker, the delays relating to licensing issues at the FSC underscores the need for continued improvement to strengthen efficiency and effectiveness. Since I took office, a year ago, I have had extensive consultations with the industry stakeholders and one of the most recurrent issues and problems that has come up is delays in processing of application.

This clearly impacts on the ease of doing business and the competitiveness of the Mauritius International Financial Centre. This is why in the Financial Services Strategy Report 2025-2030, ease of doing business has been recognised as one of the five key pillars.

Madam Speaker, a new Chief Executive of the FSC has been appointed since September 2025. One of the key priorities of the FSC Board and the new leadership is to

improve the ease of doing business. The Chief Executive of FSC also chairs the subcommittee of the Financial Services Consultative Council which has just been reconstituted. He chairs the Ease of Doing Business subcommittee of the FSCC which reinforces the mandate and our drive to make improvements with regard to delays. I am also informed that FSC has started implementing a series of measures, including upgrading of its application forms and has embarked, since November 2025, on the testing phase of a digital interface to make the process easier, clearer and more efficient. The new modes of application contain enhanced features that guide applicants' step by step, reducing mistakes and incomplete submissions.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I wish to say that timely processing of application is critical for the industry as we are competing globally. This is therefore a top priority for the FSC and we are actively working on this. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, hon. Rookny?

Mr Rookny: Madam Speaker, I must first of all thank the Minister for the very extensive reply. I would like to ask, in view of the 62 complaints received from management companies over the last two years, would she consider requesting the FSC to set up a special desk to handle complaints, that is, separate from the normal processes during incorporations or applications?

Dr. Ms Jeetun: I totally concur with the hon. Member that we have already communicated to have a special desk and to have a line of communication with clients because very often clients are left without any communication.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Beejan!

GOODLANDS TO COTTAGE – CONNECTING ROAD WIDENING – PAVEMENTS & HANDRAILS INSTALLATION

(No. B/1147) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the connecting road from Beau Plateau Road, from Goodlands to Cottage, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether consideration is being given for the –

- (a) widening thereof, in view of the number of accidents reported thereat and increasing volume of vehicles plying thereat daily and, if so, indicate the expected start and completion dates thereof, and

- (b) installation of pavements and handrails thereat, including through compulsory land acquisition near residential zones if deemed necessary to ensure the safety of pedestrians.

The Minister of Health and Wellness (Mr A. Bachoo): Madam Speaker, I am informed that the Beau Plateau Road is not a classified road and as such, it falls under the jurisdiction of local authorities, namely, the District Council of Rivière du Rempart. This road extends over a length of approximately 3.8 kilometres and its width varies between 4-6 metres.

As regards to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the project is currently at the conception stage. Once all necessary clearances, including financial approval and those related to land acquisition are obtained, the project will be implemented by the District Council of Rivière du Rempart.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, enlarging the road would – as stated earlier – require land acquisition, construction of retaining walls, pavements and drains, as well as provision for handrails, modern poles, lanterns and other associated infrastructural works as rightly highlighted by the hon. Member. The District Council of Rivière du Rempart has been requested to consult stakeholders and a technical committee is to be set up accordingly.

Madam Speaker: Yes, is that alright? Okay, the hon. Second Member for Rodrigues!

RODRIGUES REGIONAL FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION – INDIAN OCEAN COMPETITION – PARTICIPATION

(No. B/1148) Mr F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the advancement of football in our Republic and in the Indian Ocean, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether –

- (a) the Rodrigues Regional Football Association previously participated in competitions organised by the Union des Fédérations de Football de l'Océan Indien and, if so, indicate the number thereof;
- (b) Rodrigues will form part of the Fédération de Football des Iles de l'Océan Indien and, if not, why not, and
- (c) Rodrigues is included in the announced national “*Plan de Relance du Football*” and, if so, give details thereof.

Mr Nagalingum: Madam Speaker, the Union des Fédérations de Football de l'Océan Indien was a regional football confederation for the Indian Ocean and operated under the African Football Confederation. Its main function was to organise football tournaments, particularly for youth categories. It comprised six member associations, namely –

- Mauritius;
- Madagascar;
- Reunion Island;
- Comoros;
- Seychelles, and
- Mayotte.

Madam Speaker, the Union des Fédérations de Football de l'Océan Indien has been dissolved in October 2025 and a new organisation, the Union des Fédérations des Iles et Archipels was established on 9 November 2025 by the six-member association, namely –

- Mauritius;
- Madagascar;
- Reunion;
- Comoros;
- Seychelles, and
- Mayotte.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Mauritius Football Association that the Rodrigues Regional Football Association was never a member of the Union des Fédérations de Football de l'Océan Indien. However, Rodrigues was invited as a special guest to participate in youth competition, namely Under 15 Boys and Girls Tournament in 2016 and 2017 upon the proposal of the Mauritius Football Association.

With regard to Rodrigues forming part of the newly established Union des Fédérations des Iles et Archipels, I am informed by the Mauritius Football Association that for future tournaments, Rodrigues will be integrated within the selection of the Republic of Mauritius, in line with national representation norms for future tournaments. I would like to point out

that the Rodrigues Regional Football Association forms part of the Mauritius Football Association, just like the other regional football associations in mainland Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (c) of the question concerning Rodrigues' inclusion in the national plan *de Relance du Football*, I would refer the hon. Member to my reply to PQ B/999 at our Sitting on 11 November 2025.

In accordance with the Sports Act 2016, Rodrigues is recognised as one of the 13 sport regions of Mauritius. Each sport region will benefit from the same programme, support and development initiatives under the plan and Rodrigues will therefore be fully included in all future actions to raise the level of our football to new heights across the Republic.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes hon. François.

Mr François: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the hon. Member for his answer. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware if the new FFIOI Association adopted a new statute and if he is in possession of same and can he circulate same in the interest of footballers?

Mr Nagalingum: Under the plan of *Relance du Football*, Madam Speaker, Rodrigues will benefit from the same development measures like I said in my reply. The programme includes infrastructure upgrading, technical training, youth development pathways and regional competition. Rodrigues will therefore receive equitable support within the national framework.

Mr François: Second supplementary, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr François: Madame la présidente, l'honorable ministre, pour l'avancement du football, en tant qu'ancien sportif moi-même et meilleur athlète de la deuxième division de Rodrigues et ancien footballeur évoluant...

Madam Speaker: Wow!

Hon. Members: Wow!

Mr François: ...en première division rodriguaise comme buteur...

Madam Speaker: Comme buteur!

Mr François: ...j'aimerais bien demander à l'honorable ministre, serait-il disposé à militer ou à porter ou soutenir ou à même défendre auprès de la Fifa, un projet sportif

international venant de la république de Maurice, visant à organiser la coupe du monde de football dédiée spécifiquement aux îles ou nations insulaires du monde entier ?

Madam Speaker: Super!

Mr Nagalingum: I will take what the Member has just said into consideration.

Madam Speaker: Very good! Yes, hon. Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac!

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU & VICTORIA HOSPITALS - ANGIOGRAPHY EQUIPMENT

(No. B/1149) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to angiogram examinations/angiography procedure, he will state the –

- (a) number of –
 - (i) patients having undergone same at the Jawaharlal Nehru and Queen Victoria (Candos) hospitals, respectively since 2020 to 2025, indicating the number thereof on the waiting list as at October 2025, and
 - (ii) angiography machines available therefor, and
- (b) measures put in place to reduce waiting time therefor and facilitate same.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that previously there was no angiography machine at Jawaharlal Nehru hospital. It is now that the equipment is being installed and will be operational in the coming weeks.

With regard to part (a)(i) of the question for the period 2020 to October 2025, I am informed that 10,489 angiography cases were performed at Victoria hospital. During the same period, 1,026 patients from Jawaharlal Nehru hospital requiring angiography procedures have been referred to other hospitals.

Madam Speaker, with regard to waiting lists, I am also informed that as at October 2025, there were 46 patients on the waiting list at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital, whose waiting time is of approximately three weeks; and at Victoria Hospital, there were 380 patients on the waiting list with a waiting time of 11 weeks.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (a) (ii) of the question, there are currently five angiography machines that are available in public hospitals with one installed at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital, two at Cardiac Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care, SSR National Hospital, Pamplémousses and two at Victoria Hospital. In addition, the angiography machine, which was left unutilised at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital, has been transferred to Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital.

Moreover, with the setting up of Cath-lab services at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital and SAJ Hospital, the number of angiography procedures will definitely reduce the waiting time, thus relieving the suffering of our patients.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, my Ministry is resorting to extra sessions after normal working hours to curb down the waiting time for angiography procedures. In the meantime, training is being provided to paramedical staff in order to enable them to provide adequate angiography services.

Madam Speaker, the House may wish to note that there has not been any action to provide angiography services at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital for the past seeming years despite the fact that there was a Minister of Health from this particular region. Nothing was done to alleviate the suffering of the people in the southern part, and patients had to be referred to other hospitals. Adding insult to injury, our angiography machines donated by the Government of Japan were left idle at Dr. Jeetoo for nearly 6 months and was eventually transferred to Cardiac Trust Fund SSR National Hospital, Pamplémousses. It is regretful that this machine could have been transferred to Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital, where optimum life-saving intervention could have been made to relief the inhabitants of the southern region.

In the meantime, training is also being provided to medical and paramedical staff to use the angiography machine at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital. I wish to inform the House that one angiography will be installed at Flacq Hospital in 2026. The procurement procedures have already been initiated for the acquisition of this equipment which will provide a proximity service to patients in the eastern region.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Madam!

Dr. Ms Daureeawo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would the hon. Minister consider the implementation of setting up of a formal framework with a view to developing and using an evidence-based system based on the clinical needs and urgency of patients?

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, all these things are being looked into. I can even now announce that by next year, the Rose Belle Hospital will have additional departments, including one Renal Department which is being provided by the Government of India. Apart from this, there will also be other surgical operations which will be conducted, including lung surgery.

Madam Speaker: Lung surgery! Lung, yes! Okay, you are alright?

Hon. Seeburn!

BOIS DES AMOURETTES – FOOTBALL PITCH – DISCREPANCIES & REMEDIAL WORKS

(No. B/1150) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the renovation of the football pitch at Bois-des-Amourettes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether a technical assessment has been carried out to verify compliance with the initial project specifications and standards, indicating if discrepancies have been observed and, if so, indicate –

- (a) whether –
 - (i) the contractor will be required to carry out remedial works, and
 - (ii) actions will be taken against anyone having condoned same, and
- (b) expected date of coming into operation of the said football pitch.

The Minister of National Infrastructure (Mr G. Gunness): Madam Speaker, I am informed that the National Development Unit proceeded with the upgrading of the Bois des Amourettes football ground in two phases as follows –

- Phase 1 – upgrading of the Bois des Amourettes football ground which comprised the returfing of the whole pitch, and
- Phase 2 – upgrading of the frontage fencing of the Bois des Amourettes football ground.

Madam Speaker, for Phase 1, the contract was allocated to Sotravic Ltd on 17 February 2023 for an amount of Rs6,715,349.80 by the NDU under its framework agreement for amenities. The scope of works included the following –

- excavation of 700 m³ of existing topsoil;
- provision of 1050 m³ of imported fill for returfing works;
- supply of 600 m³ of vegetable topsoil;
- provision of 135 m of French drains around the area of the football pitch;
- supply and placing of 2,125 m³ of spoils of size 200 x 300 mm in size;
- felling of four trees, and
- supply and planting of grass chiendent of an extent of 4,250 m².

Madam Speaker, as regards to Phase 2 of the project, the NDU awarded a second contract to Sotravic Ltd on 13 January 2024 for an amount of Rs4,113,109.55 under its framework agreement for amenities. The scope of works concern –

- the upgrading of the frontage fencing which consisted of demolition of existing block wall over a length of 84 m;
- excavation and laying of blinding concrete;
- construction of a new one-metre-high block wall fencing with 4.5-metre-high galvanised metal fencing over a length of 84 m;
- remedial works to damaged turfing of football ground, and
- provision of a new main gate, 4 metre wide and one pedestrian gate.

Madam Speaker, the final handing over exercise to the District Council of Grand Port for Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the project was carried out on 16 January 2025. I am informed that snags were identified during the handing over exercise. The discrepancies identified were –

- levelling of the topsoil;
- presence of pebbles, and
- maintenance of grass turfing which were not to adequate length.

Madam Speaker, follow-up was done through monthly site visits by the NDU and the contractor Sotravic Ltd to review the status of the remedial works. On 21 October 2025, the final handing over was carried out successfully after all remedial works were cleared by the contractor, and the site was taken over by the District Council of Grand Port.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed that during a site visit carried out by the three MPs of the constituency, together with representatives of the District Council of Grand Port and the contractor on 19 November 2025, it was observed that the football ground was uneven and there was presence of pebbles on the pitch.

Madam Speaker, I have also been informed that during the *Régate* Festival held from 29-31 August 2025, the football pitch was used to park vehicles, which I understand damaged the playground. I would here seize this opportunity to inform the House that henceforth, football grounds would not be used as parking space but only for the specific purpose for which it is meant for.

Madam Speaker, being given that the football ground is now contractually under the responsibility of the District Council of Grand Port, the latter has been requested to carry out the remedial works.

Madam Speaker, as for part (b) of the question, the football pitch will be operational once all remedial works are completed by the District Council and the ground certified fit for use.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Dr. Ms Daureeawo!

MAURITIUS – REGIONAL INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION JURISDICTION

(No. B/1151) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Attorney General whether, in regard to international arbitration, he will state the measures being envisaged to propel Mauritius as a reliable, suitable and efficient international arbitration jurisdiction/hub in the Africa region.

Mr Glover: Madam Speaker, let me at the outset state that when we look at the evolution of reputable international arbitration centres worldwide, there has been no magical wand employed to propel them to the place of respect that they currently enjoy. The current status has been the result of enduring, consistent and incremental strategies developed and adapted over the years.

I have to say that governments hosting reputable international arbitration centres have been very careful in giving support to these centres to avoid a direct interventionist approach that runs counter to the very spirit of neutral independent resolution of disputes. In these successful ventures, governments have been mere catalysts, leveraging on the invaluable input of their private sector.

The examples I have in mind are the Singapore International Arbitration Centre and the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre. The Hong Kong one was established in 1985 and the Singapore one in 1991, and it took both of them a number of years to flourish into the respected arbitration centres that they now are.

In Mauritius, we started our international arbitration venture in or about 2008 with the enactment of the International Arbitration Act based on the UNCITRAL Model Law. This was followed by the establishment in Mauritius in September 2010 of the first Office of the Permanent Court of Arbitration outside the Hague, with the Secretary General of the PCA having the functions of appointing authority for the Arbitral Tribunal.

Subsequently, the Mauritius International Arbitration Centre (MIAC) was set up in 2011 as a fully-owned government company and operated as a joint venture with the London Court of International Arbitration until 2018. I am informed that towards the quarter of 2018, MIAC continued its operation with support from the PCA under a management agreement.

In 2019, MIAC and PCA originally housed in Ebène, migrated to new premises in Caudan with State-of-the-Art Arbitration Suite and of international standard. I am informed that MIAC and the Mauritius Office of the PCA have been involved in increasing the visibility of Mauritius as an international arbitration jurisdiction by participation in various international arbitration events.

I am also informed that MIAC has signed numerous cooperation agreements with prominent international arbitration institutions including the international centre for settlement of investment disputes. I am further informed that the PCA continues to administer an increasing number of cases through its Mauritius office and that this year marks the 15th anniversary of its establishment in Port Louis; a milestone celebrated with the participation of the hon. Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, myself, members of the Judiciary and the Bar Council. The presence of the Secretary General of the PCA on this occasion, testifies to the importance attached by the PCA to its partnership with Mauritius.

The years post 2016, Madam Speaker, also saw a transformation in the structure of the MCCI Mediation and Arbitration Centre, commonly known as MARC with increased emphasis on international arbitration. I am informed that MARC also has hearing facilities of high international standard.

Moreover, as announced by the hon. Prime Minister, government is presently working with the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry towards the consolidation of alternative dispute resolution services in Mauritius through the respective merger of MIAC and MARC. I have not later than yesterday, Madam Speaker, engaged with the MCCI to push through this matter so that it becomes reality in the next few months.

Madam Speaker, in parallel with these institutional developments, sustained efforts have also been made to build domestic capacity in international arbitration. I am informed that the PCA Mauritius Fellowship Programme, in place since September 2016, provides for the annual employment of young Mauritian lawyer at the Permanent Court of Arbitration for one year; thereby contributing to the development of local expertise.

Furthermore, various trainings, lectures, conferences and other knowledge sharing initiatives are regularly undertaken by the PCA, MIAC and several Mauritian organisations involved in dispute resolution. These capacity building measures strengthen the local arbitration ecosystem and contributed to Mauritius being consistently regarded as a safe seat for arbitration as reflected in reputable international assessment such as the Delos Guide to Arbitration Places.

In fine, Madam Speaker, Mauritius has, over the years, developed all the necessary bases to be a reliable, suitable and efficient international arbitration jurisdiction, starting with the law base UNCITRAL Model Law, then with credible arbitration institutions with recognisable rules of international standard and finally, with state-of-the-art hearing facilities.

Finally, making Mauritius a beacon for international arbitration does not boil down to inventing new measures but to first rationalising and capitalising on what we already have. Government fully realises the potential that exists in international arbitration and is, without being unduly interventionist, determined to explore and facilitate the creation of appropriate channels to leverage on the goodwill we have already acquired in the field of international arbitration; but this has to be done in, as I said before, an incremental fashion whilst giving full and careful consideration to the needs of the moment.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Member.

Hon. Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes!

**L'OISEAU DU PARADIS SHELTER – ACCOMMODATION CAPACITY –
REDEPLOYED STAFF**

(No. B/1152) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to L'Oiseau du Paradis Shelter, she will state –

- (a) the number of –
 - (i) children that can be accommodated thereat currently, and
 - (ii) staff members deployed thereat, and
- (b) whether it is operating in full compliance with safety and regulatory standards and, if not, indicate the reasons therefor.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madam Speaker, I wish to draw the attention of the hon. Member that L'Oiseau du Paradis Shelter has been closed down since 5th June 2025, following an incident which occurred on 01st June 2025 when three minors absconded. A rapid drug test was conducted on the minors which revealed positive results for cannabis in two children while the third child was tested negative.

As regards part (a) (i) of the question, the Residential Care Institution (RCI) can accommodate a maximum of 30 boys aged between 5 and 17 years old.

Regarding part (a) (ii) of the question, 33 care givers, 2 general workers, 3 cleaners and 2 cooks employed by the National Children's Council have been redeployed to Cap L'Espoir in Cap Malheureux as from 01 December 2025, that is, yesterday.

In addition, a Shelter Manager has been appointed by the Board of the National Children's Council and will take office as from tomorrow.

As for part (b) of the question, it is envisaged that the Residential Care Institution of Cap Malheureux will resume operation as from 04 December 2025 and my Ministry will ensure that the RCI adheres to all safety and regulatory standards of the RCI for Children Regulations 2022.

My Ministry has a dedicated team of enforcement officers who will conduct regular visits at the RCI to ensure that it is fully compliant with the safety and regulatory standards.

Madam Speaker, the shelter is currently undergoing renovation works comprising – painting, installation of burglar proofing to openings, replacement of ceramic tiles among others, following a tender exercise. Works started on 15 November 2025 and will be completed by Wednesday 03 December 2025.

I wish to inform the House that yesterday all staff turned up except 6 who were on vacation and casual leave. I also wish to point out that the Child Care Givers have been provided with training on Child Psychology and on legal matters in November 2025 by senior officers of my Ministry in collaboration with ‘Pedostop’, a registered NGO. Continuous training will be dispensed to the staff working at the shelter, to equip them with the required skills in carrying out their duties.

Madam Speaker: Yes! *Allez-y!*

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. Je remercie la ministre pour sa réponse. On comprend qu’un maximum de 30 enfants seront placés dans cet abri sous la responsabilité du même personnel qui l’a rendu tristement célèbre. La ministre peut-elle informer la Chambre si c’est ainsi qu’elle entend professionnaliser cet abri et donner l’assurance que les mêmes dérives ne se reproduiront pas ? Merci, Madame la présidente.

Ms Navarre-Marie : Madame la présidente, j’ai répondu que les Care Givers ont eu la formation nécessaire pendant le mois de novembre de par nos officiers du ministère et l’ONG Pedostop. J’ai rencontré les Care Givers personnellement. Ils m’ont assuré que leur *mindset* a changé. Donc je compte sur eux. Toujours est-il, Madame la présidente, qu’il y a 25 employés qui ont été suspendus de juillet 2018 à ce jour. Donc, nous comptons recruter ces personnes-là au fur et à mesure...

Madam Speaker: D’autres personnes ! Vous voulez recruter d’autres personnes ?

Ms Navarre-Marie : Non, on va, allons dire, réintégrer ces personnes suspendues. *The case will be taken on a case-to-case basis by the Board of the National Children’s Council after all charges have been cleared against these persons.*

Madam Speaker: Deuxième question ?

Ms Anquetil: Oui. Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. Pour éviter les dérives du passé, la ministre peut-elle indiquer à la Chambre si elle considère que deux demi-journées de formation en psychologie et une journée sur les droits des enfants en six mois de fermeture, suffisent à redresser un abri pour sa gestion chronique défaillante ? Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

Ms Navarre-Marie : Certainement pas, Madame la présidente. C'est pourquoi dans ma dernière phrase à la question, j'ai dit *continuous training will be dispensed for to the staff working at the shelter*. Donc, la formation sera continue.

Madam Speaker: Oui, madame Savabaddy.

Ms Savabaddy: Merci, Madame la présidente. Est-ce que la ministre peut nous dire quelle garantie nous avons que leur *mindset* vont changer ? Merci.

Ms Navarre-Marie : Je n'ai aucune garantie, Madame.

Madam Speaker: Vous avez encore une question ?

Ms Anquetil : En fait, j'ai encore deux questions. Je ne sais pas si vous allez me permettre.

Madam Speaker: C'est un sujet tellement important. Je vais vous permettre.

Ms Anquetil : Vous savez, Madame la présidente, ces enfants ne méritent pas l'indifférence. Ils méritent dignité, sécurité et ...

Madam Speaker: Pas des commentaires. Question !

Ms Anquetil : C'est pour ça que j'ai dit si vous me permettez.

Alors, la ministre peut-elle expliquer pourquoi le problème d'égout situé dans la cour de l'établissement, à proximité de la cuisine et qui nécessite l'intervention des camions D. Seeven pour le pompage des toilettes toutes les deux semaines, persiste et si un tel manquement est compatible avec les normes de santé et de sécurité applicable aux enfants en accueil résidentiel ?

Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madame la présidente, j'ai répondu et j'ai dit dans ma réponse qu'il y a des *works which are going on* et tout sera réglé dans les meilleurs délais.

Madam Speaker: Dernière.

Ms Anquetil : C'est vraiment une dernière.

Alors, vous savez, Madame la présidente, sous l'ancien régime, ma demande de visiter L'Oiseau du Paradis par un groupe de parlementaires de deux côtés de la Chambre, avait été refusée. La ministre peut-elle indiquer si cette fois ci, elle accordera l'accès à l'abri à un petit groupe de parlementaires de deux côtés de la Chambre ? Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

Ms Navarre-Marie : Certainement, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: Très bien. Monsieur Rookny, vous aviez une question ? J'ai cru voir votre main. C'était pour dire bonjour.

Très bien, l'Oiseau du Paradis. Espérons que ce sera le paradis, Madame la ministre.

Ms Navarre-Marie : On garde l'espoir, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: Maintenant, nous avons Monsieur Rookny. C'était pour ça !

BLACK RIVER DISTRICT – OPERATIONAL MARKETS – NEW MARKET CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/1153) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Black River District, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) the number of markets in operation thereat, if any, and
- (b) whether consideration will be given for the –
 - (i) construction of a new market on the west coast and issue permits in relation thereto, and
 - (ii) search for a private partnership to start the operation of a temporary market on Saturdays or Sundays thereat.

(Withdrawn)

FORTHCOMING FESTIVE SEASON – LIVESTOCK AVAILABILITY – PRICE STABILISATION MEASURES

(No. B/1154) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplémousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in

regard to meat for the forthcoming festive season, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) the expected availability and volume of livestock for local consumption, indicating the volume of livestock available from local farming compared to imported livestock therefor;
- (b) the measures being taken to ensure stable and affordable prices, and
- (c) whether any risk of price escalation or supply shortage have been identified.

The Minister of Education and Human Resources (Dr. M. Gungapersad): Madam Speaker, allow me to reply to this PQ on behalf of the substantive Minister Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries.

The Division of Veterinary Services of my Ministry issues permit for import of frozen, chilled, ambient and dry meat products from several countries including Australia, New Zealand, France, Ireland, South Africa and India.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that for the last quarter of 2024, around 2300 goats, 2650 sheep and 1181 cattle were imported from South Africa. For the last quarter of this year, the Division of Veterinary Services has already issued import permit to Socovia Belle Vue Ltd for importation of 3000 goats, 3000 sheep and 994 cattle from South Africa. 649 cattle reached on 21 November 2025 while 3000 goats, 3000 sheep and 345 cattle are expected to land on 03 December 2025. The Commission of Agriculture, Rodrigues Regional Assembly, has informed my Ministry that a quota of 1150 Livestock, including 800 goats and sheep, will be made available for the final quarter of 2025. Furthermore, I am informed by the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute that around 4500 goats and 100 sheep are estimated to be potentially available from local farmers in December 2025.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that I have received the assurance that there will be no substantial increase in the price of cattle, goat and sheep during the forthcoming festive season. Furthermore, my Ministry will set up a monitoring committee with the representatives of the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection, the Mauritius Meat Authority, the importers and the Association of Butchers with a view to ensuring that the price of meat remains stable and affordable for the festive season.

As regards part (c) of the question, in line with the decision taken by government on 24 October 2025, to have recourse to 100% non-structural protein ELISA test and 10% solid fees competition ELISA test on livestock imported from South Africa due to the foot and mouth disease, it is expected that the additional testing cost incurred by the importer will be absorbed in the overall pricing structure resulting in no significant increase in retail price and no disruption in the supply of meat.

Madam Speaker, in addition with the number of livestock being imported, the quota submitted by Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the availability on the local farms, it is expected that there will be no shortage of meat during the festive season.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Mr Rookny, you are okay?

Now, we have the Second Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or.

SUMMER SEASON – INCREASING ELECTRICITY DEMAND – PROFIT CEILING IMPOSITION

(No. B/1155) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the impending increase in demand for electricity during the peak summer season, he will state if his Ministry will consider imposing a profit ceiling on solar system kits aiming at encouraging investment therein thus reducing reliance on the national grid.

(Withdrawn)

GOODLANDS – EX-AREA HEALTH CENTRE – ESTABLISHMENT OF SUB- HEALTH OFFICE

(No. B/1156) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the Ex-Area Health Centre located at Goodlands, he will state if consideration is being given for its establishment as a sub-health office to facilitate residents of Goodlands, Roche Terre, Grand Gaube and Petit Raffray, among others, in obtaining documents such as cremation and burial papers, food handlers' certificates and others.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, the building in question does not fall under the responsibility of my Ministry. I am fully aware of the difficulties faced by the inhabitants of

Goodlands, Roche Terre, Grand Gaube and Petit Raffray and surrounding areas who currently have to travel to Rivère du Rempart to obtain cremation and burial permits.

I wish to inform the House that the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Local Government and my Ministry will look into providing a Single Point Office in Goodlands for the issue of burial and cremations permits.

Madam Speaker: The Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/1157, B/1159, B/1160, B/1164, B/1166, B/1171, B/1173.

I am saying, once again, we must find a better solution to this. It gets very confusing after a while.

Okay, let us go on. If I make a mistake, you just tell me.

Dr. Ms Daureeawo, again.

PUBLIC HOSPITALS – PARKING SPACES

(No. B/1157) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to parking spaces at public hospitals, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof available at each hospital, indicating the number assigned for public use, and
- (b) if he has been made aware of shortages thereof, indicating the measures taken to address same.

(Withdrawn)

CHÂTEAU BÉNARÈS – RESTORATION WORKS - FUNDS EARMARKED

(No. B/1158) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the national heritage site of Château Bénarès, he will state whether a site visit been carried out thereat by Officers of his Ministry to examine the current state of the building and, if so, whether funds have been earmarked for the restoration thereof, indicating the –

- (a) the scope of works;
- (b) contractor to whom, if any, works have been entrusted, and
- (c) expected start and completion dates thereof.

Mr Gondeea: Madam Speaker, Château Bénarès, located in the district of Savanne, was designated as a national heritage site on 06 May 2022 in view of its historical significance. Although it is a national heritage, it is vested in the District Council of Savanne and any restoration works have to be undertaken by the latter organisation under the supervision and technical guidance of the National Heritage Fund.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that officers of my Ministry and the National Heritage Fund have carried out several site visits in the past during which, advice was duly provided to the District Council of Savanne. Since 2023, an architect and an engineer employed by my Ministry under the expert skills programme, have been conducting surveys thereat and a preliminary report together with recommendations to, *inter alia*, recruit specialists with experience in the restoration of heritage building, were made.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that in view of the prevailing economic situation, the project has been placed in abeyance by the District Council of Savanne.

With regard to part (b) and (c) of the question, I am informed that since the project has been put in abeyance, no contractor has been appointed. As such, no start and no completion dates have been set up.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes, you are, okay?

Hon. Lobine, First Member for La Caverne and Phoenix.

**CHALINE STREET, SOUILLAC – 07 NOVEMBER 2023 TORRENTIAL RAIN
– DAMAGED BRIDGE – RECONSTRUCTION**

(No. B/1159) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the bridge damaged following the torrential rains on 7 November 2023 at Chaline street in Souillac, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the District Council of Savanne, information as to where matters stand as to the reconstruction thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**RIVIÈRE DU REMPART DISTRICT COUNCIL – MISSING STREETLIGHTS
– INQUIRY**

(No. B/1160) Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the recent allegations of missing streetlights worth over 3 million rupees from the Rivière du Rempart District Council, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether an inquiry has been initiated thereinto and, if so, where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

CNT CREDIT UNION – UNPAID DIVIDENDS & GOVERNANCE ISSUES

(No. B/1161) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the CNT Credit Union, he will state –

- (a) if he has been made aware that since 2022 over 1000 members thereof have not been paid dividends due by the Union, and
- (b) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to why the caretaker committee thereof has not been replaced, indicating the actions being envisaged to safeguard the interests of those workers.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, concerning part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Registrar of Cooperative Societies that since 2018, the National Transport Corporation Employees Co-operative Credit Union Ltd. has undertaken a restructuring of its capital to adapt to changing economic conditions. To that effect, members share capital was transferred to a deposit account while a minimum share of Rs100 was maintained for each member.

Since then, payouts to members have been in the form of interest on deposits instead of dividends on shares. It has been reported that at the annual general meeting of the National Transport Corporation Employees Co-operative Credit Union Ltd., held on 12 July 2025, the assembly unanimously approved the payments of interest on deposits for the years 2022, 2023, 2024 as follows –

- For year 2022, on a deposit of Rs30,912,986, interests of Rs1,174,693 to be paid at the rate of 3.8%;
- For the year 2023, an amount of Rs614,789 to be paid as interests to the rate of 2% on a deposit of Rs30,739,448, and

- An amount of Rs787,246 to paid as interest for the year 2024 at the rate of 2.45% of a deposit of Rs31,489,859.
- An amount of Rs1,339,322 was credited to members individual bank accounts, and
- Rs1,237,407 were transferred to member's deposit accounts as per their wish.

Madam Speaker, as regards to part (b) of the question, I am informed that a petition was received from the members of National Transport Corporation Employees Co-Operative Credit Union Ltd. requesting the removal of the caretaker board and to proceed with democratic election of members.

Accordingly, my Ministry had approved the removal of the caretaker board on 19 August 2025 and has authorised the society to proceed with the election of a democratically elected board in accordance with Section 41(3)(d) of the Co-Operative Act 2016. Concurrently, my Ministry sought the advice of the State Law Office on the eligibility of members of the society who were previously in the elected board as to whether they could stand for re-election.

The Solicitor General has, in a letter dated 14 November 2025, highlighted in two reports from my Ministry dated 11 December 2015 and 28 July 2025, respectively, that it was observed that funds have been misused and mismanaged. The Solicitor General has thus advised that pursuant to Section 48(g) of the Co-Operatives Act 2016, all members of the previous board who were subject to reports would not be qualified to stand as candidates for the post of director in the upcoming election.

Madam Speaker, the society has recently been informed of the advice of the Solicitor General about the ineligibility of members who were reported for misuse and mismanagement of funds to stand as candidates for the forthcoming elections.

Madam Speaker: Yes, thank you.

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

PUBLIC & PRIVATE HEALTH INSTITUTIONS – CAESAREAN SECTION PREVALENCE

(No. B/1162) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to women giving birth

through Caesarean Section (CS), he will state the prevalence thereof in Mauritius, indicating the –

- (a) age range concerned therewith and the ratio of birth by CS in both public and private health institutions, and
- (b) measures his Ministry proposes to take to address the issue along the recommendations of the World Health Organisation.

Mr Bachoo: I wish to inform the House that statistics show that there has been an increase in the percentage of c-section carried out in both public and private health institutions from 46.3% in 2015 to 61.4% in 2024. I am also informed that the age 20 to 34 years have recourse to c-section, and it is following the same trend during the last five years.

With regard to part (a) of the question, according to latest figures of 2024, out of 8,052 total births in public hospitals, the ratio of normal delivery to c-section is almost one to one (1:1) whereas in private health institutions, for 2024, out 4,103 total births, the ratio of normal delivery to c-section is one to two (1:2).

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, in line with World Health Organisation's recommendations, my Ministry is implementing several measures to reduce the need to carry out c-section deliveries, amongst others –

- (i) Pre-conception care and counselling is conducted regularly by Community Health Care Officers in the community;
- (ii) Women are encouraged to plan and space their pregnancies through the use of contraceptives provided free of charge in family planning clinics;
- (iii) Antenatal care is provided as early as possible in primary health centres and include one to one and group counselling, echography's and vitamins and iron supplementation;
- (iv) High risk cases and teenage pregnancies are referred to regional hospitals for specialised follow-up by obstetricians;
- (v) Labour wards are fully equipped to ensure cardiotocographic monitoring of labour and foetal heart rate to prevent complication during labour;
- (vi) Decisions to conduct a caesarean section are based on clear indication;

- (vii) Other measures include capacity building of health professionals involved in maternal and child health based on updated national obstetrics protocols.

Madam Speaker, through these measures the Ministry remains committed to ensuring that every caesarean section is performed for the right reasons, at the right time and in the right setting, thereby aligning national practices with international best standards. Caesarean section is absolutely critical to save lives in situation where deliveries would pose a risk such as malformation of foetus, hypertension in pregnancy, maternal complication, gestational diabetes mellitus, foetal distress or due to baby's malpresentations.

According to new research from World Health Organisation, birth by caesarean section continue to rise globally, now accounting to more than one in five, that is, 21% of all child births. This number is set to continue increasing over the coming decade with nearly a third or 29% of all births likely to take place by caesarean section by 2030.

Mauritius is also following the same international trend regarding the increase in caesarean section deliveries. There are so many other reasons accounting for the increased number of caesarean section deliveries.

To name a few –

- (i) Increasing maternal age and numbers of multiple births;
- (ii) Higher rates of obesity among women;
- (iii) A lot of previous caesareans pregnant ladies required to be sectioned, and
- (iv) Increased number of sexually transmitted diseases.

My Ministry is also proposing to take the following additional measures to address the issue of increasing caesarean rate –

- (i) Clinical audit and monitoring to assess whether indications are being undertaken in public hospitals to ensure medical justification and adherence to WHO guidelines;
- (ii) Updating and standardising national protocol to emphasise evidence-based management of labour and delivery, including use of WHO Robson classification system, to monitor and compare CS rates between facilities;

- (iii) Organisation of continuous medical education and refresher courses for obstetricians, midwives and labour ward staff to strengthen decision-making during labour management and promote safe, normal deliveries where feasible;
- (iv) Strengthen antenatal counselling on normal delivery, and
- (v) Public education campaigns to highlight that vaginal delivery remains the safest options where no medical contradictions exist.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Ms Savabaddy: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether any study has been carried out on how Mauritius is affected as compared to other countries in the SADC region? Thank you.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, I do not have any information regarding such type of studies which have carried out. Of course, as I have already mentioned, this is the international trend. I do hope that with the measures that we have taken, we can put – I do not say an end –, but rather a break to this system which is, in fact, not normal.

Ms Savabaddy: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My second question is: why is it that the cost of CS in public institutions is less than those performed by private institutions? Has this also been looked into, hon. Minister?

Madam Speaker: Sorry, I missed the last part. Are you saying there are more in public hospitals?

Ms Savabaddy: No.

Madam Speaker: No. It is the contrary?

Ms Savabaddy: Yes.

Madam Speaker: But it is still a lot? Yes!

Mr Bachoo: If you compare public hospitals with private hospitals, you find in public hospitals, it is less. The number of caesareans is less than in private hospitals. Probably, all prosperous people go in private hospitals.

Madam Speaker: So, it is a question of money?

Mr Bachoo: Maybe they want to get the best way out. That may be one of the reasons.

Madam Speaker: Do not say that, hon. Minister! The best way out? Do not say that!

Mr Bachoo: I am not an expert in that field, but I mean to say, I get the feeling that they want the easiest way instead of going through pain and all.

Madam Speaker: *On appelle ça la facilité.* Let us finish.

Ms Savabaddy: My last question. Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Minister provide us some statistics? Thank you.

Mr Bachoo: Of course, I am going to provide the detailed statistics.

Madam Speaker: Please lay it on the Table.

Mr Bachoo: I will lay it on the Table.

Madam Speaker: It is such an important issue, and you know that it is dear to my heart.

Yes, hon. Dr. Prayag!

Dr. Prayag: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you, hon. Minister. While providing the statistics, I think it would be more informative if we could have been provided the statistics of elective normal deliveries and elective caesarean section as compared to public and private institutions. Separately, the comparison of emergency vaginal deliveries and c-sections in public and private institutions. Then, we might be able to really compare how many insurance companies come into the game here.

Mr Bachoo: I know you are interested in the subject. I am going to provide you a bulky document on this. All the details will be provided. I will take some time.

Madam Speaker: Thank you so much, hon. Minister. Yes!

Mr François: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Minister if he has the information or the statistics about caesarean sections prevalent in Rodrigues? What is the actual situation thereat, if any?

Madam Speaker: Surement, c'est plus naturel là-bas.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, I expected a question from Rodrigues. For the period of 2020-2025, the last five years, out of 4,929 births in Rodrigues, 1,938 babies were delivered by CS which corresponds to most 39.3% of the overall births.

Statistics indicate that over the past 5 years, there is an increase in the number of CS performed. In 2020, it was 38.1%. Now, it is 43.3% for 2025. So, even Rodrigues needs some special attention.

Madam Speaker: *En français, on dit la naissance par le bas. On a appris cela récemment.*

It seems that seems that I have more questions that have been withdrawn: B/1165 and B/1168.

Now, time is over! Thank you very much, hon. Minister and everybody.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

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

Mr Guinness rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill (No. XXX of 2025) was read a first time.

Second Reading

THE LAW PRACTITIONERS (DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS) BILL (No. XXIV of 2025)

The Attorney General (Mr G. P. C. Glover, SC): Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that I do not propose to proceed with the Law Practitioners (Disciplinary Proceedings) Bill (No. XXIV of 2025), and that notice has already been given to the Clerk of the National Assembly as far back as 18 November.

**THE LAW PRACTITIONERS
(DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS) BILL
(No. XXIX of 2025)**

Order for Second Reading read.

(4.19 p.m.)

The Attorney General (Mr G. P. C. Glover, SC): I, therefore, beg to move that the Law Practitioners (Disciplinary Proceedings) Bill (No. XXIX of 2025) be read a second time.

Madam Speaker, the Law Practitioners (Disciplinary Proceedings) Bill is a reform that goes to the heart of the confidence that our citizens place in the legal profession – and, by extension, in the administration of justice itself. Legal practice is not merely a technical craft, it is surely not a business. It is a vocation rooted in trust.

This Bill recognises that truth. It seeks to protect the overwhelming majority of practitioners who serve honorably, while dealing firmly and transparently with the minority whose conduct undermines that trust.

Let me state at the outset what this Bill does not do. You see, Madam Speaker, I stand here as a member of that profession for forty years. A profession that I love and made me who I am, a profession that I share with colleagues whose work and ethics I admire. I know that most practitioners work with dedication, often unseen and unacknowledged.

But we also know– because the public and the press regularly remind us of this – that this confidence has been weakened by a perception that misconduct is not always dealt with swiftly, visibly or consistently.

I regularly receive visitors at my office. They are from all over the country; from all ages. Some come with all their documents, neatly compiled over the years. Some with just a handwritten note, their desperation poured on paper.

They want help. They think the “Minister for Justice”, as they often mistake the Attorney-General to be, is the one they should turn to, because they feel the system has failed them.

They do not understand why their plot of land is still disputed after many years, or why the Courts have not struck down this deed of sale which they say is fabricated. When it is explained to them what the Attorney-General’s Office does, and why it is better that they turn to their legal advisers for such matters – it is then that the stories come out.

Madam Speaker, Again, we are talking about a handful of rotten apples. But the acts and omissions of these legal practitioners besmirch the whole profession.

Often enough, fortunately, complaints will be unfounded. But even then, the perception of the public is that their accusations have not been dealt with efficiently or transparently.

A few cases, a few repeated complaints, a few unresolved matters: sometimes, that is all it takes to erode the standing of an entire profession.

Madam Speaker, this Bill is, therefore, not an act of suspicion. It is indeed an act of faith in the profession, and an act of responsibility towards the public. It is an expression of confidence that the reputation of law practitioners is worth protecting – that the best way to defend the honor of a profession is to ensure that its disciplinary framework is fair, independent, transparent, and effective.

Before explaining the architecture of the Bill, it is important to reflect on why this necessary reform has taken this particular shape. For more than a century now, the system of self-regulation has prevailed. It has served us in some respects, but it has also shown clear limits. The more so in recent years with the rapid increase in the number of law practitioners. We are now almost 1600 barristers on the role of barristers in Mauritius; we are not talking of attorneys and notaries.

The Bar Council, the Chamber of Notaries and the Law Society have all exercised disciplinary oversight over their members, and they have done so conscientiously. However, the system as a whole, has not delivered the consistency or transparency that a citizen can expect in this 21st century.

Complaints accumulate, some remain unresolved for years, and some are closed or remain *in limbo* in ways that arouse suspicion. From the outside, observers conclude – rightly or wrongly – that lawyers cover for lawyers. This perception, fair or unfair, weakens the legitimacy of the profession and of the justice system itself.

The Government Programme has made accessibility and efficiency of justice clear priorities, and credible disciplinary proceedings are part of that mission.

Madam Speaker, we did not embark on this reform lightly. Even though the previous draft Bill had received the approval of Cabinet, I decided to go back to the drawing board after having listened and heard the qualms of law practitioners. We held lengthy consultations with all stakeholders: the Bar Council, the Law Society, the Chamber of Notaries, senior practitioners, young practitioners and members of the judiciary.

And this, it must be said, built on past feedback of previous draft versions of this Bill, elaborated under the previous Government. They did seek to tackle the subject, but when met

with serious objections, they lacked the ability to self-examine, compromise and improve. Since there was no political will, there was no change.

Today, we have a Government with a clear political will and which will bring this much needed change.

As I said, our consultations were substantive and intense. Many provisions of the Bill have been modified to reflect the concerns and suggestions of the professions. But on one point – the insistence on maintaining self-regulation – we could not compromise. Independence is essential. A disciplinary system must not only be fair; it must be seen to be fair.

Madam Speaker, allowing the professions exclusive disciplinary authority no longer meets that standard. Still, I wish to emphasise that the professional bodies retain a key voice in the new Commission. They nominate and are part of the decision-making process of appointment of members, they contribute expertise, and they participate in all divisions. Their role is significant, though no longer exclusive.

My attention was recently drawn to the fact that some law practitioners would have been perceived to have meddled in unsavoury matters and could well become members of the Commission because the seemingly sole criteria is the fact that he/she has spent 15 years in the profession.

My short answer is this: although the possibility, however remote, does exist, we must however foster the belief that all three heads of the three professions and the Attorney-General of the day, would surely not fail in their duty to ensure that those appointed are beyond reproach, and this, without a shadow of a doubt.

I am of those who firmly believe that our professions are teeming with good, honest practitioners who like to hold their head high. I trust that four of the most senior members of the profession will never stoop so low as to choose someone with an unenviable track record too sit on the Complaints Commission.

That being said, allow me, Madam Speaker, to walk the House through the main mechanisms of the Bill, beginning with the establishment and composition of this new body: the Complaints Commission.

Now Clause 4 of the Bill establishes that Commission, as an independent statutory authority empowered to receive, investigate and determine whether disciplinary proceedings should be initiated. It is expressly insulated from the “direction or control of any person or authority”.

Clause 5 proposes that it be composed of a Chairperson, two Vice-Chairpersons with senior judicial or professional experience, as well as nine members nominated respectively by the Bar Council, the Law Society Council and the Chamber of Notaries. This ensures both independence and expertise.

The creation of the Appointment Committee here is the precise result of the feedback we received from the professional bodies. There was a fear that an appointment process resting exclusively in the Attorney-General could transform this body into a controlling device of the executive over law practitioners.

That had not been the intent of our first version, but the professional bodies pointed out that future abuses by less scrupulous people could not be ruled out. They were right and we listened to them.

The structure of divisions under Clause 6 reflects the specificity of each branch of the profession: complaints against barristers are heard with two barristers sitting with the Chair or a Vice-Chair; similarly for attorneys and notaries.

In doing so, the Bill ensures that standards are judged by those who understand the professional context, while avoiding the shortcomings of self-regulation. It is a balanced solution which fits the Bill.

The procedure for opening complaints is set out clearly in Clause 8. Any person—including members of the public, judicial officers, the Attorney-General, and the professional bodies— may lodge a complaint. It must normally be filed within six months, though the Commission retains discretion to entertain serious complaints even if late. Importantly, the Commission may also initiate investigations *proprio motu*, that is, as you know Madam, Speaker, of their own initiative.

Now, to avoid abuse, Clause 9 gives the Commission power to dismiss complaints that are trivial, frivolous or vexatious. Where matters are minor or stem from misunderstandings, Clause 10 empowers the Commission to attempt conciliation. This allows resolution without stigma and avoids unnecessary escalation.

When an investigation is warranted, Clause 11 sets out the process: written explanations, summoning of witnesses, compulsory production of documents – even recourse to the Judge in Chambers where confidentiality is invoked.

Investigations must be completed within 90 days. This is an important guarantee of timeliness and fairness. A staple inclusion now in the processes that this government is shaping for the justice system of this country.

In cases of minor misconduct, where the practitioner has no prior record, Clause 12 allows the Commission to administer a caution, a proportionate measure that protects the public interest without imposing excessive sanctions. The Chief Justice, Attorney-General and the relevant professional bodies are then duly notified.

Where there is no evidence of misconduct, Clause 13 requires written notification to all parties, with reasons, including the complainant, of course. This protects practitioners from the reputational harm of unsubstantiated complaints.

If, however, the Commission finds a *prima facie* case, Clause 14 mandates that it refers the matter to the Supreme Court after obtaining the Solicitor-General's advice on the formulation of charges. And, the Supreme Court then becomes the sole disciplinary authority.

This, Madam Speaker, is a point worth emphasizing. Case law, such as that of *Geemul*, has firmly established that the disciplinary function of the Supreme Court over law practitioners are part of its inherent powers. That is, powers that, even when they are not expressly provided for, are necessary to the good functioning of its judicial mission.

The principle relating to the retention by the colonial Courts of their powers of discipline over barristers and the rationale behind it, having been succinctly explained by Lord Denning in *The Gambia*, which was referred to with approval in the case of *Geemul* in *Mauritius*, and I quote –

“By the common law of England, the Judges have the right to determine who shall be admitted to practise as barristers and solicitors; and, as incidental thereto, the Judges have the right to suspend or prohibit from practice.

In England, this power has for a very long time been delegated, so far as barristers are concerned, to the Inns of Court; and, for a much shorter time, so far as solicitors are concerned, to the Law Society.

In the colonies, the Judges have retained the power in their own hands at any rate in those colonies where the profession is fused ...

Now advocates and attorneys have always been admitted in the Colonial Courts by the Judges, and the Judges only. The power of suspending from practice must, we think, be incidental to that of admitting to practise, as is the case in England with regard to attorneys.”

In Mauritius, as we all know, Barristers, attorneys and notaries are admitted to practise by the Supreme Court, and only, the Supreme Court can therefore decide on eventually removing them.

We have thus preserved this principle here: the Commission investigates, but it is the Supreme Court that decides.

This disciplinary process before the Supreme Court is addressed in Part III of the Bill.

Clause 15 dictates the Court sits as a disciplinary tribunal composed of two judges, hearing the matter in open court except for justified exceptions.

Clause 17, the Court may dismiss the charge, reprimand the practitioner, suspend him, strike him off the roll, or issue warnings for breaches relating to AML/CFT obligations.

The Court must determine the matters within 90 days, unless the delay is justified. Clause 18 provides a right of appeal to the Court of Civil Appeal.

Now, I have heard from certain quarters that this right of appeal to the Court of Civil Appeal is useless since the matter is dealt with at first instance by two judges.

It is regrettable that such comments, devoid of any merit I must say at the outset, have been aired without having properly consulted the Civil Appeal Act 2025 which specifically provides that the Court of Civil Appeal will consist of at least two judges. Hence, it can have more than 2 judges.

If I read section 11(2) of the Act, the Chief Justice may either *proprio motu* or on application in writing made to him by any party of an appeal stating the reason for such application, direct that the case be heard by more than 2 Judges having regard to the

magnitude of the interests at stake or the importance or intricacy of the questions of fact or law involved.

In these such disciplinary matters, since 1993 up to today, in all cases that we have seen, there have been at least three, and in certain circumstances, five judges that have been designated to hear such disciplinary matters at the Supreme Court. So, let my friends who had qualms rest assured that this was looked at properly.

There are a few proposed amendments that have been circulated yesterday, and which I propose to move for at Committee Stage in clauses 5, 9 and 20.

Madam Speaker, the purpose of this Bill is not punitive, but it is corrective.

It strengthens the reputation of the profession by ensuring that complaints are handled fairly, independently and transparently.

It protects the innocent by enabling frivolous complaints to be dismissed quickly, and it protects the public by ensuring that serious complaints are addressed with rigour.

Madam Speaker, the professions themselves – in all our consultations – acknowledged that reform was needed. They too want clarity and consistency. They want a system that inspires public confidence. And they want unfounded allegations to be cleared without unnecessary delay. This Bill achieves that balance.

This reform also forms part of the wider transformation of our justice system.

We have modernised appeals, judicial review, legal aid, and we continue to work toward a justice system that is accessible, modern and humane. Public confidence is essential to that work.

Citizens who entrust their liberty, their property, the fate of their families to a legal practitioner must feel secure. They must know that the system will protect them if something goes wrong – and conversely, a system that will also protect practitioners who face unjustified accusations. Fairness to all is the guiding principle.

Madam Speaker, the legal profession is the backbone of justice. It is essential that it remains strong, respected and trusted. This Bill seeks to reinforce that trust. It is not a

criticism of the many, but a safeguard against a few. It is an act of confidence in the profession and an affirmation of our duty to the public.

I, therefore, Madam Speaker, commend the Bill to the House.

Mr Uteem rose and seconded.

Madam Speaker: So, we are going to listen to hon. Ramdass. Then, we will break.

(4.41 p.m.)

Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle): Merci, Madame la présidente. Madame la présidente, d'abord, permettez-moi de remercier et féliciter l'honorable *Attorney General* pour avoir présenté devant cette auguste Assemblée ce projet de loi, *the Law Practitioners (Disciplinary Proceedings) Bill*.

Un projet de loi, Madame la présidente, qui a pour objectif la création d'une entité centralisée. Une entité, en fait, centralisée et chargée de traiter les doléances et les griefs formulés contre les praticiens du droit dans l'exercice de leur fonction.

Pour bien comprendre cette démarche, Madame la présidente, il convient ici, pour moi, de rappeler que les praticiens du droit se retrouvent aujourd'hui à la croisée des chemins. En fait, au cœur même des interactions d'une part entre le citoyen et la réalité sociale dans laquelle il évolue de l'autre. L'avocat, en fait, Madame la présidente, est le professionnel visé par l'article 10 de la Constitution de notre pays, lequel article, en fait, garantit le droit à une représentation légale dans une poursuite, un procès au pénal.

En ce qui s'agit, Madame la présidente, les revendications relevant du droit civil, l'avoué, lui, représente le justiciable en quête de justice et d'équité. Tandis que le notaire, lui, officier public habilité à dresser les actes authentiques, confère aux citoyens de ce pays, Madame la présidente, des droits et obligations dans leur vie sociale. Ces praticiens du droit constituent en fait des maillons essentiels de la mise en œuvre d'un aspect fondamental de notre démocratie, celui de l'accès à la justice.

Madame la présidente, *having said this, in fact, the noble nature, the nobility of the three branches of this profession* – c'est-à-dire des avoués d'une part, les avocats et les notaires – *stands from the crucial role which they are called upon to exercise in the*

administration of justice d'une part. Et deuxièmement, *from the stringent ethical standards to which they are subjected under their respective code of ethics*, c'est-à-dire *the code of ethics for barristers* d'une part, *the code of ethics for attorneys* et *the code of ethics for notaries*.

However, we can only observe, Madam Speaker, regrettably so, that the existence of such rules does not, unfortunately, guarantee that all members of the legal profession will now toe the line and act in accordance with the principles that give to this profession its noble character. Given that any breach of the code ethics by a legal practitioner is likely to have a direct and sometimes even a severe impact on the lay client's perspective, the lay client's experience of the justice system, it is only then natural and indeed essential, Madam Speaker, that a stronger system of checks and balances be implemented once and for all.

Whilst the Mauritius Bar Association (MBA), the Mauritius Law Society (MLS) et *la Chambre des Notaires* are already vested with investigative and disciplinary powers over their members as per the present law, the question now is whether the existing structures are still adapted to the realities of the profession and the realities of our society, Madam Speaker.

Si nous prenons, par exemple, Madame la présidente, la *Mauritius Bar Association*, le *Bar Council*, comme l'a dit l'*Attorney General*, est composé de sept membres élus pour un mandat d'une année. De ces sept membres, deux doivent être impérativement pourvus d'au moins 10 ans de pratique. Ce qui implique donc que les cinq membres restants peuvent avoir moins de 10 ans de pratique. Et nous le savons tous, Madame la présidente, le barreau mauricien est de plus en plus jeune. Nous avons environ une centaine d'avocats qui prêtent serment chaque année. La proportion de nouveaux avocats inscrits en fait augmente constamment. De ce fait, il ne serait pas surprenant, et même peut-être un petit peu rafraichissant, d'un certain point de vue, d'avoir un *Bar Council* majoritairement composé de jeunes avocats.

Cependant, Madame la présidente, bien qu'il soit une bonne chose que nous ayons de jeunes avocats sur le *Bar Council* et sur le conseil, il serait quand même légitime de s'interroger quant à leur niveau d'exposition et d'expérience et surtout quant à leur niveau de maturité pour traiter de ces cas potentiels de manquement déontologique.

It has been a tradition at the Bar, Madam Speaker, to resort to senior members for guidance on matters relating to ethics and etiquette. In such a situation where the membership of the Bar is increasingly comprising of members of the younger generations, it is certainly

time to consider shifting investigative and disciplinary powers to a stronger body, a consolidated body whose composition would reflect *d'abord* the seriousness of the task *et bien sûr*, the solemnity of the mission conferred upon it, that is to probe into allegations, into breach of code of ethics and misconduct and to determine, Madam Speaker, the consequences thereof.

En dernier lieu, Madame la présidente, it cannot be ignored that with the exponential, as I said before, with the exponential increase in the number of law practitioners, the number of complaints registered by the Bar Council on the one hand and the Mauritius Law Society on the other hand, are also on the rise. And these bodies, Madam Speaker, are comprised of members elected on a periodical basis. I understand that it is one year for the Bar Council and if I am not mistaken, it is two years for the Law Society. And these members who are elected, they are elected to hold office, not on a full-time basis. Hence the volume of complaints and the limited mandate of each body necessarily implies that there are practical issues in the timely disposal of any grievance formulated by members of the public, giving rise to frustrations and the perception of injustice where no comprehensive action follows from a complaint or at least not in a timely manner.

Donc, *so much to say, Madam Speaker*, que l'initiative de l'honorable *Attorney General*, en fait, arrive donc à point nommé. *And, obviously if we go to the Bill, Madam Speaker, I do not propose to go through all the clauses of the Bill since the hon. Attorney General has already done so. But I will only address l'Assemblée on a few clauses. If we look at clauses 4 and 5, as regards to the Complaints Commission, Madam Speaker*, le projet de loi propose la création sous la clause 4, d'une Complaints Commission. Une commission composée d'un président, de deux vice-présidents et de neuf membres et le président et les vice-présidents devront être respectivement un juge à la retraite, un ancien magistrat ayant servi au moins quinze ans, un avocat ou un *law officer*, comptant au moins 15 ans de pratique, donc une telle composition, Madame la présidente, garanti que les plaintes portées devant la commission seront examinées par des professionnels aguerris, capable de comprendre les attentes du public tout comme la réalité de la pratique de la provision légale.

Autre clause, Madame la présidente, celle de la clause 15 qui parle du délai de 80 jours comme nous l'a si bien dit l'honorable *Attorney General*, en fait la clause 15 (4) prévoit un délai de 90 jours pour que la cour suprême statue sur toutes procédures disciplinaires portées devant elle. Cela constitue, de mon point de vue, Madame la présidente, une avancée

majeure. Une avancée majeure puisqu'aucun délai n'existe actuellement sous les lois présentes et ce qui a conduit le fait qu'il y a aucun délai sous les lois existantes, a conduit à ce que plusieurs affaires restent sans suite, minant ainsi la confiance du public et là, Madame la présidente, je parle ici sous la correction de mes collègues avocats ici présents, dont vous-même, Madame la présidente, qui se souviendront de plusieurs cas, dont je ne citerai pas les noms ici, des cas de *professional misconduct* qui sont malheureusement restés impunis et sans aucune suite. J'en ai été témoin moi-même d'un gros cas de *misconduct*, il y a plus d'une dizaine d'années de cela. Je ne citerai pas le nom mais l'*Attorney General* saura de quoi je parle puisqu'il en a été témoin lui aussi.

Madame la présidente, je faillirais à mon devoir, avant de terminer si je ne parle pas par contre d'un petit souci que j'ai par rapport à une petite incohérence, allons dire, par rapport à ce projet de loi. When I go through the Bill, Madam Speaker, I observe that it does not specify the burden of proof which rests upon the Complaints Commission when it prosecutes a case before the Supreme Court and in fact, when we look at the Bill, clause 17 (1)(b)(3), *Madame la présidente*, we note that the outcome of such proceedings before the court, may be as severe as the erasure of the name of a law practitioner from the roll. This is indeed very extreme, Madam Speaker. It is indeed a very extreme measure. *La radiation complète d'un avocat, d'un avoué ou d'un notaire. Je ne suis pas contre, mais par contre puisqu'il y va du livelihood du praticien*, would it not be appropriate, Madam Speaker, to specify in the Bill that the burden of proof should be beyond reasonable doubt or at least a higher burden than that of the civil burden of proof which is on the balance of probabilities. I am saying this, Madam Speaker, of course, since the erasure of a professional, of a barrister, a notary or an attorney from the roll, in fact goes to the very ability of that law practitioner to earn a livelihood and this should not therefore be taken lightly.

Madame la présidente, en guise de conclusion, *in fact, it is true to say that this Bill addresses many of the shortcomings in the existing structures. In fact, it enhances the process in a bid to hold accountable those law practitioners which disregard completely the letter and the spirit of the code of ethics.* Et, ce projet de loi, Madame la présidente, aura pour vocation de rendre à la profession légale ses lettres de noblesse puisque trop longtemps, Madame la présidente, les valeurs de cette profession ont été effritées par les agissements de certains, des agissements impunis, des agissements sans qu'aucune sanction ne soit prise contre ces brebis galeuses de la profession qui ternissent malheureusement la réputation de tous les avocats.

Merci, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: Merci !

Sur ce, nous allons prendre un peu de thé.

At 4.52 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.39 p.m., with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Please be seated.

Yes, hon. Mr Lobine.

(5.40 p.m.)

Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I wish to commend the hon. Attorney General for bringing such an important reform before this House. The objective is clear and commendable, that is, to modernise our disciplinary architecture for the legal profession, provide procedural clarity and enhance public trust in the administration of justice. And, as the hon. Attorney General rightly pointed out, there was a first draft then there were consultations with the Bar Council, with the Law Society, with the Chambers of Notaries and there were several proposals made and as lawyers, we are glad that there has been a consensus and we are here before this House with a very comprehensive and well-drafted piece of legislation.

Madam Speaker, this effort deserves recognition because it is taking us back to 1998 whereby there was a Presidential Commission appointed Lord Mackay, of Clashfern to prepare a Comprehensive Report with regard to reform of the judicial and legal system and also to have a look at the legal profession. So, way back, when there was the labour-led government in 1998 with the then Prime Minister, the current Prime Minister, Dr. Ramgoolam, that reform was on the agenda. I am glad today that we are continuing in this process to have access to justice and if I am not mistaken, it's maybe the 27th or 28th Bill of the Attorney General before this House to enhance access to justice with such a comprehensive piece of legislation, again.

Madam Speaker, the major change, the fundamental change being brought through this Bill is the full centralisation of disciplinary intake and investigation. Hon. Ramdass spoke

about Clause 4 whereby the establishment of the Law Practitioners Complaints Commission and also complemented by Clause 8 subsection 2 with regard to –

“Where a complaint against a law practitioner is addressed to the Attorney-General, the Bar Council, the Chamber of Notaries and the Mauritius Law Society Council, that complaint shall promptly be referred to the Complaints Commission.”

In the legal profession, Madam Speaker, there are a few that apprehend this piece of legislation. They thought that this is a radical shift or change from what we are used to, that is, self-regulation but I would like to take a few examples so that our fellow lawyers will understand that the trend is for reform and this is being done in many Commonwealth countries. So, this is not a radical proposition; this is in line with what many Commonwealth countries have been doing for years now.

We take the example of Australia, Madam Speaker. Each State and territory has a Legal Services Commission. These are statutory bodies completely independent from Bar Associations. Their mandate is to investigate, mediate, and if necessary, prosecute legal misconduct before independent tribunals.

In the same vein, Madam Speaker, in New Zealand, they have the Lawyers and Conveyance Act of 2006 created a single-entry complaints service managed by the New Zealand Law Society but decisions are reviewable by the Legal Complaints Review Office, an entirely separate and impartial body.

In South Africa, Madam Speaker, they took the bold step through the Legal Practice Act 2014 which established the Legal Practice Council, a unified regulatory authority, overseeing all legal practitioners. It ensures that the public can lodge complaints in a transparent and efficient manner. Even in Canada, Madam Speaker, in Ontario, the Law Society functions as both a regulator and a complaint handler but decisions are made by disciplinary tribunals with strict rules of independence and lay participation.

So, this is not something out of the blue. This is the trend with regards to the modernity that we are bringing in the legal profession. The hon. Attorney General pointed out, we have got more than 1600 lawyers now and hon. Ramdass, has been saying that around 100 lawyers are being called to the Bar almost every year in Mauritius. So, the legal profession is a blend of old and newcomers with speciality in very specific fields.

Madam Speaker: It was 50 when I started.

Mr Lobine: 50?

Madam Speaker: Yes, only 50.

Mr Lobine: So, all these, Madam Speaker, bring us to what we need – reform and, this well-drafted piece of legislation is part of this process of access to justice. Madam Speaker, there is a very important clause that I would refer to. I would not be repetitive to what hon. Ramdass and the hon. Attorney General said but I would like to specify on Clause 9 of the Bill.

It empowers the Commission to dismiss complaints that are frivolous, trivial and vexatious. This is an essential filter because, Madam Speaker, unfortunately in Mauritius, we have got a few jack of all trades and master of none. They know the profession more than others and there are so many adverse comments because they do not know how the profession functions.

For example, you take the cab rank rule. Many people do not know the basics of this important rule because this is for lawyers. I must admit that at the level of the Bar, we need to disseminate, educate and give proper guidance as to how the profession is all about.

So, this important filter is something that is very commendable. This is also mentioned in clause 8 (2) whereby all complaints would be now directed to the commission.

Now, what are the risks and the practical issues? The practical issue is that the commission may risk becoming administratively overburdened. Why do I say so, Madam Speaker? Because this practical issue is already well documented internationally.

A significant proportion of complaints received by legal regulators worldwide relates to delays, communication issues or fee disputes, none of which constitute misconduct. That is why I would make a proposal here. In the United Kingdom, there is the Legal Ombudsman. I will call it the Legal Ombudsperson. So, in the United Kingdom, Madam Speaker, service quality complaints are handled by the Legal Ombudsman, allowing disciplinary bodies to focus solely on allegations of ethical or professional breaches.

Similarly, Madam Speaker, New Zealand separates preliminary assessment and service complaints from serious disciplinary matters through the lawyers' complaints service. Introducing a similar mechanism here, whether now or at a later subsequent phase, could greatly enhance the efficiency and clarity of the system. Why do I say so, Madam Speaker? With the establishment of a Legal Ombudsperson, this would bring three major benefits.

It would firstly educate the public about the distinction between misconduct and service complaints. It would also filter out non-disciplinary matters, ensuring the commission's resources are used appropriately. Thirdly, to protect the commission from becoming overwhelmed, allowing it to concentrate on serious misconduct as intended by this Bill.

The commission's mandate, Madam Speaker, as structured under clause 8 to clause 14, is to assess professional misconduct. A complementary mechanism to deal with service issues would ensure disciplinary system remains accessible, efficient and fair.

So, this is the proposal that I am making to the hon. Attorney General. This goes in line with the Commonwealth (Latimer House) Principles. These are guidelines with regard to promoting good governance, democracy, but also to the rule of law, access to justice, and most importantly, the independence of the legal profession. In this vein, I would humbly invite the hon. Attorney General to consider this suggestion offered in a spirit of constructive reflection.

I do not want to detract from the merit of this Bill. Rather, the aim is to reinforce effectiveness with regard to a balanced, independent, efficient and capable of maintaining public trust in this new commission. At the end of the day, Madam Speaker, the Law Practitioners (Disciplinary Proceedings) Bill is a serious and thoughtful reform that aims to strengthen transparency and also to give confidence to the public at large that the legal profession is here to participate in this administration of justice.

So, I would invite the hon. Attorney General to kindly consider whether maybe at a later stage, we could implement this Legal Ombudsperson so that we can filter and also disseminate what qualifies as misconduct or other complaints that could be dealt at administrative level.

This is my participation in this debate, Madam Speaker. I thank you for your kind attention.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Minister!

(5.51 p.m.)

The Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations (Mr R. Uteem): Madam Speaker, 32 years ago, on a cold evening of 25 November 1993, I was called to the Utter Bar of the

Society of Middle Temple. Incidentally, on the very same day, at the very same time, our hon. Prime Minister was being called at the Inner Temple!

In England, every barrister has to be a member of the professional association known as an Inns of Court. We have the Lincoln's Inn, Gray's Inn, Inner Temple and Middle Temple. What surprised me when I was admitted to the Bar is that each of these association carries the name 'Honourable Society.'

When you are called to the Bar, you become a member of the Honourable Society of one of the Inns of Court. Why? Because as is set out in the first paragraph of the Code of Ethics for Barristers, I quote –

“Honesty, integrity, independence and strict compliance with professional standards remain constant requirements for all those who seek to practise at the Bar.”

Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, not all practitioners adhere to these ethical principles today. Most of us do, but not all of us.

This Bill is providing the necessary legal framework for law practitioners to be held accountable for their actions and be subject to disciplinary proceedings, and where necessary, sanctions. So, as at today, there are two separate and distinct mechanisms to deal with cases of breach of etiquette, breach of professional misconduct involving law practitioner. By law practitioner, I mean barrister, attorney-at-law and notary public.

First is by self-regulation. So, the professional bodies of which the law practitioner is a member takes the sanction. The Bar Council, the Mauritius Law Society Council or the Chamber of Notaries have the discretion to investigate any report made to it regarding alleged act of professional misconduct. The professional bodies can then reprimand or severely reprimand a law practitioner.

However, they are required by law – and that is very important – to attempt to reach an amicable settlement, an amicable solution, and afford the law practitioner with an opportunity to be heard.

Only where after preliminary investigation, there is prima facie case of serious professional misconduct that the professional body refers the matter to the Supreme Court for determination. So, that is the first general mechanism.

The second mechanism to investigate an institute disciplinary proceeding against a law practitioner rests with the hon. Attorney General. The Attorney General has the power, under

the Law Practitioners Act, either on his own initiative, *proprio motu*, or on receipt of a complaint, to enquire into act done by a law practitioner.

Where the Attorney General is of opinion that the act done by a law practitioner calls for the institution of disciplinary proceedings, he has to submit a detailed report to the Chief Justice who then proceeds to hear the matter.

So, first, a self-regulation. Second, there is the Attorney General who refers the matter to the Supreme Court. Then, third, the Supreme Court itself under its inherent jurisdiction has the power to hear and determine any complaint against a law practitioner under Section 18 of the Courts Act.

But as at today – and this is not going to change with this new Bill –, it is only the Supreme Court that has the power to order the name of a law practitioner be erased from the roll, so that he can stop practicing. I pause here to recomfort hon. Ashley Ramdass that the Supreme Court always acts reasonably when imposing the sanction.

In the case of Baboolall, for example, the Supreme Court held that the case will be visited by a suspension of one year. So, they gave a suspension of one year. However, since it was the very first case of disciplinary proceeding for such professional misconduct which did not involve dishonesty towards the client, the court said that they were prepared to suspend the decision for a period of three years. So, the Supreme Court is not going to likely suspend a law practitioner or remove him from the roll.

But, Madam Speaker, in practise – I totally concur with the hon. Attorney General –, the system is not seen to be working. The Supreme Court is rarely called upon to determine allegation of professional misconduct against law practitioners. I have gone through all the law reports in the past 25 years. There are only seven reported cases where disciplinary proceedings against law practitioners have been brought before the Supreme Court.

Two barristers and one attorney had their names removed from the roll of practicing law practitioners, and one barrister was suspended for a period of six months. Why? Is it because all practitioners are adhering to their code of ethics? Rather, there is the perception, Madam Speaker, that the current mechanism of disciplinary action against law practitioner is not working.

Professional bodies, be it the Bar Council, the Law Society Council or the Chamber of Notaries hardly ever report a matter to the Supreme Court for disciplinary proceedings. There is the perception of the lawyers sticking together. You know, ‘You scratch my back, I will

scratch yours.’ True it is that the law, as it currently stands, gives the power for them to attempt an amicable solution. *Le linge sale après tout se lave en famille, Madame la présidente.*

But the law also requires them to refer cases to the Supreme Court whenever there is a *prima facie* and a serious breach of code of ethics. I will give an example, Madam Speaker, to illustrate my point. This is within the public domain and concerns this august Assembly because it was the subject of a PNQ last year on 12 June 2024.

It concerned the conduct of then Minister of Environment, Mr Kavydass Ramano.

It was established that whilst Mr Ramano was Minister of Environment, an application was received at his Ministry of Environment for an environmental impact assessment. The application was supported by a certificate, a document, under the letterhead of *Étude Ramano* signed for Mr Kavydass Ramano.

There was a clear conflict of interest. You cannot be a Minister, be called upon to determine an EIA application, and your own personal notarial practice, *l’Étude*, is signing a letter confirming the ownership of the land – subject matter of the EIA application. The more so when the certificate is signed by an employee of that notary public.

According to the reply, the application was made on 08 May 2024, that is, more than four and a half years after Mr Ramano had been a Minister.

So, he cannot come and say that these are works that he was doing before becoming a Minister. Four and a half years later, his *Étude*, of which he was the sole owner, was still operating and issuing application which are considered by his Ministry. Was that normal? Was that ethical? Yet, the Chamber of Notaries refrained to comment.

In a communiqué, they stated, I quote –

« Cette situation pourrait faire l’objet d’enquêtes, et par conséquent, la Chambre se voit contrainte de ne faire aucun commentaire sur cette affaire spécifique. »

What happened since? Where is the Chamber of Notaries? Have they conducted any investigation? Have they taken sanction? Have they referred the matter to the Supreme Court?

Another example: the case of another notary public, Mr Vinay Deelchand. There were endless complaints from the public concerning his failure to comply with his statutory duties.

In September 2024, the Supreme Court even ordered him together with another defendant to pay the sum of Rs2 million to a plaintiff concerning a fictitious sale. Yet, have you ever heard *les notables*, the honourable members of the Chamber of Notaries referring a case of Mr Deelchand to the Supreme Court for disciplinary action? The list is long, Madam Speaker!

Now, what about the then Attorney General? I will call him double honourable; hon. Member of an Inns of Court and a former hon. Member of Parliament. I am taking exception to the incumbent.

From 2007 to 2009, there were a few cases where the Attorney General had reported to the Chief Justice for disciplinary proceedings. Mostly were following conviction in criminal cases. But no disciplinary proceedings seemed to have been reported since 2014 by the then Attorney General. Madam Speaker, probably, according to their personal ethical standards, there was no professional misconduct.

May I remind you who were those Attorneys General? Hon. Yerrigadoo, *l'homme aux honoraires de R 32 millions*! The Minister who was forced to resign over the Bet365 scandal.

Who was the other Attorney General? Hon. Maneesh Gobin, currently on bail for the offence of public official using office for gratification in breach of Section 7(1) of the Prevention of Corruption Act. Not so honourable after all!

Madam Speaker, the problem is when you give the power to the Attorney General to initiate or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings before the Supreme Court, you are effectively giving the power to a politician – again, no offence intended to the present incumbent –, but you are giving power to a politician to use this power to persecute a political opponent or use that power to protect his political allies. That is the problem with the current system.

In June 2018, the Commission of Enquiry on Drug Trafficking in Mauritius, chaired by the former Justice Lam Shang Leen, published its report. It sends shivers up and down the spine of law practitioners. It uncovered a fine-tuned system where certain law practitioners seem to be acting as accomplices for drug traffickers.

To cite an extract of the report, at paragraph 19.5.3., – and that paragraph has not been expunged by any order of the court – it is worth listening, Madam Speaker –

“The Commission has very strong reason in the light of the evidence adduced before it to believe that there is a handful of barristers who may have acted and may still be acting in a most unethical manner, if not engaging in illicit activities such as obstructing the course of justice, intimidating witnesses, causing witnesses to diverge from their original statement version, thereby abstaining from incriminating drug barons. They were also likely to have been using drug money to finance political campaigns, possibly money laundering the proceeds of drugs trafficking in accepting wilfully tainted money, accepting cash beyond permissible amount and not accounting same in their VAT receipt, and generally fostering incestuous relationship with drug tycoons.”

Who were the law practitioners cited in the report? Who were *les brebis galeuses*? Most, if not all, were from the MSM party, Madam Speaker!

As the hon. Prime Minister said ‘*kala prizon*’, unsolicited visits to prisoners, mobile phone communication with drug lords serving their sentence in prison!

Let me clear something. In the case of hon. Rubina Jadoo, she was a Minister. So, it is directly relevant to this House. She had to resign after her name was cited in the report. She went to the Supreme Court and asked for a judicial review of the findings of the commission. On two complaints, namely the phone communication with prisoners and the unsolicited visits, the Supreme Court found no merit in her complaints and held that the decision of the Commission of Enquiry was not manifestly unreasonable or irrational.

And what happened? Instead of the former Attorney General initiating an enquiry against the lady, the MSM gave her a ticket to run as candidate in Constituency No. 2 in the elections of 2024! Luckily the electorate, like all of them, threw them out of history.

So, Madam Speaker, we can see even under the self-regulation or under the existing Attorney General, it is not working. Legal proceedings, disciplinary proceedings are not being brought against law practitioners. Now, this will change with this Bill. So, with this Bill, we will no longer have self-disciplinary actions by the Professional Association, the Bar Council, the Law Society Council, the Chamber of Notaries and no more, any power to the Attorney General to decide whether to institute legal proceedings or not. Instead, we are replacing it by a new independent Law Practitioners Complaints Commission which will be an independent body and it will be under the direction or control of no person or authority.

What is interesting, Madam Speaker, with this body, the Attorney General will not sit on any of the inquiries. In fact, there will be a Chairperson or a Vice-Chairperson and two members of the relevant profession –

- If there is an inquiry over conduct of a barrister, there will be two barristers sitting on the Committee.
- If there is an inquiry over an attorney, there will be two members of the Law Society.
- If there is an inquiry over the conduct of a public notary, we will have two public notaries.

What is also a very important departure from the existing law is that today professional misconduct has been defined widely. It does not cover only breaches of the Code of Ethics but also covers improper, disgraceful, dishonourable or unworthy act that has brought his profession or her profession or the administration of justice into disrepute. So, that goes wider to just the black letter of the Code of Ethics and also goes in his personal life, you know, the way he has behaved in public, whether that has brought the profession in disrepute. The Bill, as the hon. Attorney General mentioned, has now a set deadline; six months to report the complaint and 90 days to complete the inquiry. This is most welcomed because for those law practitioners who want to clear their names, it is very important that there is a set timeframe to do so. Another important change – the disciplinary proceedings will now be heard in front of a bench consisting of two judges and the aggrieved party can appeal to the Court of Civil Appeal. This is a major difference from the current practice where disciplinary hearings are heard before three judges and the appeal is to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

Madam Speaker, the legal profession of which I am a part of, is in its very essence a very noble profession and it goes, or at least should go, without saying that those admitted to this profession must uphold the highest ethical standards and a top-notch professional conduct. Regrettably, even in the most respected profession, there are a few whose conduct tarnishes the reputation of the many. This Bill is not just a legislative reform but a structural safeguard for the rule of law, for fairness and for equal accountability whether the lawyer is well connected or not.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister.

Hon. Attorney General, I know you do not like me saying ‘winding up speech’. I just checked; it is perfect English but I will ask you to round up.

(6.10 p.m.)

Mr Glover: Madam Speaker, there is a well-known line from Shakespeare that is often quoted and let me hasten to add that before I actually spell out the words, that I do not approve, of course, of its contents. It is spoken not by reformers in the play Henry the Sixth but by those plotting to destroy the rule of law, and it goes as follows –

“The first thing we do, let’s kill all the lawyers.”

The meaning is very simple. If you wish to collapse a society, you begin by silencing those who know the law, who defend rights, who safeguard due process. Far from being an insult to the profession, the line just quoted, is thus a reminder of the centrality of lawyers in any functioning democracy.

Madam Speaker, this is why the Bill before the House today matters. It recognises that the strength of a democracy is tied to the strength of those who serve justice and it recognises that public confidence is the bedrock on which the legal profession must stand.

If at this stage, I could respond to my learned friends who have addressed the House today, to the hon. Ramdass, I will draw attention to the fact that section 15(2)(c) clearly spells out that the disciplinary proceedings before the Supreme Court shall be conducted in the same manner as proceedings in a civil matter, and of course, that is, on a balance of probabilities. The suggestion that lawyers should be treated differently from any other professional being placed before a Disciplinary Committee under the Workers’ Rights Act would not sound very good. If it is good for everyone else, it should be good enough for us.

As far as my learned friend, hon. Lobine’s comments are concerned, I take onboard the suggestion of the complementary mechanism of the legal ombudsperson but I do think that at this stage, and I take his point that we should

perhaps look at this in the future, if ever, we have this administrative overburden on the system. On the part of hon. Uteem, let me say that I have nothing to add.

The vast majority of our attorneys, barristers and notaries, Madam Speaker, serve with dignity and competence but we must acknowledge an uncomfortable truth; confidence has been shaken, not because the profession is corrupt but because the system for dealing with the few cases of misconduct has not kept pace with modern expectations. The Bill is not a

reprimand of the profession, it is an act of respect, an act of commitment, an act of confidence. It says clearly; ‘your honour matters’, ‘your role matters’, ‘your credibility matters’ and we will help you protect it with a system that works, that is transparent and independent.

Our Government, Madam Speaker, has promised to renew the foundations of our institutions. We have said that democracy must be strengthened not only in its grand principles but in its everyday workings. A justice system cannot be credible if citizens doubt whether misconduct in the legal profession is treated impartially, nor can it inspire confidence if lawyers themselves feel that well-intentioned colleagues are tarnished by the acts of a few. The Bill answers those concerns with balance and clarity.

Madam Speaker, a society that values the rule of law must also value those who practice it and valuing them means helping them uphold the highest standards. That is what this Bill does. It protects the many from being stained by the few. It protects citizens who seek justice and it protects the integrity of the three professions and that is indispensable to the health of our democracy. I thus commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

THE LAW PRACTITIONERS (DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS) BILL (No. XXIX of 2025)

Clauses 1 to 4 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 5 (Composition of Complaints Commission).

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

Mr Glover: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendment in clause 5 –

“in clause 5, in subclause (4), by deleting the words “nominate 3 attorneys, 3 barristers and 3 notaries” and “nominated attorneys, barristers and notaries” and replacing them by the words “nominate 3 barristers, 3 notaries and 3 attorneys” and “nominated barristers, notaries and attorneys”, respectively;”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 5, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 6 to 8 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 9 (Trivial, frivolous or vexatious complaints).

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

Mr Glover: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendment in clause 9 –

“in clause 9, by deleting the words “section 9” and replacing them by the words “section 8”;

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 9, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 10 to 19 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 20 (Consequential amendments)

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

Mr Glover: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendment in clause 20 –

“in clause 20, in subclause (2), by deleting the words “subsection (2)” and replacing them by the words “section 19H(2)””

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 20, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 21 and 22 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

The title and enacting clause were agreed to.

The Bill, as amended, was agreed to.

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

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Law Practitioners (Disciplinary Proceedings) Bill (No. XXIX of 2025) was read the third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister, adjournment!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 09 December 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 6.23 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 09 December 2025 at 11.30 a.m.