



EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 09 DECEMBER 2025

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THE CABINET

(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
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MAURITIUS

Eighth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 39 of 2025

Sitting of Tuesday 09 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)

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 Law Reform Commission Bill (No.XXXI of 2025). (In Original)

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

- (i) The National Savings Fund (Collection of Contributions) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 113 of 2025)
- (ii) The National Pensions (Pension Points) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 114 of 2025)

- C. Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities**

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency for the year ended 30 June 2024.

- D. Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection**

- (i) The Consumer Protection (Fixed Penalty Notice) (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 115 of 2025)
- (ii) The Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 6) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 116 of 2025)
- (iii) The Consumer Protection (Use of Liquified Petroleum Gas in Small Cylinders) (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 117 of 2025)
- (iv) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 7) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 118 of 2025)
- (v) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 5) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 119 of 2025)
- (vi) The Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 7) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 121 of 2025)
- (vii) The Consumer Protection (Consumer Goods) (Maximum Mark-Up) (Amendment No. 4) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 122 of 2025)

- (viii) The Consumer Protection (Pharmaceutical Products) (Maximum Mark-Up) (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 123 of 2025)
- (ix) The Consumer Protection (Safety Requirements) (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 124 of 2025)
- (x) The Consumer Protection (Price Label) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 125 of 2025)
- (xi) The Consumer Protection (Sale of Essential Goods During Emergency Period) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 126 of 2025)

E. Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research

The Higher Education (Transitional Provisions Relating to the Accreditation of Institutional Accreditation Process) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 120 of 2025)

F. Ministry of Industry, SMEs and Cooperatives

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Co-operative College for the period 01 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

G. Ministry of Education and Human Resource

The Annual Reports and Reports of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Special Education Needs Authority for the years ended 30 June, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, please be seated!

Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition, your Private Notice Question!

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACT – GENERAL ELECTIONS 2024 EXPENSES – ALLEGED BREACHES

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 alleged breaches of the provisions governing election expenses incurred in relation to the National Assembly Elections 2024 under the Representation of the People Act, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police and the Electoral Commissioner, information as to whether any complaint has been reported in relation thereto, indicating in each case where matters stand, further indicating the –

- (a) date (s) thereof and at which police stations;
- (b) constituencies and elected representatives concerned therewith, and
- (c) names of the persons interrogated by the Police as at date.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the elections were held on 10 November 2024 and the results were declared on 11 November 2024. As per section 56(1) of the Representation of the People Act, the election agent of a candidate who has been returned or declared elected shall, within six weeks of the results of the elections, make an election return to the returning officer for the constituency in which he acted as an election agent. Every return shall be in Form K of the Schedule to the Representation of People Act and shall be sworn before a Magistrate by the agent by whom it is made.

In addition, every return shall be supported by a declaration sworn before a Magistrate by the candidate, stating that –

- (i) the return fully and accurately setting out all the payments made by him,
- (ii) to the best of his knowledge, information or belief, the return is a full and accurate return of all the expenditure incurred, and all money, securities or the equivalent of money received by the election agent, in connection with the elections.

As per section 51(B) of the Representation of the People Act –

“(b) The maximum amount of election expenses to be incurred in respect of a candidate for a National Assembly election shall be –

- (A) where the candidate does not belong to a party, or where there is no other candidate belonging to the same party at the election in a constituency, the sum is 250,000 rupees;
- (B) where the candidate is not the only candidate belonging to a party at the election in the constituency, the sum is 150,000 rupees;”

With regard to parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the following candidates for the 2024 General Assembly Elections against whom complaints have been made are –

- (i) Hon. Pentiah of Constituency No. 7;
- (ii) Hon. Dr. Prayag of Constituency No. 7;
- (iii) Hon. Dr. Sukon of Constituency No. 7;
- (iv) Hon. Lukeeram of Constituency No. 12;
- (v) Hon. Ms Leu-Govind of Constituency No. 14;
- (vi) Hon. Richard Duval of Constituency No. 17, and
- (vii) Hon. Ms Colette of Constituency No. 21.

I further wish to inform the House that the following three unreturned candidates of *L’Alliance Lepep* also exceeded their election expenses –

- (i) Khemloliva of Constituency No. 18;
- (ii) Kavydass Ramano of Constituency No. 18, and
- (iii) Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo of Constituency No. 19.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police, Madam Speaker, that on 01 February 2025 at Piton Police Station, one Mrs Kalpana Koonjoo-Shah who was an unreturned candidate for Constituency No. 11 for the 2024 General Elections, made a complaint against the three returned candidates of Constituency No. 7, namely hon. Dr. Sukon, hon. Pentiah, and hon. Dr. Prayag.

On 17 February 2025, at the said police station, other complaints were made against those three returned candidates by one Mr Fokkerah Jugdice.

I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 03 February 2025 at Port Mathurin Police Station, one Mr Allas Ibrayen made a complaint against hon. Ms Roxana Collet for having exceeded her election expenses during her campaign for Constituency No. 21.

I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 17 February 2025, at Mahebourg Police Station, two complainants, namely one Mr Luck Veer Seerungen and one Mr Jean Christophe Toussaint made complaints against hon. Lukeeram for having exceeded his election expenses during his campaign for Constituency No. 12.

On 18 February 2025 at Chemin Grenier Police Station, one Mr Peerbux Samnawaz made a complaint against hon. Ms Veronique Leu-Govind for having exceeded her election expenses during her campaign for Constituency No. 14.

I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that statements have been recorded from all the complainants.

I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 24 February 2025 at Curepipe Police Station, one Mr Pyndiah Alagangi made a complaint against hon. Richard Duval for having exceeded his election expenses during the campaign for Constituency No. 17.

I am further informed by the Electoral Commissioner that no complaint has been received at his office. However, on 12 May 2025, the Police informed his office that the Central CID was investigating cases relating to a breach of the Representation of the People Act by elected Members of the National Assembly who had declared, through their election agents, electoral expenditures in excess of Rs150,000 for the National Assembly Elections 2024. A statement was given to the CCID on 19 May 2025 by an officer of the Electoral Commissioner's Office, wherein all information requested by the Police was provided. I understand that the Police enquiries are still ongoing, and these files will be sent to the DPP, eventually.

I am further informed by the Electoral Commissioner that in the case of hon. Dr. Prayag, hon. Pentiah, hon. Dr. Sukon, hon. Lukeeram, hon. Ms Leu-Govind and hon. Ms Collet, they each submitted a further affidavit to his office on different dates to amend their

initial electoral returns claiming that their initial returns contained expenses which were not related to their campaign.

Madam Speaker, therefore, this is the situation, and there is a consensus among the major political parties that the maximum statutory expenses per candidate at General Elections dating back to 2001 are totally unrealistic. This issue will be reviewed as part of the Government Programme to enhance transparency in the political sphere with a view to ensuring free and fair elections. Government will also introduce legislation for the funding of political parties.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Yes, first supplementary!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister to confirm to the House whether those cases are being treated individually or the Police has grouped those cases together?

The Prime Minister: Normally, it is individually, Madam Speaker.

Mr Lesjongard: The hon. Prime Minister stated that certain members have filed new affidavits. Will he agree that those new affidavits are tantamount to an admission of guilt by those who have filed those new affidavits?

The Prime Minister: It is not for me to decide this, Madam Speaker. I have just explained that they feel that there were expenses that were not related to the electoral expenses which were put in there.

Madam Speaker: If I understand well, the affidavits were not sent to the Police but to the Electoral Commissioner. Is that what I understood? They sent it to the Electoral Commissioner. So, I am not sure how it is linked.

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, but they were filed in outside the prescribed dates, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Yes! Yes!

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Prime Minister provide to the House information with regard to the dates on which those new affidavits were filed?

The Prime Minister: I thought I did give the dates. I will have to look for it, but they were filed. I thought I mentioned that the affidavits were filed afterwards, outside the prescribed date anyway, at different dates.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Next question!

Mr Lesjongard: The hon. Prime Minister stated that certain complainants have already been interrogated. Can he give indications to the House as to who has already been interrogated by the Police, and whether elected Members of this House were concerned with this inquiry; whether they have been interrogated? And can he give a timeline of proceedings from now onwards?

The Prime Minister: It is, in fact, the agents that have to be interrogated because they are the ones who submitted the files. They have been interrogated, except two agents, I understand, have not been.

Mr Lesjongard: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether his office has obtained a full report from the Office of the Electoral Commissioner on this matter, and whether such a request has been made to the latter?

The Prime Minister: No, I did not get any report from the Office of the Electoral Commissioner, and neither did I ask because this is an independent office.

Mr Lesjongard: So, will the hon. Prime Minister give a guarantee to the House that there will be no cover-up in these cases of alleged illegal practice under the Representation of the People Act?

The Prime Minister: Certainly not! But as I mentioned at the end of my answer, even on the Opposition's part, we all agree, I think – at least, I think so, from what I have heard – we have to re-look at these expenses. They are completely unrealistic.

Mr Lesjongard: But there was a bill in front of this House some years ago, and the alliance in power did not vote for the bill when it was presented to the House, that is, the bill with regard...

Madam Speaker: You are making a statement!

Mr Lesjongard: ...to financing of political parties.

Madam Speaker: You are making a statement!

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Non*, not a statement; a speech!

Mr Lesjongard: Will the hon. Prime Minister confirm to this House that those found guilty of illegal practice will face the full force of law, including vacation of their seat?

The Prime Minister: That is for the DPP who will look at the files and decide. It is not for me to say who is guilty or who is not guilty.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the DPP's Office has already been contacted by the Police?

The Prime Minister: No, the Police want to complete the enquiry before they send the files to the DPP. That is what I understand from the Commissioner of Police.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, this is a very serious matter. Why is it that until now, the hon. Prime Minister has not directed those elected Members of this alliance to step down pending the full investigation in these alleged cases of illegal election expenses and breaches of the Representation of the People Act?

Mr Etwareea: Are you joking?

The Prime Minister: We cannot say that there have been breaches. It is not for me to decide whether there have been breaches or not. They are alleged breaches.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. A. Duval is asking.

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister with regard to the offences of illegal practice, which carry vacancy of seat and ineligibility for 5 years, and where it would be for the court to find a person guilty where he was aware and had consented to the expenses being done over the prescribed limit, in the given case, given that this has been sworn by the Members in their own affidavit and given one year has passed, where potentially their seats could be found to be ineligible, not only for that one year, but also 5 years of ineligibility ...

Madam Speaker: You are still making a statement! Where is your question?

Mr A. Duval: The question is: is it not a matter of urgency with regard to the irregularity of the decisions taken by members of Government who may be found later to be ineligible? Is it not an urgent matter which requires to be treated urgently by the investigative authority?

The Prime Minister: I must say, Madam Speaker, of course, it has to be looked on. As I said, the Police are completing the enquiry, the files will be sent to the DPP because there are counter affidavits, as I said. Whether these counter affidavits have been done outside the prescribed date, that is for the DPP to look at.

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

Madam Speaker: Yes, a second question but no statements!

Mr A. Duval: No statements! May I know, as a matter of information, whether the Electoral Commissioner has referred upon becoming aware of potential irregularities...

Madam Speaker: He has answered that!

Mr A. Duval: No, whether he has referred those irregularities potentially to the Police as he should do?

Madam Speaker: Ah! To the Police! We don't know!

Do you know?

The Prime Minister: I did answer part of that question. It is not for the Electoral Commissioner to refer it to the police. They must come and complain to the... Nobody has complained to the Electoral Commissioner.

Madam Speaker: Okay!

Mr Lesjongard: Two more?

Madam Speaker: Yes, two more, okay!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, I am sure the hon. Prime Minister, especially the hon. Deputy Prime Minister will see to it that this enquiry is taken seriously. Concerning the incoming electoral reform, can the hon. Prime Minister provide to the House with a proposed figure as a new threshold for expenses during an election?

Madam Speaker: No, I don't think he can do that! It is too early for him to do that.

Mr Lesjongard: But at least! Because he is saying...

Madam Speaker: Okay, if you want, hon Prime Minister?

(Interruptions)

Please, hon. Prime Minister, do you want to reply to this question?

The Prime Minister: No, because this would be a question of debate and all of us have ideas but we will have to see.

An hon. Member: *Fer enn propozision Joe!*

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Mo gagn drwa dir kitsoz, linn mention mwa!*

Mr Lesjongard: Again, on the same issue with regard to expenses during an election, will the hon. Prime Minister reassure the House that in the upcoming electoral reform, the Office of the Electoral Commissioner will be empowered to enquire on real expenses of candidates during an election and be empowered by this new piece of legislation to take severe sanctions in case of breaches like the one we have had in the last general elections?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: ... *seki to'nn fer pendant 10 ans.*

The Prime Minister: I am glad the hon. Deputy Prime Minister is saying what he just said that for ten years, nothing was done. We are about to do things.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr A. Duval: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister, again on the role of the Electoral Commissioner, in 2019 elections, he did refer upon being aware of ballot boxes being found at large, the matter to the police?

Madam Speaker: Oh, that matter! That has nothing to do with this question!

Mr A. Duval: No, it does. He has the inherent responsibility to make sure that when he sees something being irregular and he becomes aware to refer it. I am not saying to prosecute, not prosecuting powers! But referral to the police. Does the hon. Prime Minister not think that the Electoral Commissioner ought to have referred this matter to the police?

The Prime Minister: Just to correct the hon. Member of the Opposition. It was in the 1991 elections that tin boxes, not transparent boxes, were found in sugarcane fields and all over the place. That was in 1991.

Mr A. Duval: 2019!

Madam Speaker: In any case, it does not arise from that question!

The Deputy Prime Minister: He should not arise!

Mr A. Duval: Irregularity!

Madam Speaker: Okay, now we go to other questions.

Hon. Members, the Table has been advised – I hope I have the whole list – PQ B/1220 will be replied by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister, time permitting. PQ B/1176 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Land and Transport. PQ B/1177 has been withdrawn.

Hon. Second Member for Rodrigues!

MBC-RODRIGUES SERVICES – AUDIO-VISUAL EQUIPMENT – UPGRADING

(No. B/1174) Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the MBC-Rodrigues Services, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the state of the audio-visual equipment and other related logistical facilities available at the Station therefor to ensure the smooth running thereof and provision of enhanced coverage, reliability and picture quality, indicating the consideration being given for the upgrading thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed that in February of this year, soon after assuming office, the Director General of the MBC undertook a visit to MBC Rodrigues to assess operational conditions, review the technical and logistical requirements of the Station, and engage with staff with a view to motivating them.

His visit revealed that the MBC Rodrigues Station has been functioning during the previous years with audio-visual equipment totally inimical to the provision of a modern and high standard broadcasting service. In fact, MBC Rodrigues had become as if a dumping ground for used and second-hand equipment, which were no longer useful to the MBC Mauritius.

Subsequent to the visit, in March 2025, a technical team comprising a Broadcast Officer/Senior Broadcast Officer and a Consultant were commissioned to carry out a comprehensive technical audit and to evaluate both the production and training needs of MBC Rodrigues.

The audit exercise evaluated the state of cameras, the studio equipment, the editing systems, and other production tools and identified several items that had surpassed their optimal service life and required replacement.

Furthermore, Madam Speaker, in October and November 2025, technical missions were carried out in Rodrigues by a team from the MBC and Multi-Carrier (Mauritius) Ltd to improve production capacity, strengthen transmission reliability, and enhance picture quality. These missions have delivered tangible results, including improved studio lighting, camera adjustments and enhanced picture quality. Maintenance was also carried out on all the transmitters sites, including FM Radio and an island-wide survey has confirmed that television and radio coverage was satisfactory. No complaint regarding picture quality, reliability or coverage has been reported following the audit and maintenance exercise. All the MBC channels remain available across Rodrigues.

In addition, following the recommendations of the technical audit, practical training was provided to Production and News personnel from the 19 October to 04 November 2025. This training strengthened staff competencies in camera operation, news production, and field reporting, contributing to a marked improvement in the quality of locally produced content.

Madam Speaker, I am also informed that in November 2025, the Director-General of the MBC undertook a second visit to MBC Rodrigues, during which several other priority areas for improvement were identified.

Madam Speaker, it is clear that under the previous regime, MBC Rodrigues was the least of their priorities.

Under this Government and the new Management of the MBC, the MBC Rodrigues Station has not been left out. Accordingly, corrective measures are being implemented to improve the services offered by the Station. A total of Rs12.7 million has been allocated by the MBC under its Annual Procurement Plan specifically for upgrading of Rodrigues facilities. Procurement of new cameras, audio-visual systems, studio equipment and other

production tools which is already underway. This investment demonstrates our clear commitment to strengthening the Rodrigues' Station.

Madam Speaker, I wish to assure the inhabitants of Rodrigues that this Government is fully dedicated to ensuring the smooth and efficient operation of broadcasting services in Rodrigues. It is, in fact, the policy of this Government to treat all parts of our territory, whether it is mainland Mauritius, Rodrigues, Agaléga, St Brandon and Chagos on the same footing. We are committed to providing our citizens with the same level of all public-funded facilities and services, beyond radio and TV services, irrespective of the part of the Republic of Mauritius they reside in.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr François: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the hon. Prime Minister as well as the DG. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister in line with the vision to upgrading the broadcast capacity and to well equip MBC Rodrigues, whether consideration will be given to acquire an Outdoor Broadcasting Vehicle (OB Vehicle) for production and live transmission of news, entertainment, sports and cultural events from any location other than at the Citronelle MBC Rodrigues?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member is right. There is no OB Vehicle in the Rodrigues Station at the moment but there is one OB Unit which is available. I will certainly pass that request to the Director General.

Madam Speaker: Very good!

Mr François: A second supplementary? May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he can confirm if further or additional recruitment will be carried out thereat?

The Prime Minister: My understanding is that they have just done training, as I said in my answer, but I am not aware that further recruitment will be done but I am sure that the Director General will do that if he feels there is a need for it.

Mr François: Thank you.

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

SHIPPING AGENTS – PORT LICENCE – FEES PAYABLE

(No. B/1175) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Shipping Agent License, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof currently in operation, indicating the fees payable therefor and when same were last reviewed.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I presume the hon. Member is referring to Port Licence issued to Shipping Agents.

In accordance with Section 4(1)(g) of the Ports Act, the Mauritius Ports Authority shall, as landlord, exercise licensing, regulating and controlling functions in respect of port and marine services not provided by the Authority. In addition, section 24 of the Ports Act stipulates that no person shall provide any service or facility unless so authorised by a licence granted by the Mauritius Ports Authority.

The issuance of licences for the supply or handling of cargo, goods, bunker, water, other equipment, labour or other services within the limits of a port, the outer port or the port premises is governed by the Ports (Issue of Licences) Regulations 1981, concerning the issue of licences. It further provides that a separate licence shall be required for each business or activity that is asked for. This licence may be issued or renewed for a period not exceeding one year, subject to such conditions as may be imposed by the Mauritius Ports Authority against payment of an annual fee as prescribed in the Port (Fees) Regulations 2008.

I am informed, Madam Speaker, by the Mauritius Ports Authority, that port licences are issued to Shipping Agents which are designated by owners or charterers of vessels to represent their interests and act on their behalf when calling at the port.

Presently, there are 34 companies licensed to operate as Shipping Agents in the port area and every licensee pays an annual fee of Rs15,000, as prescribed in the Second Schedule of the Port (Fees) Regulations 2008.

Following a Port Tariff Study undertaken by the Mauritius Ports Authority in the year 1999, a prescribed fee of Rs15,000 was then fixed to be payable by Shipping Agents. The House will note that since the last 25 years, these fees have not been reviewed.

I am further informed, Madam Speaker, that a contract was awarded on 01 October 2024, that is, just a few weeks before the General Elections, for the conduct of a Port Tariff Study by Strategic Networking Partners & Consulting Ltd for a sum of Rs7,202,267, exclusive of VAT. The scope of the study is to set a revised tariff structure that would reflect the real value of port services provided and benchmarked with those being practised regionally and internationally.

The Consulting company was expected to submit the Final Report in April 2025. However, the Draft Final Report was submitted, seven months later, on 28 November 2025. I am informed that the bidding document prepared by the Procurement Policy Office did not provide for penalty clauses in the General Conditions of Contract for consultancy services. However, Clause 14 of the General Conditions of Contract provides for the termination of the contract in the event the consultant commits a material breach or fails to remedy a failure in the performance of its obligations under the Contract within seven working days after being notified, or within any further period as the client may have subsequently approved in writing.

The Mauritius Ports Authority has not applied this Clause with regard to the late submission of the report. An inquiry into the matter is accordingly being initiated.

Approval of the Board of the Mauritius Ports Authority on the recommendations of the Port Tariff Study is expected before the end of January 2026. And necessary amendments would accordingly be made to the Port (Fees) Regulations to give effect to the revised port charges and fees.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Mr Babajee, yes.

Mr Babajee: Will the hon. Prime Minister submit a list of licences issued from 2014 to 2024, and whether, all those licences have been in norms with the regulations? Will he be able to table it?

The Prime Minister: I can submit a list of these licences.

Madam Speaker: Yes, alright. Okay.

Then, it is Mr Jhummun, Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac.

METRO EXPRESS LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT SYSTEM – PUBLIC SECURITY – MEASURES

(No. B/1176) 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 Metro Express Light Rail Transit System, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the measures being taken to ensure public security around the stations and onboard the wagons thereof.

(Withdrawn)

RESIDENCE BARKLY – ASSAULT CASE – 6-YEAR-OLD GIRL – INQUIRY

(No. B/1177) 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 assault on a 6-year old girl, named L., at her place in Residence Barkly on Monday 24 November 2025, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the outcome of the inquiry carried out thereinto and the circumstances of the arrest of the suspected perpetrator thereof.

(Withdrawn)

DHYANAVARTAM LTD – LOANS GRANTED – INVESTIGATION

(No. B/1178) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the loans granted by the State Bank of Mauritius and the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd. to Dhyonavartam Ltd., between 2022 and 2024, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Crimes Commission, information as to where matters stand concerning the inquiry initiated thereinto, indicating the –

- (a) number of persons interrogated and/or arrested as at to date, and
- (b) actions taken, if any, to recover these loans, given that the said company has already initiated winding-up procedures.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I shall reply to Parliamentary Questions B/1178 and B/1181 together, as they relate to the same subject matter.

I am informed by the Financial Crimes Commission that a preliminary investigation was initiated on 10 February 2025 into loans granted by the State Bank (Mauritius) to Dhyanaavartam Ltd which is the operator of the Maradiva Hotels and Resorts Spa.

At the very outset, I am informed that the State Bank of Mauritius granted a loan of Rs1.4 billion to Dhyanaavartam Ltd and a further loan of Rs1.65 billion was again given to them by the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd. Hence, as at 30 September 2025, the loans extended by the two entities to Dhyanaavartam Ltd amount to approximately Rs3.1 billion. The collateral held against the loans is both in terms of fixed charges and floating charges.

I am further informed that the Financial Crimes Commission is currently investigating into the matter. So far, 48 statements have been taken from 27 witnesses and 13 interrogations have been conducted with 7 suspects. On 18 June 2025, the Financial Crimes Commission proceeded with the arrest of Mr Premchand Mungur, former Chief Executive Officer of State Bank (Mauritius) Ltd and provisionally charged him for an offence of fraud by abuse of position in breach of section 43 of the Financial Crimes Commission Act. On 03 December 2025, Mr Mungur was arrested again and provisionally charged for an offence of conspiracy in breach of section 48 of the Financial Crimes Commission Act, respectively. On the same day, the Financial Crimes Commission also proceeded with the arrest of Sanjiv Kailash Ramdanee for an offence of conspiracy in breach of Section 48 of the Financial Crimes Commission Act.

I am further informed, Madam Speaker, that no recovery action has been initiated since the loan facilities are inscribed against the asset of the company. The State Bank has a first ranked charge over the asset. As the House is aware, there is ongoing inquiry on this matter, therefore, I cannot give other information.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Mr Jhummun.

Mr Jhummun: Thank you, Madam. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether, the former Chairman of the SBM Holdings, Mr Sattar Hajee Abdoula, has been interrogated as he has been dealing with such toxic loans?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware of who is being interrogated but the inquiry is ongoing.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Yes, Mr Beejan, because both questions were taken together.

Mr Beejan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House what was the purpose for which the loans were contracted?

The Prime Minister: I am not sure. It so happens that they were huge loans. What was the purpose? I cannot say at this point.

Madam Speaker: Another one, yes.

Mr Beejan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House what guarantee was submitted so that the loan be disbursed?

The Prime Minister: I did not go into the nitty-gritty because there is an inquiry going on, and I don't want to prejudice the inquiry.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. We will find out in due course.

Yes, now we have hon. Second Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle.

MAURITIAN RUPEE – STABILISATION – FOREIGN CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATE

(No. B/1179) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Mauritian Rupee, he will state whether same has stabilised over the past year having regard to the official exchange rate of same vis-à-vis the US Dollar and the Great Britain Pound compared to fluctuations in previous years, indicating whether the measures taken by the Bank of Mauritius have helped the economy, particularly, in relation to inflation, import costs and investor confidence compared to past periods of higher exchange-rate volatility.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, when this Government took office in November last, the forex market was in total chaos. The exchange rate of the Mauritian rupee was on a steeply declining slope, depreciating at a very rapid pace vis-à-vis all currencies, in particular against the US dollar, thus fuelling inflationary pressures in the

economy and rapidly eroding the purchasing power of the population. Madam Speaker, this is the situation that we have inherited.

In fact, from December 2014 to October 2024, the rupee depreciated, some say intentionally, by 46% against the US dollar and by 21% against the British Pound. To make matters worse, the previous government even indulged in money printing of over Rs180 billion purposely to give a false sense of prosperity to Mauritians. This has exacerbated the already excess liquidity situation in the banking system which, as we all know, further fuelled inflationary pressures.

It is no wonder, Madam Speaker, that consumer prices in Mauritius increased by a dramatic 43.3 percent from December 2014 to October 2024, and import prices went up by 63 percent. I think these figures speak for themselves.

The dramatic fall in the value of the Mauritian rupee has had profound and far-reaching adverse effects on our economy, affecting households, businesses, and overall confidence in the system.

One of our first priorities when we came into power was to correct that disastrous mismanagement of the previous government. The Bank of Mauritius has acted urgently to stabilise the value of the rupee and to curb inflationary pressures through its monetary policy.

The Bank of Mauritius adjusted its policy rate in February 2025. It also issued instructions to banks to ensure that forward transactions are priced in a fair manner and in accordance with market fundamentals. In addition, the Bank of Mauritius has sold USD 244 million on the market from November 2024 to 04 December 2025.

At the level of Government, we have supported the efforts to increase the supply of forex on the market by imposing that at least 85 percent of the proceeds from sales of villas under the Property Development Scheme should be paid in rupees.

Furthermore, as from this fiscal year, all businesses that receive at least 50 percent of their annual turnover in foreign currency are paying their tax in foreign currency. The Tourist Fee of 3 Euro per night per tourist effective as from 01 October this year is also generating additional foreign exchange for the country.

Madam Speaker, these measures have contributed to an improvement in the forex market conditions. I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that as from 03 January 2025 to 04 December 2025, the rupee has appreciated by 3.4 percent against the US dollar, whereas

during the same period, it actually depreciated by 5.5 percent. During the same period, the Bank of Mauritius has also successfully reduced the depreciating trend against the British Pound from 6 percent to 3.6 percent.

The measures taken to stabilise the exchange rate have contributed to a fall in headline inflation in Mauritius. Import prices have actually gone down by 4.4% between the third quarter of 2024 and the second quarter of 2025.

The headline inflation rate is estimated at 3.5 percent in November 2025, well within the target range of 2 to 5 percent.

Madam Speaker, it is clear today that the shift away from the previous regime's opacity, *ad-hoc* policymaking and excessive money-printing have restored a sense of predictability and discipline to our economic management. The rupee is now more stable. We have been able to reduce inflation, as I said, it stands at 3.5 percent this month. May I remind the House also that a number of amendments to the Statistics Act were introduced in the Finance Act 2025 so as to restore credibility and independence to Statistics Mauritius.

Our actions have brought the country back on a path of economic stability and investor confidence has been restored. But we still have a long way to go.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Now, hon. Babajee!

PRISONS DETAINEES – HIV CASES

(No. B/1180) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the prisons, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to the current number of detainees thereat, indicating the number thereof being –

- (a) women detainees, and
- (b) HIV positive, further indicating whether they –
 - (i) contracted same inside or outside the prisons, and
 - (ii) are under antivectorial treatment in line with the World Health Organisation Guidelines.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that, as at 04 December 2025, there was a total of 2,848 detainees in prisons.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am also informed that there are, presently, 214 female detainees in our prisons.

Regarding part (b) (i) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that there are 359 detainees who are HIV positive. Upon admission, all detainees undergo medical examination, which includes HIV testing. While some detainees are already aware of their HIV-positive status before their admission, others are diagnosed through the routine blood tests conducted on-site.

Regarding these 359 HIV infected detainees, all of them were already living with HIV prior to their coming into prison.

Madam Speaker, with respect to part (b) (ii) of the question, I presume that the hon. Member's question pertains to Antiretroviral Therapy (ART), which targets HIV viruses.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that detainees who are diagnosed with HIV are immediately placed under antiretroviral therapy. The treatment is provided in accordance with the guidelines of the World Health Organisation and national health protocols. The treatment is continuous and uninterrupted throughout detention, including during court appearances, hospital admissions, or transfers between prisons.

I am also informed that awareness and sensitisation campaigns on HIV are organised by the Mauritius Prisons Service in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Wellness, and the NGO Kinouété across all penal institutions throughout the year.

For instance, in the context of the World AIDS Day, which was observed on 01 December this year, a candlelight vigil was held at the Eastern High Security Prison, Melrose, in memory of those who passed away with HIV in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Babajee, is it alright?

Hon. Edouard, Fourth Member for Rodrigues!

DHYANAVARTAM LTD – SBM LOANS – INQUIRY STATUS

(No. B/1181) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether in regard to the inquiry initiated by the Financial Crimes Commission on the disbursement of loans by the State Bank of Mauritius after the year 2014 to Dhyonavartam Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/1178)

RODRIGUES – INCOME TAX & VAT REVENUE – THREE-YEAR OVERVIEW

(No. B/1182) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth 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 taxes, including Income Tax and Value Added Tax, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to the yearly quantum of revenue collected in Rodrigues in terms thereof over the past three financial years.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Mauritius Revenue Authority that over the past three financial years, the quantum of tax revenue collected by the Authority in Rodrigues were as follows –

- (a) Rs148.0 million in Financial Year 2022-2023;
- (b) Rs137.4 million in Financial Year 2023-2024, and
- (c) Rs156.6 million in Financial Year 2024-2025.

I am further informed that the income tax collected in Rodrigues amounted to –

- (a) Rs81.5 million in Financial Year 2022-2023;
- (b) Rs68.7 million in Financial Year 2023-2024, and
- (c) Rs78.6 million in Financial Year 2024-2025.

Regarding Value Added Tax, the following amounts were collected –

- (a) Rs64.8 million in Financial Year 2022-2023;
- (b) Rs67.3 million in Financial Year 2023-2024, and
- (c) Rs76.4 million in Financial Year 2024-2025.

Madam Speaker, although the tax collection in Rodrigues is Rs150 million on average annually, Government provides more financial resources for the economic and social development of Rodrigues. In fact, for the current financial year, the total resource allocated to Rodrigues amounts to Rs10.1 billion, of which –

- Rs5.78 billion of recurrent and capital grants to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly;
- Rs1 billion for construction of the new Runway at Plaine Corail;
- Rs340 million for the development of the water sector;
- Rs223 million for subsidy on ration rice, flour, LPG, petroleum products and cement, and
- Rs60 million for Land Drainage Projects.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

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

NATIONAL AGENCY FOR DRUG CONTROL – CANNABIS DEPENALISATION

(No. B/1183) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to cannabis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Agency for Drug Control, information as to whether consideration will be given to requesting the technical committee that will be set up to work on the depenalisation thereof to consider same for recreational use and, if not, why not.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Chief Executive Officer of the National Agency for Drug Control that the Drug Control Board, at its fourth meeting held on 16 October of this year, decided to set up a Technical Committee comprising experts in public health, the criminal justice system, fiscal policy, neuroscience, addiction medicine, harm reduction and representatives from the Ministry of Health and Wellness, to conduct a comprehensive review of the three proposed technical models on the regulation of cannabis, namely –

- Depenalisation;
- Decriminalisation, and
- Regulated Legalisation.

As part of its preparatory work, the Agency has initiated discussions with the UNODC and the WHO for Mauritius to benefit from specialised expertise and ensure that the review is fully aligned with global best practices and public health standards.

In parallel, consultations are being held with the Attorney General's Office to address the legal complexities associated with the three proposed models and to determine the precise legislative drafting requirements for any future implementation within the Mauritian legal framework.

Madam Speaker, the Technical Committee is planning to meet in January 2026 and will produce a legal brief outlining the domestic requirements and the international treaty compliance options for the regulation of cannabis. In parallel, from January to March 2026, an assessment of the public health impacts will be carried out to identify the most equitable and effective model.

It is expected that a draft blueprint and proposed administrative framework will be submitted by July 2026.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, why is it that the Technical Committee has been set up but that the Select Committee of Parliament which was promised by *Alliance du Changement* comprising Members of both sides of the House to assist, to give views, and to, of course, deliberate on the issues of the drug problem and to make recommendation to that entity. Why is it that this part has not been done and you have proceeded with the Technical Committee?

The Prime Minister: I believe that they wanted to have expert opinions first before addressing that issue with the Parliament.

Mr A. Duval: May I ask then, Madam Speaker, when will that Select Committee then see the light of day so that Members of Parliament can also participate in this national problem?

Madam Speaker: Yes!

The Prime Minister: That does not depend on me. It depends on when they will...

Madam Speaker: But you are not saying 'no'?

The Prime Minister: I am not saying no.

Madam Speaker: Yes, you are not saying 'no'. That's it.

Hon. Jhummun! Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac.

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, please!

Madam Speaker: I have already called the hon. Member.

Mr A. Duval: But, please.

Madam Speaker: Please, you cannot. I have already called the hon. Member. You had two supplementary questions.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS – BANK CHARGES, FEES & COLLATERAL SECURITIES – REVIEW

(No. B/1184) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the bank charges, fees and collateral securities regarding loans granted by financial institutions, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to –

- (a) when same were last reviewed, and
- (b) whether consideration will be given to aligning same to international norms and standards applicable in other jurisdictions.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that the fees, charges and commissions levied by banks are determined by these institutions themselves in the light of their business strategies, operational model, internal policies and risk assessments.

Nonetheless, as the regulator for the banking sector, the Bank of Mauritius closely monitors the fees, charges and commissions charged by its licensees to ensure that these are not inordinate. Whilst the banking market is driven by competition, the Bank of Mauritius also focuses on protecting customers of banking services against abuses.

In that regard, the Bank of Mauritius requires commercial banks to submit their schedule of fees, charges and commissions on a half-yearly basis to the central bank. With a view to enhancing transparency and enabling consumers of banking services to make informed choices, the Bank of Mauritius has made it mandatory for all banks to upload all information pertaining to fees and charges on their website and to affix these conspicuously

in all branches. The templates of all commercial banks are also published on the website of the Bank of Mauritius to enable customers to have a comparative view of all fees, charges and commissions charged by the banks.

Furthermore, banks are obligated to notify the Bank of Mauritius of any change effected in their fees, charges and commissions, in which case these changes and their impact are assessed to safeguard the interests of customers and the public. The last submission by commercial banks of their fees and charges template was made in July 2025.

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

I am also informed by the Bank of Mauritius that issues pertaining to fees, charges and commissions as well as improvements to be brought to customer service delivery are discussed with the Chief Executive Officers of all the commercial banks during its quarterly Banking Committee Meeting chaired by the Governor of the bank. The last such meeting was held on the 19 November of this year.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am further informed by the Bank of Mauritius that although there are no generally agreed international norms or standards relating to fees and charges levied by banks, the Bank of Mauritius will carry out a comprehensive study on these fees and charges and take appropriate actions, if deemed necessary.

Madam Speaker: Okay! Time is up!

Now, we have been advised that B/1186, B/1187, B/1192, and B/1193 have been withdrawn.

Now, we go to questions to other Ministers.

Hon. Fourth Member for Rodrigues, Mr J. Edouard. Is that right? You are not with me?

Your questions to hon. Ministers! We are doing questions to hon. Ministers. Am I wrong?

Mr Edouard: Excuse me, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: It happens to me as well, hon. Edouard. Do not worry!

RODRIGUES – EDUCATIONAL REFORM PROPOSAL – STATUS

(No. B/1196) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the proposed implementation of education reform in Rodrigues, he will state where matters stand concerning the issue of –

- (a) national colleges;
- (b) proposed abolition of mixity in schools, and
- (c) change of educational stream in case of repeated failures.

Dr. Gungapersad: Madam Speaker, following the “*Assises de l'Education et des Ressources humaines*” held in Mauritius and Rodrigues in April and May 2025, respectively.

My Ministry is in the process of developing a strategic plan, blueprint, for the transformation of the education sector for the Republic of Mauritius. The views and proposals shared by stakeholders during the “*Assises de l'Education*” as well as the specificities of Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agaléga have been duly taken into account in the drafting of the document.

Madam Speaker, in Rodrigues the eight existing secondary schools admit student to grade 7 based on –

1. Grade aggregate obtained by the candidate in the PSAC assessment;
2. Parental choice;
3. Distance between the residence of the candidate and the school allocated, and
4. Availability of seats.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the hon. Member that my Ministry will together with the Commissioner for Education of Rodrigues, examine the possibility of including one or more schools as National Secondary Schools for Rodrigues.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the hon. Member that during the “*Assises de l'Education et des Ressources humaines*” held in Rodrigues in May 2025, the proposal to abolish co-education was not raised by stakeholders. In fact, learners in Rodrigues are accustomed to co-education right from pre-primary to secondary level. My Ministry will consult the Commission for Education for Rodrigues and other Rodriguan stakeholders during the ongoing discussions in the context of the upcoming transformation in the education sector.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (c) of the question, I wish to inform the hon. Member that my Ministry is examining the modalities of allowing students from the regular streams who have repeatedly not succeeded in the lower secondary classes to join the Foundation Programme in Literacy, Numeracy and Skills subject to the consent of the responsible parties.

As regards those students who are experiencing difficulties at mid-lower secondary level, they are encouraged to explore other sectors of education which would be better adapted to their competencies. In fact, the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD) offers several courses to students who have completed three years post-primary schooling including those who are below 16 years old.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes!

Mr Edouard: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. Minister for his reply. Will the hon. Minister consider the improvement of the courses run at MITD so as to cater for what he has just said regarding the repeated failures?

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, hon. Member, during the “*Assises de l’Éducation et des Ressources humaines*” held in Rodrigues proposals were made and MITD has taken good note of it and soon these will be implemented.

Madam Speaker: Yes, are you okay? Next question is from the hon. Second Member for Rodrigues, hon. François!

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/1197) Mr F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Sustainable Development Goals, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation thereof, indicating whether consideration will be given for the establishment of a Sustainable Development Goals Committee within our National Assembly.

Mr Ramful: Madam Speaker, it may be recalled that in 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a framework built around 17 Sustainable Development Goals designed to drive economic, social and environmental progress. Mauritius is fully committed to its global agenda and continues to implement it through a coordinated national approach. To ensure coherence across Government, the Sustainable Development Unit was established within the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs in January 2021. The Unit oversees interministerial coordination through designated SDG focal points, supports national reporting processes and guides the monitoring of timelines and commitments.

In parallel, Madam Speaker, Statistics Mauritius has developed a comprehensive national SDG database which serves as a single publicly accessible platform for indicators and strengthens the foundations of evidence-based policy making. Mauritius presented its first voluntary national review in 2019 and its second in July 2024 before the High-Level Political Forum in New York. The 2024 review, *inter alia*, identified challenges, notably the need to expand access to grants and concessional financing for climate action and call for stronger international partnerships. According to the 2025 Sustainable Development Report, Mauritius achieved an SDG Index Score of 70.3, well above the regional average and ranked 76 out of 167 countries. Significant progress has been made in poverty eradication, innovation, infrastructure development, financial inclusion and digital connectivity. A positive spill-over score of 75.13 further demonstrates that Mauritius contributes more positive than negative impacts to global sustainable development.

To accelerate implementation, Mauritius and the United Nations signed the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2024-2028, the joint steering committee of the SDCF co-chaired by myself and the UN President Coordinator ensures oversight and alignment with national priorities. Its three thematic results groups, people, prosperity and planet are fully aligned with the Government Programme 2025-2029. The meeting of the SDFC joint steering committee held in October 2025, was an opportunity to take stock of progress made, as well as providing guidance to the results groups.

Financing remains at the heart of the SDG implementation. While domestic resources form the backbone of development efforts, we continue to mobilise international partnerships. Global initiatives including the Sevilla Commitment and the Doha Political Declaration reinforce international commitments to support a climate action, sustainable finance and poverty reduction. Mauritius is also working with the UN Economic Commission for Africa to adopt the integrated planning and reporting toolkit which align national strategies with the SDGs and Agenda 2063, strengthen coordination and facilitate automated reporting.

As regards the second part of the question, my Ministry also recognises the Interparliamentary Union's call for parliaments to institutionalise oversight of the 2030

Agenda. Establishing an SDG Committee within the National Assembly would reflect global best practice and reinforce accountability. Accordingly, we propose initiating consultations to explore its establishment according to the Standing Orders and of course, subject to the consent of the Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Yes, I was thinking this would be more for me than for the Minister...

Mr Ramful: Yes, of course.

Madam Speaker: ...but it is very good. Maybe you should remember that we are already dealing with SDG 5 in the Gender Caucus.

Mr Ramful: Okay.

Mr François: Yes, this is why you have the Gender Caucus.

Madam Speaker: Of course, but it is a tall order, Mr François. We hear you. Okay, now next question is hon. Beejan. Yes?

CONSTITUENCY NO. 6 – OUTDOOR CHILDREN PLAYGROUNDS – MAINTENANCE & SAFETY

(No. B/1198) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to outdoor children playgrounds in Constituency No. 6, he will table the list thereof, indicating in each case –

- (a) whether the equipment or infrastructure thereat require maintenance or repair;
- (b) when comprehensive maintenance work was last carried out;
- (c) the measures taken or planned to ensure safety and security in terms of installation, repair, lighting and fencing, and
- (d) whether consideration is being given for the installation of a new one in St-François and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, I wish to point out that Constituency No. 6, Grand Baie and Poudre d’Or falls under the jurisdiction of two District Councils, that is, the District Council of Pamplemousses and the District Council of Rivière du Rempart. I am informed that there is a total of 11 children’ playgrounds in Constituency No. 6, out of which, ten fall under the aegis of the District Council of Rivière du Rempart and one under the District Council of Pamplemousses. As requested by the hon. Member, I am tabling a list of the

children' playgrounds under the responsibility of the each of the two District Councils and the relevant details thereof with respect to part (a), (b) and (c) of the question.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (d) of the question, I am informed that at its meeting of 14 October 2022, the Council of Rivière du Rempart had identified a site for the construction of a mini soccer pitch in the region of St François on a plot of State land of an extent of 3,600 m² situated at the entrance of the road leading to Anse La Raie Youth Centre. However, I am now informed that the District Councillors have now decided to set up a children playground thereat. Same will be taken up in the next council meeting scheduled on 19 December 2025. Subsequently, a request for vesting of the said plot of land will be made to my Ministry.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes, alright one question. Yes?

Mr Beejan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Minister inform the House if there is a long-term strategy for play infrastructure in my Constituency No. 6 to ensure fair distribution, accessibility for children with disabilities and renewal of equipment? Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, we are considering all the children play equipment with accessibility to children with disabilities.

Madam Speaker: Yes, next question, hon. Apollon!

MAHEBOURG MARKET FAIR – PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/1199) 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.

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, with regard to the proposed construction of the market fair near youth centre in Mahebourg, I wish to inform the House that the original project has not been pursued following the termination of the contractor's contract in January 2023 and the subsequent arbitration process.

After the reassessment in March 2025, it was decided not to proceed with the market fair on that site. Instead, Government intends to develop a multipurpose complex there, but

this project has been deferred to the next financial year. As for the market fair itself, it has already been relocated to the Mahebourg market which has been extended to accommodate 206 stalls. Construction works for this extension have been completed and the market fair has been operational since May 2025. Accordingly, there is no completion date for the market fair at the youth centre site as the project is no longer being implemented.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes?

Mr Apollon: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The drugs problem in Mahebourg is affecting the youths of the locality and the construction of this gymnasium will provide more facilities for our youths to practice sports. Will the hon. Minister give this project a priority and get the necessary clearance from the Ministry of Finance for the next year?

Mr Woochit: Sure, Madam Speaker, we will still find a solution for the next financial year. As I said, it has been deferred for the next financial year.

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

NATIONAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION EXAMINATIONS 2025 – EXTENDED PROGRAMME – FAILURE RATE

(No. B/1200) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the 2025 National Certificate of Education Examinations, he will state the percentage failure rate of the school children following the Extended Programme having sat therefor, giving the reasons therefor.

Dr. Gungapersad: Madam Speaker, the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate has released the results of the National Certificate of Education Examinations 2025 on 2 December 2025. A total of 15,047 school candidates comprising both mainstream and Extended Programme students were examined for the NCE examinations which were conducted from 22 September to 16 October 2025. Out of the 15,047 candidates, 1,460 are from the Grade 9+ Extended Programme.

Madam Speaker, with regard to the Grade 9+, that is, the Extended Programme, I am informed that only 78 out 1,460 students who were examined, met the requirements and were

awarded the NCE. I have noted with much sadness that out of these 1,460 students, 1,382 did not succeed, representing a staggering failure rate of 94.7%.

These students are left without any results or certificate to bank upon to pursue their education afterwards. Therefore, asking these students of the Extended Programme, on the mission to attempt the NCE, was not fair to them.

Madam Speaker, this year's failure rate for the Extended Programme, unfortunately, does not come as a surprise. If we look at the previous years, the failure rate has ranged between 92-97%, demonstrating a persistent and alarming trend. It is clear, therefore, that the Extended Programme has failed lamentably to deliver. The previous government was well-aware of this situation, but was driven by political pride and unwillingness to acknowledge the Extended Programme's deficiencies. They did not take the required remedial measures, much to the detriment of our students.

Madam Speaker, let me refer to the Mid Term Evaluation of the Extended Programme 2018-2019 by the World Bank and the Ministry of Education and Human Resource. Let me quote from the report –

“At the end of primary, the majority of EP [Extended Programme] students failed to reach to minimum requirements in English, French and Mathematics, with most students not obtaining the minimum score of 30 required in the PSAC assessment. More than half of these Extended Programme students come from low socio-economic background, from families with limited educational achievement and unstable families.”

The report also refers to the curriculum which was not adapted to the needs of these children. The report highlights the need to focus on life skills and basic literacy and numeracy during the foundation years and beyond.

Madam Speaker, this is what we did when we came with the Foundation Programme which answers to the multiple needs of these children. While the self-esteem of these children is respected, they are being supported so that they acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills, life skills and values which will help them in life. In some cases, Madam Speaker, underlying learning difficulties such as dyslexia or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder may go undiagnosed and unsupported, further affecting performance.

Madam Speaker, our government, since its assumption of office, has taken the decision that this year's cohort of Extended Programme having sat for the NCE Examination is the last one. The students who have failed will not be abandoned. Government has already put in place necessary support measures to ensure that they have a viable pathway for their future.

Madam Speaker, indeed, as from January 2025, the Extended Programme was replaced by the Foundation Programme for Literacy, Numeracy and Skills for Grades 7, 8 and 9 students. The FPLNS is competency-based and provides a more adapted approach students who are otherwise disadvantaged by the traditional academic approach.

At the end of three-year Foundation Programme for Literacy, Numeracy and Skills, successful students will be awarded a certificate, the National Foundation Certificate of Education, which is pitched at Level 2 of the National Qualifications Framework. The certificate will enable them to enrol on a specialised NC3 courses at MITD training centres. However, the students who do not achieve the minimum requirements of the NFCE can enrol on a specialised NC2 courses at the MITD training centres.

Madam Speaker, let me repeat it again, the Extended Programme has been a failure because the previous government did not recognise the different types of learners that we have in the education system. And that is why it was important to provide them with different educational pathways that meet their needs. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Your question now!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the Extended Programme was called at a time, in 2023, when the...

Madam Speaker: No statement!

Mr A. Duval: It is not a statement. I will refresh the memory of the hon. Minister. It is a crime against children, and he agrees. I want to clarify the important part of his answer that says that those who have failed – the 95% who have failed – will be given vocational training. I want to clarify whether they have a guaranteed seat at the MITD or any other vocational training centre, as well as those children in Grade 8, the other thousands of children, who are also going to face the same difficulties today?

Madam Speaker: Is that what you said?

Dr. Gungapersad: Yes. Rest assured, hon. Member, that students will get a seat in those training centres.

Mr A. Duval: Can I ask the second question?

Madam Speaker: Yes, second question!

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, the MITD has had a bottleneck issue with lack of capacity in the past before being able to take onboard the thousands of children which the Minister now plans. May we know from the Minister the plans that have been implemented, and if he can give us the numbers? Is it 12,000 children under the EP now? How many children are now undergoing the EP and will they all be guaranteed a place?

Dr. Gungapersad: Hon. Member, apart from the MITD, it is good that you take note that there will be the ITET also which will cater for the needs of these students, depending upon the wish of the students as to what they want to do when they reach that level. It will depend on what they want to do, either at the MITD or ITET.

Mr A. Duval: And the number?

Dr. Gungapersad: I cannot give you the number at this level.

Madam Speaker: Not immediately.

Mr A. Duval: May I clarify? The number of children currently in Grade 8 and the 1,500. The total that are in the Extended Programme that will be doing their NCE exams under the old system.

Dr. Gungapersad: From memory, I can tell you it is around 2,000 per year. They seek admission in those centres, but Grade 8 has the possibility to continue with the Foundation Programme next year. That is, in Grade 9, they are continuing with the Foundation Programme whereby they are being prepared in skills development so that after one year, that is, after Grade 9, they will apply for either MITD or ITET.

Madam Speaker: When you say skills, do you also include life skills?

Dr. Gungapersad: Yes, one of the components of the Foundation Programme, Madam Speaker, is life skills.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Yes, hon. Beechook!

Mr Beechook: *Madame la présidente*, I wish to congratulate the Minister for having replaced *cette boucherie, cet abattoir qui était* l'Extended Programme.

In line with the answer by the Minister, I wish to know what is being envisaged to tackle what is considered as the backward socio-economic factors that are affecting the education of the kids? Secondly, is there any mechanism that is being put in place so that we can detect the learning disabilities earlier instead of waiting for the NCE exams?

Dr. Gungapersad: I referred earlier to the Mid Term Report on Extended Programme, and that is what the previous government did not do, hon. Member. One of the requirements was to involve parents in the education of their children. Secondly, they said it is important to have a curriculum which is adapted to their needs. Thirdly, they said it is important to have proper teacher training in order to provide proper education for the students. Fourthly, they asked to review the class size. So, all these things are being taken care of with these kids now.

Madam Speaker: *Ok, Monsieur Beechook?* Very good question!

If I am not mistaken, hon. Apollon!

PUBLIC SCHOOLS (CLOSED) – DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

(No. B/1201) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the public schools, he will give the list thereof which are currently closed and those which will not be enrolling students for the 2026 intake, indicating in each case, the project, if any, earmarked for implementation thereat.

Dr. Gungapersad: Madam Speaker, I am informed that there are 17 public schools, 11 primary schools and six secondary schools, which have been closed down as from 2002 onwards. I am tabling a list thereof.

Out of the 17 schools, the following four schools which have been closed after the Academic Year 2025 will not be enrolling students for the 2026 intake –

- (i) Riche en Eau Government School where we have only 19 students, including eight Special Education Needs students;
- (ii) Marcel Cabon SSS where there are only 97 students;
- (iii) Sebastopol SSS where there are only 105 students, and
- (iv) Port-Louis North SSS where we have 165 students.

The students concerned have been relocated to neighbouring schools.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed that most of the closed schools have been converted into Mauritius Institute of Training and Development Training Centres and SEN schools, as indicated in the table being laid.

Additionally, the Economic Development Board (EDB) has requested my Ministry to submit the list of Government Schools which have been closed and which are currently unused. The EDB intends to assess the suitability of these unused buildings for conversion into revenue generating projects. The request is under consideration at the level of my Ministry.

Madam Speaker: You are tabling that!

Dr. Gungapersad: Yes!

Madam Speaker: Very good!

Yes, next question, hon. Dr. Prayag!

BOIS MARCHAND HIGHWAY – PERMANENT BARRIERS & STREET LIGHTING

(No. B/1202) Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the Bois Marchand Highway, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to whether consideration will be given for the installation of solid and permanent barriers along same with a view to preventing pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists from dangerously crossing same, to reduce risks of fatal accidents and provision of additional street lighting along that specific stretch thereof.

Mr Gunness: Madam Speaker, the Road Development Authority is responsible for the construction, care, maintenance and improvement of motorways and main roads. The stretch

of motorway M2 linking the Terre Rouge Flyover to the Calebasses interchange is a dual carriage way segment that passes through the region of Bois Marchand. Along this section of the motorway, the north bound carriage way runs alongside the Bois Marchand Cemetery while the south bound carriage way borders both the Cemetery and the Bois Marchand Village. A pedestrian footbridge has been provided for safe crossing. The central verge, separating the two carriage ways is approximately three meters wide and consist of a turf area with low decorative shrubs.

Madam Speaker, I am informed by the hon. Minister of Land Transport that a road crash analysis was carried out along the stretch of motorway M2 at Bois Marchand, using the Internet Micro-Computer Accident Analysis Package Software. Over the past five years, a total of twelve accidents have been recorded along this section. Among those, one resulted in a fatality, three resulted in serious injuries and twelve resulted in slight injuries. Most of the accidents involved pedestrians and two-wheelers. According to police reports, the accidents occurred mainly during dark hours and were attributed to unsafe road crossing behaviour, the absence of street lighting and the lack of safety fencing along the central reservation.

I am further informed by the RDA that from an engineering stand point, this section of the motorway is equipped with adequate safeguards. However, it has been observed that some persons are engaged in unsafe practices by crossing the motorway illegally, despite the availability of pedestrian footbridge. This behaviour poses significant risk to pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and motorists alike.

In order to address the above issues, I have directed the RDA to carry out a joint site visit with the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, the police and the relevant local authorities to assess the situation on site and identify the most appropriate mitigation measures and long-term solutions. In the meantime, I requested the police to reinforce surveillance and enforcement under the Road Traffic Act in the area to deter unsafe crossing practices.

Madam Speaker, as regards street lighting along this stretch, the RDA has informed that responsibility for street lighting on existing roads falls under the local authorities. I am further informed that as per established procedure, street lightings installed by the RDA along motorways, is subsequently handed over to the relevant local authority for maintenance which is normally carried out by the CEB under an existing Memorandum of Understanding.

I will take up the matter with my colleague the hon. Minister of Local Government so that the need for further lighting along the stretch may be considered.

Madam Speaker, the RDA also intends to progressively replace the existing street lighting by solar street lighting along motorway M1 from Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport to La Vigie. The project will be implemented in phases: with the first phase covering the section from the airport to the Gros Bois roundabout. Financial clearance for phase 1 has already been sought for the replacement of the existing grid connected street lighting by solar street lighting.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Dr. Prayag!

Dr. Prayag: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wish to thank the hon. Minister for his reply. Can the hon. Minister just take into consideration the fact that many people tend to cross the road there, and they don't go through accidents and this is quite a serious happening, maybe it will help during the conversation with the Ministry of the Local Government? Thank you.

Mr Gunness: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member will be invited for the site meeting where there will be the police, the RDA and the TMRSU and we'll rely on his contribution to see mitigation measures.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Now, the next question B/1203 has been withdrawn.

Now, I will ask First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue, Ms Savabaddy!

KREOL MORISIEN – SECONDARY SCHOOLS – NCE & SC EXAMINATIONS – EDUCATORS

(No. B/1203) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether in regard to the Kreol Morisien, he will state –

- (a) the number of secondary schools currently offering same as a subject from Grade 7 onwards, indicating the number of teachers thereof currently registered;

- (b) whether there are institutions where students sat for the Grade 9 National Certificate of Education Examinations or the Cambridge School Certificate Examinations without having a designated educator in relation thereto, and
- (c) whether the Ministry has recently recruited educators to teach same in secondary schools and, if not, whether it intends to do so.

(Withdrawn)

JOHN BRODIE STREET, BATTERIE CASSÉE – WWMA SEWERAGE NETWORK WORKS – TIME FRAME

(No. B/1204) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the John Brodie Street, in Batterie Cassée, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to whether consideration will be given for needful to be done for the connection to the sewerage network of households thereat which are not yet connected thereto and, if so, indicate the expected timeframe therefor.

Mr Assirvaden: Madame la présidente, la *WMA* m'informe que Batterie Cassée, faisant parti de Roche Bois et constitue une zone résidentielle d'environ 800 maisons dont la plupart sont raccordées au réseau d'égout construit en 1983.

En ce qui concerne la rue John Brodie, j'ai également appris qu'il y a environ 23 maisons dont 16 sont raccordées au réseau d'égout et sept ne le sont pas. Pour raccorder les sept maisons restantes au réseau d'égout, il est nécessaire de prolonger de 105 m le réseau d'égout de rue.

Madame la présidente, la *WMA* réalise actuellement une étude détaillée afin de déterminer les exigences techniques exactes pour le raccordement des ménages concernés et les travaux seront mis en œuvre dans le cadre du prochain projet pour l'extension des réseaux d'égouts dont le début est prévu aux alentours de février 2026.

Madam Speaker: Oui, allez-y !

Ms Savabaddy: Merci, Madame. L'honorable ministre peut-il confirmer si des mesures seront prises également à Batterie Cassée pour les autres rues comme Baxipea 1 et 2 ?

Mr Assirvaden : Non, je n'ai pas ces renseignements-là. Vous m'avez posé la question sur la rue...

Ms Savabaddy: Ce sont les rues avoisinantes !

Mr Assirvaden : La rue John Brodie. Donc, malheureusement, Madame la présidente, j'ai des renseignements que pour John Brodie et revenez avec les autres Brodie et je vais voir ce que je peux faire.

Ms Savabaddy: ... et la rue avoisinante. Merci.

Madam Speaker : Non, sûrement vous pouvez faire ça en attendant.

Mr Assirvaden : Oui, je vais chercher certainement.

Madam Speaker : Il faut demander, pas besoin. Elle ne pourra pas attendre l'année prochaine.

Mr Assirvaden : Il y a pas mal de Brodie à...

Ms Savabaddy: Parce que tu n'as rien fait ...

Madam Speaker: Mademoiselle, we do not speak from a sitting position.

(Interruptions)

Ms Savabaddy: Hypocrite !

Madam Speaker: Incroyable ! Je ne peux plus rien dire moi. Tout le monde discute ; on se bagarre, on ne se bagarre pas, enfin bref !

Hon. Lukeeram, you will have the last question for this morning.

MAURITIUS SPORTS COUNCIL – FOOTBALL ACADEMY – 7 TO 17 YEARS OLD – WAIVER OF FEES PAYABLE

(No. B/1205) Mr C. Lukeeram (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the football academy for kids between 7 to 17 years old, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether consideration will be given for the waiver of the fees payable to the Mauritius Sports Council for the training sessions.

Mr Nagalingum: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for this question which gives me an opportunity to clarify the situation regarding the use of facilities under the purview of the Mauritius Sports Council by football academies, especially for young people aged 7 to 17.

Madam Speaker, the football academies referred to in the question, are for the most part private initiatives operating independently of my Ministry. Madam Speaker, I am informed that only one private academy, the Mahebourg Fire Academy, is presently making use of the facilities of the Mauritius Sports Council for its training sessions.

With regard to the fees payable, I wish to reassure the House that the Mauritius Sports Council does not charge any rental fees at all for the training session of this academy. The only cost that arises is overtime for handy workers and that applies only when the academy uses the ground outside normal operating hours.

I am informed that the rate varies, depending on the grade of the officer and whether the activities are held on week days or weekend. Therefore, Madam Speaker, the question of waiving rental fees does not arise because there are no rental fees being charged in the first place.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Mr Lukeeram!

Mr Lukeeram: Thank you, hon. Minister. Could the hon. Minister inform the House whether he would consider waiving the user fees?

Mr Nagalingum: Madam Speaker, since assuming office, I have always thought to democratise access to our sports facilities. However, today in the light of the State-of-the-Economy, the Ministry of Finance has opined that waiving of users' fees will have an adverse impact on revenue generating capacity and be counterproductive to fiscal consolidation. The payment of fees, even minimum, develop a sense of belongingness while using the sport facilities and help to sensitise users towards a proper behaviour in the use of public infrastructure.

In addition, the revenue being generated contributes towards the maintenance of the sports infrastructure.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Mr Juman! Welcome back!

Mr Juman: Merci, Madame la présidente. Je peux demander à l'honorable ministre si dans le processus de promouvoir le football si ce n'est pas nécessaire, un must, pour exempter les écoles de foot de tous les frais ? Pour promouvoir le football, c'est un must !

Madam Speaker: Les écoles de foot !

Mr Nagalingum: I am glad that the hon. Member asked that question because like I just replied, I made a demand to the Ministry of Finance but, unfortunately, with the State-of-the-Economy, we cannot do that for the time being, probably the next budget, we are going to see.

Madam Speaker: Ce n'est pas lui qui décide. Vous voyez.

Hon. Members, we are going to break in a minute. May I tell you that I have been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/1176, B/1208, B/1214, B/1215, B/1219, B/1224, B/1229, B/1232.

Now we break. Now we can chat. Now we break until a little bit after 2.30 p.m.

At 1.03 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.37 p.m., with Madam Speaker on the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Please be seated.

Hon. Second Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle.

RIVIÈRE DES CRÉOLES COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE – DENTAL SERVICES

(No. B/1206) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the Rivière des Créoles Community Health Centre located in the Rivière des Créoles Multipurpose Complex, he will state whether consideration will be given for the re-opening thereof for the provision of dental services at least twice a week, indicating the steps being envisaged to ensure continuity and accessibility of essential oral healthcare to those currently facing hardships due to the absence of local dental facilities.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, the accessibility of oral health services is undeniably important. I am informed that the dental clinic at Rivière des Créoles was originally operating twice a week, providing preventive and basic curative oral health services including checkups, extractions, fillings, scaling, hygiene advice and treatment of dental emergencies that did not require referral to hospitals to inhabitants residing at Rivière des Créoles and surrounding villages. However, since 06 October 2025, the dental clinic is operating only on Thursdays.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed that this temporary measure is due to shortage of dental assistants and attendants averaging to 100 patients per month at the dental clinic. As such patients requiring urgent dental care such as severe pain, infection, trauma, are immediately referred to the dental clinic at Mahebourg which operates on a full-time basis and is equipped to handle emergencies.

Moreover, the Ministry has already initiated actions to report 14 vacancies for dental assistant to the Public Service Commission. Once the recruitment exercise is completed by the PSC, more dental assistants will be available at my Ministry and who will be deployed in different dental clinics including Rivière des Créoles Dental Clinic. This will ensure that the dental clinic at Rivière des Créoles operates twice a week as before.

Madam Speaker: Hon. First Member for Port-Louis North and Montagne Longue.

EDUCATIONAL REFORM – ABOLITION OF MIXITY/CO-EDUCATION – PUBLIC & PRIVATE SCHOOLS

(No. B/1207) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the proposed reform of the educational sector, he will state the rationale behind the decision to abolish mixity or co-education in public schools and whether same shall equally apply to the private sector.

Dr. Gungapersad: Madam Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. Member for this question which will allow me, albeit, briefly to clarify a few misunderstandings.

At the outset, I wish to inform the House that no final decision has been taken regarding the abolition of mixity. The blueprint of this government will be the reflection of stakeholders' input, not a single person's decision. The merit of the forthcoming blueprint is based on consultations held during *les Assises de l'Éducation* in April 2025 in Mauritius and in May in Rodrigues. The interministerial committee comprising hon. Gunness, hon. Ms Navarre-Marie, hon. Dr. Sukon, hon. Subron, and hon. Pentiah also went through the draft proposals of the forthcoming blueprint and they made valuable contributions.

Madam Speaker, during *les Assises de l'Éducation* held in April 2025 in Mauritius, many stakeholders showed their concern regarding the model of mixity in academies, with the exception of Mahatma Gandhi Institute. They highlighted the following –

1. The lack of consultation of the previous minister prior to taking this major decision;
2. The absence of pedagogical rationale behind converting the academies into mixed schools as from Grade 10;
3. The adaptation and school culture issues for students transiting from regional single-gender schools from Grade 7-9 to mixed school in Grade 10;
4. The numerous discipline-related issues which emerged in these academies after the transition to mixed-gender status, and
5. The drop in the relative academic performance of students in the academies.

Madam Speaker, my Ministry is carrying on a nationwide consultation exercise from 08 December 2025 to 20 January 2026 to gauge public views on the issue of mixity and mode of admission in secondary schools. I seize this opportunity to invite everyone who wishes to contribute their views on mixity and the two options. Technicians of my Ministry will be meeting with stakeholders and there will be an online survey as well to gauge public opinion.

The online survey will provide the technicians of my Ministry with valuable data, and I will inform the Cabinet about the ultimate findings of this survey. Madam Speaker, we do not want to rush with the blueprint. We do not want to impose anything which may affect the children of our republic. We believe in consultations with all stakeholders, and we are here to listen to stakeholders. Their valuable views will be taken onboard. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Ms Savabaddy!

Ms Savabaddy: Thank you, Madam Speaker. *Puis-je suggérer à l'honorable ministre que cette question d'abolir ou non la mixité devrait être discutée avec les parents et les étudiants pour obtenir leurs réactions avant d'aller de l'avant ? Et aussi, si c'est possible, will the backbenchers be invited for consultations. Thank you.*

Dr. Gungapersad: Yes. Regarding parents and students, it will take place in January. Regarding students, the School Prefect and the Student Council will be taken onboard and the PTA as well. That will take part in January. Regarding backbenchers, you are most welcome. Even backbenchers of the Opposition will be invited to share their views.

(Interruptions)

He will pass on the message to the others, DPM, I hope, so that they can contribute their views. It will be online. If you want to have consultation with the technicians of the Ministry, you are most welcome. You are invited for that. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, if I may. As Chairperson of the Parliamentary Gender Caucus, I am telling hon. Ms Savabaddy – we have just discussed with the Chief Whip –, we are going to take this issue onboard also because it is a very important issue concerning boys and girls.

It is a very long debate. There has been a lot of research that has been done worldwide on this issue. So, maybe we can do it also at our level. It is a very important issue. You said something about, I do not remember, but are girls doing worse or doing better in co-education schools? That is what we want to know.

Dr. Gungapersad: No, I did not pronounce on that. If you want, Madam Speaker, we noted in academies which were formerly girl schools, when boys joined there, so far, we did not have any...

Madam Speaker: We did not have?

Dr. Gungapersad: We did not have any laureates so far. It is something which we are owed excellent performance, but there has discipline related issues.

Madam Speaker: *Laureate*, ce n'est pas la fin du monde.

Dr. Gungapersad: Discipline related issues have been noted. We are going to discuss, and your valuable input is most welcome.

Madam Speaker: I went to a girl school. It is a very important issue. I am sure everybody will want to talk about it. Do you have a question, hon. Ms Savabaddy?

The next question has been withdrawn.

Fourth Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue, Mr A. Duval!

DEUX FRÈRES TO ROSE-BELLE – COASTAL AREA – BUS SERVICES

(No. B/1208) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the southeastern coastal area from Deux Frères to Rose-Belle and/or the centre of the island through Bambous Virieux, Grand Port and Ferney, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land

Transport Authority, information as to whether bus services are operational along same and, if not, indicate whether consideration will be given therefor.

(Withdrawn)

MSAW – UNREGISTERED DOGS & SHELTER CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/1209) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port-Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to dogs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare, information as to –

- (a) the estimated number thereof which are unregistered as at to date, and
- (b) where matters stand as to the proposed construction of shelters therefor.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much. Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare that over the past two months following the coming into operation of section 31 (1) and 31 (3) of the Animal Welfare Act on 01 October 2025, 14,500 dogs have been registered which is more than double of the number of dogs registered throughout the year 2024 which stood only at 6,470.

I am further informed that the estimated number of dogs that are unregistered as at date is between 250,000 and 300,000. However, the House should know that the last dog population survey was carried out in 2013 by the Humane Society International. But those statistics are not reliable anymore.

In order to obtain an accurate and up-to-date estimate of the dog population, MSAW is initiating a comprehensive dog population survey using drones, for which, necessary clearances are being sought. This survey would provide detailed mapping of dog distribution in both urban and rural areas, identify dog packs and estimate population densities across different regions.

The information gathered through the registration process and the population survey will establish a reliable baseline for evidence-based policy making the planning of dog control measures a strategic intervention, including the prioritisation of shelter development. It will also reinforce efforts to effectively manage stray dogs' population and support targeted public awareness campaign on responsible dog ownership.

As regards part (b) of the question, my Ministry has initially identified land at Five Ways, Belle Rive, for the construction of an animal hospital and dog shelters. However,

following the state visit of the hon. Prime Minister to India from 09 to 16 September 2025, a grant of Rs2 billion was secured from the Government of India for the development of veterinary school and an animal hospital.

Consequently, the site at Five Ways has been repurposed for the implementation of the project. In parallel, the Ministry of Housing and Lands has also been requested to identify alternative and suitable plots of land within its jurisdiction for the establishment of dog shelters on a regionwide basis. The site to be identified should *inter alia* meet the following criteria –

- Availability of essential utilities, namely water and electricity;
- Accessibility to public transport with a maximum walking distance of 400m from the shelter, and
- A minimum setback of 500m from any residential area.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr A. Duval: Hon. Minister, first of all, only 5% of dogs have been registered despite the panic that was created with the abrupt fine. We have spoken about that last time in the House.

An hon. Member: *Pena panik la!*

Madam Speaker: Question!

Mr A. Duval: So, the campaign is not bearing the fruits that the Minister thought it would. May I ask the Minister, for the animal shelters, how many shelters will be built and operated by government?

Dr. Boolell: Madam Speaker, I will not comment on the figment of imagination of the hon. Member. Let me impress upon him that we doing our level best despite the resources which we have. I have to congratulate our friends from MSAW who are delivering.

Now, in relation to shelters identified, I have stated very clearly that the Ministry of Housing and Lands is identifying the site. We are working very closely with the Ministry of Housing and Lands. As matters stand, there are six existing sites. Three belong to the private sector and three belong to MSAW.

Having said so, Madam Speaker, we are putting our best endeavour to make sure to make things happen. Things are happening in a positive way. I would have expected our

friend to appreciate. I do not want to compare like with like, but he should have known what happened under the previous regime.

Mr A. Duval: May I ask the hon. Minister...

Madam Speaker: Question! Question!

Mr A. Duval: Yes, question! Twenty were promised. Now, we are talking about six. May I ask the hon. Minister, with regard to the registration again, the fees, which were a disaster, have been brought down from Rs500 to Rs350. The fact that there was only one registration centre and is now being devolved around the island, which should have been done at the outset.

An hon. Member: Question!

Mr A. Duval: All of that, Madam Speaker, therefore, equates...

Madam Speaker: You are not listening to whatever I have said before.

Mr A. Duval: Will the hon. Minister...

Madam Speaker: Put your question!

Mr A. Duval: Will the hon. Minister agree that the disastrous start of his campaign has led to these disastrous figures of 5% ...

(Interruptions)

... after two months of having panicked the island, people taking their dogs on public transport...

Madam Speaker: You are still putting a question? That long your question?

Mr A. Duval: The question has been put. Yes!

Madam Speaker, other Members have been making statements...

The Deputy Prime Minister: Now, he is judging your ...

Mr A. Duval: ... and you did not stop them.

Madam Speaker: I do not see the others?

Mr A. Duval: You do not see!

Madam Speaker: Are you again?

Mr A. Duval: You do not see! I think that is...

Madam Speaker: Are you once more saying that I only see one side? Are you once more criticising me?

Mr A. Duval: If I may, Madam Speaker, you said you did not see. I merely repeated what you said.

Madam Speaker: If I do not see...

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Twa kinn ...*

Madam Speaker: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister, please!

Mr A. Duval: Yes, stop him!

Madam Speaker: Let me deal with this.

If I do not see and I do not hear, what I want you to say now in this House: are you saying that I am not independent?

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, you said you did not see! I repeated that indeed you did not see. You said it.

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Fer foutan !*

Hon. Etwareea: Sit down boy!

Mr A. Duval: *Ki foutan?*

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Foutan... Imbécile!*

Mr A. Duval: *Twa to pa fer foutan twa?*

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, do you want to reply?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Imbécile!

Mr A. Duval: *Twa zis to lavwa ki marse.*

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *Sa 2-3 zour to ti laba la...*

Dr. Boolell: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member is a losing consent and he deserves to be treated with contempt.

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Kot li'nn tir pasians pou tou sa letan la ?*

Madam Speaker: I know, I know. I have not up to now done any case of contempt – the hon. Attorney General is not here –, including members of the press. I am being patient. I said, I would be independent. If people do not like the way I do it, I cannot do anything about it.

But I do not want to tolerate anybody doing loads of explanations. I can understand that you have to do a little bit but not that much. So, try and control yourself.

Mr A. Duval: May I, Madam Speaker, since it is directed ...

An hon. Member: No!

Madam Speaker: No, you cannot question my ruling and what I said.

Mr A. Duval: I am not questioning. You said last time that if I had any issue to raise...

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Get sa malelve la! Malelve!*

An hon. Member: Respect the Chair!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: You are talking in a sitting position. So was hon. Ms Savabaddy earlier on and I have told her, but you did not hear me.

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, may I? Since you asked last time to raise issues when they do arise.

Madam Speaker, my point being that other Members do make long statements. My statement was necessary, in my opinion, to give a certain...

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. He can't go on like that! I take a point of order.

Madam Speaker: You sit down!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Sit down! *Asize do bourik!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *Asize! Camaron!*

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister! Honestly, I am convinced that the hon. Member understands exactly what is going on...

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes!

Madam Speaker: ...and he is cultivating this way...

(Interruptions)

If you, on this side, you start getting into that game, it will never end. Let me deal with it.

You better keep quiet for the moment. You have asked your question, the hon. Minister has replied.

You have replied to the last question?

Dr. Boolell: Yes.

Madam Speaker: So, that is it.

The Deputy Prime Minister: No, Madam Speaker, I want to take a point of order.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

The Deputy Prime Minister: We do not object to him introducing a supplementary question, but he makes it a point to use provocative, insulting words every time he starts with a supplementary question. I think you should rule that out.

Mr A. Duval: Since when? Since when?

Madam Speaker: I do not want you to speak from a sitting position. This is the third time I am saying it. He is not the only one who does this by the way, and I...

This is the last sitting. This is the last ...

Mr A. Duval: May I, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: Let me speak!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Imbécile! *Bachara!*

Mr A. Duval: This he can say! This he can say! He can treat me of these words and you do not hear!

The Deputy Prime Minister: He is always provoking, Madam Speaker!

Mr A. Duval: And then, you are asking me if you are being one-sided? He can insult me like this and you will not interact? You will not intervene?

Madam Speaker: And you keep sitting...

(Interruptions)

Both of you...

Mr A. Duval: How can that be?

An hon. Member: He raised the question of point of order!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: I am going to raise the Sitting. I have had it. I am raising the Sitting. You sort it out between yourselves.

At 2.56 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 3.10 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: I am going to just call the next question.

If anybody will speak from a sitting position, I will raise again.

Hon. Dr. Ms Thannoo, please! Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka.

ELECTRICITY DEMAND – PEAK SUMMER SEASON – SOLAR SYSTEM KITS PROFIT CEILING

(No. B/1210) 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 to reduce reliance on the national grid.

Mr Assirvaden: Madame la présidente, la sécurité énergétique de l’approvisionnement en électricité demeure une priorité absolue pour ce gouvernement au même titre que la promotion des énergies renouvelables.

L’intégration d’installations solaires photovoltaïques constitue un élément essentiel de notre stratégie de décarbonation visant à atteindre 60% des énergies renouvelables d’ici 2035. Je suis informé, Madame la présidente, que l’imposition d’un plafond de profit – d’un cap – sur les kits photovoltaïques nécessite une analyse détaillée du marché, de la qualité des kits photovoltaïques et surtout de l’efficacité de ces appareils. Nous devons d’abord nous efforcer de mettre en place un système de standard qu’on n’a pas pour l’instant, des installateurs photovoltaïques, parce qu’on en trouve un peu partout, on a pas mal de plaintes aussi et

d'établir des normes minimales de performance énergétique pour ces kits, qu'on n'a pas pour l'instant. Il est essentiel que ces normes soient pleinement conformes aux spécifications techniques internationales afin de maintenir des standards de qualité élevés et de préserver surtout la stabilité de notre réseau électrique, parce que des petits consommateurs ici et là entrent sur notre réseau et ressortent sur notre réseau et cela crée de l'instabilité sur le réseau.

A cette fin, je peux dire que j'ai mis en place un comité composé du personnel de mon ministère, du ministère du Commerce, du CEB, de l'EEMO, l'Agence mauricienne d'énergie renouvelable, de la MARENA, de la gestion de l'efficacité énergétique afin d'étudier la possibilité pour un plafond de profits comme précisé dans la question de l'honorable membre sur les kits photovoltaïques dans le but d'encourager l'investissement dans ce secteur et de réduire la dépendance au réseau électrique national. Je voudrais préciser que personnellement je n'ai pas d'opinion arrêtée sur la question en ce qui concerne un plafond où libéraliser le marché.

Mais, Madame la présidente, avec votre permission, je souhaite informer la Chambre que j'ai l'intention prochainement de demander au Cabinet la permission de présenter un projet de loi dédié aux énergies renouvelables. Il est grand temps à mon avis, Madame la présidente, de mettre de l'ordre dans ce secteur. On l'a fait de façon amateur jusqu'ici, ici et là, essayant *pick and choose* dans ce secteur. De plus, il y a eu des retards accumulés qui nous mettent dans cette situation où on est aujourd'hui et nous avons aussi – il faut bien le préciser – sur beaucoup de toits, un vrai bazar. Je crois profondément au développement des énergies renouvelables et nos objectifs, comme je l'ai dit un peu plus tôt de 60%, mais ce développement doit se faire dans la discipline selon un cadre approprié et transparent. Nous le voyons chaque jour sur les réseaux, circulent des publicités encourageant le public à s'équiper en kit *solar*, alors même que certaines installations se font actuellement sans passer ni par le CEB, ni par les autorités compétentes.

On a déjà la MARENA, on a EEMO qui est pour l'efficacité énergétique, mais nous ne savons pas combien de kits sont installés, combien de batteries sont installées, ou s'ils sont connectés au réseau. C'est un peu le désordre. Il existe même des maisons – c'est bien de le dire – produisant leur propre électricité, stockant leur propre énergie dans des batteries hors de tout contrôle du système du CEB. Donc, ce n'est pas soutenable. Cela peut causer, on me l'a dit et je l'ai confirmé aussi – des dysfonctionnements sur le réseau, mettant en danger la vie de certaines personnes. C'est pourquoi il est indispensable de venir encadrer clairement

les *Home Solar Projects* comme on dit dans le jargon, l'agri-solar et les autres, ainsi que l'ensemble des initiatives du secteur privé. Voilà.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. Ms Thannoo do you have a question?

Dr. Ms Thannoo: Thank you. Are we going to have study about to what extent people are endangered when they are putting solar kits in their homes because at the end of the day, they are being self-reliant? Thank you.

(Interruptions)

I am sorry, I apologise. I think people are very much worried about the safety but they know that by investing in solar kits, they are doing the utmost to save energy and promote renewable energy. So, there is a lack of clarity about it at the moment. Thank you.

Mr Assirvaden: Je pense que l'honorable membre a raison. Certaines personnes manquent d'information. Nous poussons vers l'énergie renouvelable, nous voulons l'efficacité énergétique, mais l'encadrement n'est pas là. Le cadre légal n'est pas là. Bien souvent, les gens du CEB ont à intervenir sur des maisons, et c'est à ce moment-là qu'ils apprennent qu'il y a un *solar kit* sur la maison ou que cette maison est équipée de batteries. Je pense qu'avec le projet de loi qu'on amènera bientôt et le comité que j'ai en mis en place, à ce moment-là on pourra décider si on peut contrôler les profits. Mais, d'abord, il faudra que les standards soient sur place, que les installateurs soient formés, que les kits soient selon les standards internationaux. Donc, à ce moment-là on pourra aller dans cette direction.

Madam Speaker: Okay, Monsieur Beehook!

Mr Beehook: Merci, Madame la présidente. Est-ce que l'honorable ministre, dans le cadre de ce projet de loi, pourrait confirmer à la Chambre s'il y a la possibilité pour que son ministère mette en place un système de recyclage de ces batteries qui accompagnent les *solar kits* utilisés en ce moment, qui sont très toxiques ? Voilà.

Mr Assirvaden: Je vais dire que la MARENA et l'EEMO travaillent sur ce projet. Disons que les batteries que nous avons mis en place jusqu'ici ce sont des batteries de 10 ans, de 12 ans. Ce sont des batteries qui ne sont arrivées à la fin de leur cycle pour l'instant. C'est sûr que ce problème au fil des années, si nous arrivons à avoir 60% d'énergie renouvelable et que les maisons sont équipées de ces batteries-là, éventuellement cela causera un problème dans le temps. Mais, je pense que les institutions de mon ministère, que ce soit MARENA ou l'EEMO travaillent sur ce schéma parce que nous avons des projets dans le temps que nous

avons mis en place. Les frigidaires à la casse, on voulait pour l'efficacité énergétique faire changer les frigidaires de la majeure partie des personnes parce que les frigidaires consomment énormément d'énergie, mais c'est sûr que le souci de recyclage des batteries va être aussi dans le mandat de la MARENA et de l'EEMO.

Madam Speaker: Monsieur Rookny!

Mr Rookny: Thank you, Madam Speaker, could the Minister advise the House if he intends to require off-grid users that have nothing to do with the CEB, that are not even connected to the grid to be also regulated by authorities under his Ministry?

Mr Assirvaden: Oui, impérativement parce que le danger est où ? Le danger c'est que nous si n'avons pas un *data* spécifique de qui sont ceux qui ont une batterie à la maison, mais demain l'ingénieur du CEB travaille sur la ligne qui est soi-disant off et l'énergie chez un particulier peut retourner sur la ligne, créant un danger. Donc, les travailleurs et l'utilisateur peuvent être en danger à tout moment. Donc, le projet de loi qu'on discutera dans la Chambre ici va essayer de brasser assez large. Je peux dire qu'en Inde, en Allemagne, au Portugal, en Espagne nous avons déjà des projets de loi de genre. Par exemple, en France il y a la loi APER qui effectivement englobe un petit peu la batterie, le standard, les installateurs et le prix, le profit et un peu tout ça. Donc, nous travaillons dans cette direction.

Madam Speaker: Yes, okay. Very interesting but especially people must understand what is going on because it is not very easy to understand, alright?

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

BUILDING LAND AND USE PERMITS – APPLICATIONS RECEIVED & REJECTED – QUANTUM OF FINE REVIEW

(No. B/1211) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Building Land and Use Permits 1, 2, and 3, respectively, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Savanne and Black River District Council, information as to the number of applications therefor received since July 2024 to October 2025, indicating the number of –
 - (i) applications rejected and the number thereof objected to or delayed by the Land Drainage Authority, Forestry Services, Water Resources Unit and/or other relevant authorities, and

- (ii) permits issued with compliance notice (fined Rs 50,000), and
- (b) state whether consideration will be given for a review of the quantum of the fine imposed.

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that Building Land and Use Permits (BLP) are in three categories, namely –

- BLP 1 which relates to residential developments;
- BLP 2 concerns the excision of land, including the sales or donation of a lot and the subdivision of land among heirs, and
- BLP 3 pertains to economic activities, small enterprises, residential developments as from ground plus four level and places of public worship among others.

As regards part (a)(i) and (ii) of the question, the information is being tabled. With regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that in accordance with section 127A(5)(a) of the Local Government Act 2011, as subsequently amended, a fixed penalty fee of Rs50,000 is levied on an applicant when a Building and Land Use Permit Application is approved following the issuance of a compliance notice by a local authority. In the context of the Local Government reform, the fine of Rs50,000 will be reviewed.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, your first question?

Mr Jugurnauth: Madam Speaker, is the Minister is aware that in many cases, it takes years for a BLUP? There is a lot of delay along with the LDA, etc., which is not necessary. Can the Minister inform the House whether he will take actions?

Madam Speaker: Yes, Minister!

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that the following stakeholders do not access the NELS, that is, the Traffic Management Road Safety Unit, the RDA, the Irrigation Authority, the LDA, and the Forestry Service. So, when all these institutions will be on NELS, it will be much easier to have it approved.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Jugurnauth: Madam Speaker, can the Minister inform the House on the gap of time for the Land Drainage Authority and the Forestry officers to reply?

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, it all depends on the Ministry's staff, but I think they have a lapse of two weeks to reply before it is being approved.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Hon. Beehook!

Mr Beehook: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister if he is satisfied with the very blanket decision which is applied by the LDA of either to approve or to not to approve a construction? Is he satisfied with this approach or does he intend to request the engineers of the LDA to provide alternative solutions to BLUPs?

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, I will have to find these answers with the LDA, and then I can give a prompt answer to the hon. Member because I do not have it right now.

Madam Speaker: Il va se renseigner. On est d'accord avec ça. On continue.

Hon. Ramdass!

FERNEY PLAISANCE LINK ROAD – STREET LIGHTING – INSTALLATION

(No. B/1212) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the Ferney Plaisance Link Road, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether consideration will be given for the installation of adequate street lighting along same for the safety of the road users thereat.

Mr Gunness: Madam Speaker, the Ferney Plaisance Link Road, also known as the South Eastern Highway (A15), is an existing road of approximately 6.2 km, constructed in 2005 to engineering standards. It links the Plaine Magnien-Mahebourg (A12) Road at Plaine Magnien, the Cent Gaulettes (B7) Road at Grand Bel Air and the Flacq-Mahebourg (B28) Road at Rivière des Créoles.

I am informed by the Road Development Authority that street lighting has been provided at the roundabouts at Grand Bel Air and Rivière des Créoles. However, no street lighting has been installed at the Solitude roundabout at Plaine Magnien, which is near the airport, as recommended by the Department of Civil Aviation.

Madam Speaker, as I have explained in my previous reply to PQ B/196 on 18 March 2025, the provision and maintenance of street lighting along existing roads fall under the responsibility of the local authorities. The RDA provides street lighting only along new road projects and hands over the facilities to the relevant local authority upon completion.

In this connection, the District Council of Grand Port has informed that it has no objection to the implementation of street lighting along the Ferney Plaisance Link Road, subject to the availability of funds and after obtaining the views of the Department of Civil Aviation regarding the permissible height to lighting poles.

Madam Speaker: Yes, you are alright?

Next question, hon. Dr. Prayag!

MILLE & MEMOIRE BEACHES, POSTE LA FAYETTE – TOILETS & BATHROOM FACILITIES – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/1213) Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to Mille Beach and Memoire Beach, in Poste La Fayette, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Beach Authority, information as to whether consideration will be given for the construction and provision of public toilets and bathroom facilities thereat.

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Beach Authority that Mille Beach, of an extent of 2.13 hectares and a sea frontage of 350 m, was proclaimed in November 1990 as Roches Noires Public Beach. There is currently no toilet block due to the topography of the site and the high-water table.

Madam Speaker, the lagoon of Roches Noires is classified as a dangerous bathing area and is considered unsafe for recreational swimming. There are two ‘dangerous bathing’ warning signages on the beach.

With regard to amenities, same are being considered and implementation will depend on availability of funds.

Madam Speaker, as regards Memoire Beach, I wish to inform the House that the beach was proclaimed as Poste La Fayette (near Memorial) Public Beach in January 1991 and is of

an extent of 7.740 hectares, with a sea frontage of 620 m. There is an existing toilet block which is fully operational. It is to be noted that the lagoon thereat is also classified as a dangerous area for recreational swimming. There is a 'dangerous bathing' warning signage at the said beach.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that the Beach Authority is presently working on a beach management plan for the Poste La Fayette Public Beach. The preparation of a masterplan is being finalised and provision will be made for amenities. MPs of the constituency will be informed of the plan before it is operational.

Madam Speaker: Dr. Prayag, are you okay?

Now, I have two questions withdrawn: PQs B/1214 and B/1215.

So, we go to hon. Fourth Member for Rodrigues, Mr Edouard!

NORTH REGION BUS ROUTES – COVERED SHELTERS INSTALLATION – WORKS SCHEDULE

(No. B/1214) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether in regard to the bus routes along Poudre d'Or Village, Goodlands, Roche Terre, Grand Gaube, St-François, Calodyne, Cap Malheureux, Vale, Petit Raffray, Fond Du Sac, Grand Bay, and Pointe aux Cannoniers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether consideration is being or will be given for the installation of covered shelters along same and, if so, indicate the priority sites earmarked and expected commencement and completion dates of works therefor and, if not, why not, indicating the proposed alternative options to sheltering the waiting commuters against weather vagaries.

(Withdrawn)

BASSIN ROAD, QUATRE BORNES – BUS SERVICE

(No. B/1215) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the bus route along Bassin Road, in Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land

Transport Authority, information as to the number of buses currently deployed on same, indicating the frequency of service during peak and off-peak hours.

(Withdrawn)

COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/1216) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the Comprehensive Sexuality Education, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation thereof in schools in mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues Island, respectively, indicating whether the issue of the shortage of dedicated staff to teach same is being addressed.

Dr. Gungapersad: Madam Speaker, I am informed that elements of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) are already embedded within the primary and secondary curriculum frameworks in both Mauritius and Rodrigues. Mauritius is also signatory to the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) Commitment, which reaffirms our obligation to provide comprehensive sexuality education to adolescents and young people.

At the primary level, components of sexuality education are integrated into the health and physical education syllabus for Grades 5 and 6, with further aspects covered on the life skills education. These initiatives aim at promoting balanced development, healthy attitudes and responsible citizenship among pupils.

At the secondary school level, a programme on social and emotional well-being, also referred to as *Éducation à l'affectivité et à la sexualité*, is being implemented since 2018 for Grade 7 and has subsequently been extended to Grades 8 and 9. The programme addresses themes such as identity, body image, gender roles, sexual development, reproductive health, relationships and intimacy.

I am also being informed that, since 2017, more than 500 Educators have been trained by SeDEC for the effective delivery of EAS Programme. Training for Educators of secondary schools is an ongoing process.

To support effective classroom implementation, pedagogical materials such as teacher manuals and student manuals, *Mystère à la Vie*, have been made available for Grade 7 and Grade 8 since 2019. I wish to reassure the hon. Member that the same curriculum and support

materials applicable in mainland Mauritius are also extended to Rodrigues, and implementation follow the same structure at both primary and secondary schools.

Madam Speaker, there is no shortage of dedicated staff as CSE is delivered across the curriculum rather than by a single specialised cadre. Educators teaching health and physical education, biology, integrated science, life skills and related subjects already cover components of sexuality education. As I have already stated, continuous training is being provided to educators, and my Ministry is addressing any gap through capacity building initiatives, refresher sessions and the inclusion of CSE content in pre-service teacher training to ensure the availability of trained personnel.

Madam Speaker, my Ministry remains firmly committed to strengthening Comprehensive Sexuality Education in all schools in the Republic of Mauritius in line with our national and international commitments. Thank you.

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

Mr Edouard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you, hon. Minister. Can the hon. Minister inform the House how many among these 500 teachers who have been trained are from Rodrigues?

Dr. Gungapersad: I don't have the exact figure how many are for Rodrigues. I may give you the figure afterwards.

Madam Speaker: From or for?

Mr Edouard: From!

Madam Speaker: From!

Dr. Gungapersad: Out of the 500, he wants how many are from Rodrigues.

Madam Speaker: From Rodrigues, yes!

Okay, next question, Mr Lukeeram.

HSC 2024 – ADDITIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS – BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/1217) Mr C. Lukeeram (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the Scholarship Scheme, he will state whether Government intends to award additional scholarships

thereunder based on the social merit criteria to eligible candidates of the Cambridge Higher School Certificate Examinations 2024 considering that the academic year is drawing to a close and, if so, indicate the expected timeline for the –

- (a) publication of the list of beneficiaries, and
- (b) effective allocation and disbursement of the bursaries.

Dr. Gungapersad: Madam Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. Member for this question, which thanks to him, has had a very happy outcome. Why? I wish to inform the House that, as in previous years, my Ministry has proceeded with the award of the 24 additional scholarships to eligible candidates of the Cambridge Higher School Certificate Examinations 2024 based on both academic merit and social criteria. Under the scheme, 16 scholarships are awarded to students who meet the academic criteria and whose total monthly parental income does not exceed Rs30,000 in the aggregate and 8 scholarships are awarded to students who meet the academic criteria and whose total monthly parental income does not exceed Rs18,500 in the aggregate.

Madam Speaker, regarding part (a) of the question, the publication of the list of beneficiaries has been made public today. A press communique has already been issued in that sense.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the allocation and disbursement of bursaries will follow immediately after the publication of the beneficiaries of the scholarships.

Madam Speaker, allow me on behalf of everyone present here to congratulate all those 24 scholarship winners, their families, their teachers and their schools. Well done to all of them.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. I was listening.

Mr Lukeeram, you are okay? Right.

Now, I have hon. First Member for Savanne and Black River!

Not forgetting you now!

BLACK RIVER DISTRICT – TEMPORARY MARKET FAIR

(No. B/1218) **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.

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, I am informed that there is presently no market in operation within the administrative area of the Black River District Council. A plot of land has already been identified at Bambous near Winners and vested into the District Council of Black River in July 2024. The preliminary design has been finalised and a quantity surveyor will be appointed to prepare the preliminary cost estimate. In this financial year, an amount of Rs1 million has been earmarked for payment of consultancy fees.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) (ii) of the question, I have already instructed the District Council of Black River to issue an expression of interest to invite proposals for the setting up of a temporary market fair pending the construction of the market fair by the Council. I also wish to highlight that in the past, Médine had tried to operate a market fair for vegetables but had to close down due to low customer turn out and poor accessibility as the site was located far from the main road.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, Mr Babajee!

Mr Babajee: May I know from the hon. Minister as to an estimated time for when the market will be fully operated?

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the hon. Member that the proposed Market Fair at Bambous, the Council will have to invite bids on design and build basis by

April 2026 and the contract for the construction works will be awarded by July 2026 and the work may be completed by October 2027.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

AMAURY VILLAGE – BUS ROUTE NO. 222 – PROVISION OF BUS SERVICES

(No. B/1219) Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to Bus Route No. 222 serving the Amaury Village, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Corporation, information as to whether consideration will be given for bus services to be provided along same throughout the day as against the current provision of two trips per day and, if so, indicate the measures that will be taken in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka!

One question was transferred. So, now you come with B/1221!

RAINWATER HARVESTING SYSTEM - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/1221) 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.

Mr Assirvaden: Merci, Madame la présidente. Je souhaite informer l'Assemblée que presque chaque année durant la saison difficile, le pays est confronté à une crise d'eau qui affecte gravement nos ressources hydriques. Par conséquent, afin de gérer judicieusement cette ressource, il est nécessaire de mettre en œuvre des mesures de conservation de l'eau à tous les niveaux et notamment d'impliquer la population.

Madame la présidente, afin de mobiliser davantage d'eau et d'encourager la collecte d'eau de pluie, un budget de R 25 millions a été prévu dans le budget 2025-2026. Les ménages dont le revenu mensuel est inférieur à R 60 000 peuvent bénéficier d'une subvention

de R 10 000 pour l'installation d'un système de collecte des eaux de pluie, donc *rain water harvesting*, le *scheme*.

Par ailleurs, le budget prévoit aussi la mise en œuvre d'un programme de collecte des eaux destinées aux écoles maternelles, aux écoles spécialisées, aux établissements d'hébergement pour personnes âgées, aux centres communautaires, associations des femmes, aux ONG et aux centres de loisirs.

Par ailleurs, mon ministère a adressé une circulaire à tous les ministères et organismes publics les invitant à envisager des mesures de conservation de l'eau afin de garantir la sécurité d'approvisionnement en eau de ces instances gouvernementales et du grand public.

Madame la présidente, nous avons déjà au sein du ministère un comité technique composé de fonctionnaires de mon ministère, du ministère de l'environnement et de la CWA, de Statistics Mauritius, de la DBM. Ce comité qui a été mis en place pour examiner ce *Rain Water Harvesting Scheme*, nous allons y inclure aussi le ministère de Commerce pour pouvoir...

(Interruptions)

C'était très sérieusement, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: Non, ce n'est pas vous. Ce n'est pas du tout vous, M. le ministre, c'est juste mon téléphone qui fait des siennes.

Mr Assirvaden: Mais vous savez qu'on est obligé d'éteindre son téléphone dans la Chambre ? L'exemple doit venir d'en haut.

Madam Speaker: Vous avez parfaitement raison ! Mon téléphone m'a dépassé complètement. Allez-y !

Mr Assirvaden : Je peux ? Merci.

An hon. Member : There is a fine for that!

Mr Assirvaden : Ce n'est pas évident de garder son sérieux dans des circonstances pareilles.

Madame la présidente, en ce qui concerne la partie (a) de la question, je souhaite informer la Chambre que mon ministère, en ce qui concerne la question de l'honorable membre concernant le cap sur les profits, un plafond, nous allons tenir des réunions. On a

décidé qu'on tiendra des réunions avec le ministère des commerces en ce qui concerne le plafond de profit concernant le système de récupération de l'eau de pluie. Mais je dois préciser encore une fois c'est une question qui demande beaucoup de réflexion, de discussion quand même. *It's a policy decision*, c'est une question en termes de contrôle des prix ou la libération de certaines commodités. Donc, il faudra engager des discussions au sein du gouvernement, surtout avec mon collègue le ministre de la sécurité sociale. Au Cabinet, on va en discuter, c'est sûr.

Concernant la partie (b) de la question, les institutions gouvernementales ont été invitées à mettre en œuvre la récupération d'eau de pluie, étendre ce dispositif à l'ensemble des institutions gouvernementales malheureusement nécessiterait un financement important actuellement indisponible et pourrait être envisagé dès que la situation financière le permettra.

Madam Speaker : Je suis vraiment désolée, M. le ministre. C'était des petits enfants qui chantaient 'We are the World'.

Bon, allez on continue le travail. C'est bien quelque fois un petit rire comme ça. Alors, hon. Thannoo, *you want to ask another question?*

Ms Thannoo: Yes, please! May we include primary schools and secondary schools within the scheme, please?

Mr Assirvaden: Je crois dans ma réponse éventuellement j'ai parlé des établissements scolaires. Je l'ai dit, je le crois. Oui, mais si c'est nécessaire d'élargir cette panoplie d'autres secteurs, on est disposé à le faire. Merci

Madam Speaker: Très bien, merci.

Next question, Dr. Prayag, please!

DIABETIC PATIENTS – CONTINUOUS GLUCOSE MONITOR DEVICES & INSULIN PUMPS

(No. B/1222) Dr. S. Prayag (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the decision of his Ministry not to proceed with the provision of Continuous Glucose Monitor Devices and Insulin Pumps to Type-1 Diabetes Mellitus patients, he will state whether he will reconsider same and explore

alternative modes of financing and support from Non-Governmental Organisations and agencies.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, I wish to refer the hon. Member to my reply made to Parliamentary Question B/559 at the Sitting of the House on 17 June 2025. As I previously stated at this august Assembly, the proposal to introduce Insulin Pumps and Continuous Glucose Monitor Devices, was neither recommended by a team of technical experts nor by Professor D. Ovens, eminent diabetologist from United Kingdom.

Regarding alternative modes of financing and support from the Non-Governmental Organisations, the question does not arise.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. Prayag.

Dr. Prayag: Thank you, hon. Minister. Instead of considering Continuous Glucose Monitor together with Insulin Pumps, maybe the Ministry could come up with a policy just to consider the Continuous Glucose Monitor and then afterwards, check for the feasibility of the second piece and not consider both together.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, well I am not a professional in that field but the team of doctors that I have in my Ministry as well as Professor Ovens, they have openly declared that this is not feasible and we should not go ahead with this.

At the same time, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Member that the Insulin Pump is a device which is attached to the body of the patient on a 24-hour basis and track the glucose level in the real time. The proposal to introduce Insulin Pumps and Continuous Glucose Monitoring System was made by the former government without proper consultation with the technical staff of the Ministry.

I am also advised on the lack of personnel to support the insulin pump use and Continuous Glucose Monitoring who will monitor the use by children who are Type-1 diabetics in schools, lack of support to cater for emergencies arising from faulty insulin pumps, high cost involved as the insulin pump has several costs associated to it. Moreover, insulin pump has to be replaced on average after four years of use and they provide a modest reduction in HbA1c blood test, conducted for evaluating blood-sugar level.

So, because of all these reasons, I have been strongly advised by the officials of my Ministry and the doctors not to go ahead with this.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. Prayag.

Dr. Prayag: I wish to thank the hon. Minister for the answer but again I am saying maybe it is better to try different avenues where NGOs which cater for Type-1 diabetics patients and we don't have to consider insulin pumps at the moment given that your Ministry has deemed that it is expensive even though you can have cheaper and good quality ones in other countries. Maybe if we explore avenues with NGOs which have well-trained staff to just start with the Continuous Glucose Monitor for these 1000 young children suffering from Type-1 diabetes.

Mr Bachoo: It is not a question of financial help and all these. It is clear that the Ministry does not want to go ahead, unless and until, the team of doctors in my Ministry are agreeable to the request being made by the hon. Member.

Madam Speaker: Alright. We will just have to wait, Dr. Prayag.

Hon. Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes.

CHILD DAY CARE CENTRE, BAIE DU TOMBEAU – ENROLLED BABIES & STAFFING – REGULATIONS COMPLIANCE

(No. B/1223) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the Baie du Tombeau Child Day Care Centre operating under the aegis of her Ministry, she will state –

- (a) currently, the number of
 - (i) babies enrolled, and
 - (ii) staff members employed, thereat, and
- (b) whether it is operating in full compliance with safety standards and, if not, why not, giving details thereof.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madam Speaker, as regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that the Baie du Tombeau Child Day Care Centre, operational since 2006 and managed by the National Children's Council, has 19 babies: 9 boys and 10 girls, between the ages of 14 weeks to 3 years, presently enrolled.

The Baie du Tombeau CDCC has 11 staff members employed thereat comprising one Ag. Officer in Charge, one Assistant Child Programme Officer, 7 qualified Child Caregivers, one Nursery Attendant and one General Worker.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to reassure members of this Assembly that the Baie du Tombeau Child Day Care Centre is registered as per the Child Day Care Centres Regulations 2022 made under section 7 (2)(1) of the Children's Act 2020 and is therefore operating in compliance with the safety standards. This includes the infrastructure and the child to caregiver ratio.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. Cette garderie accueille des familles vulnérables. La Ministre peut-elle indiquer à la Chambre sur quel critère son ministère a confié le Child Day Care Centre de Résidence Florida à Baie du Tombeau à une ACPO, responsable des gros fracas...

Madam Speaker: C'est quoi ACPO? Dis-nous.

Ms Anquetil: ACPO, c'est Assistant Child Programme Officer.

La Ministre l'a indiqué tout à l'heure. J'ai entendu.

Alors, donc la Ministre peut-elle indiquer à la Chambre sur quel critère son ministère a confié le Child Day Care Centre de Résidence Florida à Baie du Tombeau à une ACPO, responsable des gros fracas dans plusieurs *shelter* notamment La Colombe, L'Oasis, Notre-Dame et L'Oiseau du Paradis ?

Elle est connue pour son langage vulgaire, ses fausses allégations contre ses collègues et des officiers de police et la falsification du *Occurence Book*.

Merci.

Ms Navarre-Marie : Madame la présidente, je ne suis pas au courant de ces faits. Mais toujours est-il que la dame en question dont l'honorable membre fait référence, a été choisie par la NCC pour prendre en charge le Day Care Centre depuis quelques semaines déjà.

Laissez-moi vous dire une chose. J'ai effectué au moins deux visites à cette garderie. Une première visite – le 30 septembre et une deuxième visite – le 23 octobre *where I took note of some operational deficiencies and management gaps affecting the day-to-day running of the Day Care Centre*.

Alors, complaints received on this centre were the following –

“The Child Day Care Centre was often still closed at 07.30 hrs in the morning and parents had to wait whilst the opening hours are Monday-Friday from 07:30 to 17:15

hrs, and Saturday from 7:30 to 12:30 hrs. Parents were informed that the Day Care Centre was closed on Saturday due to general cleaning.”

Alors que la garderie aurait dû être ouverte de telle heure à telle heure, donc telle n’est pas le cas. Les parents sont avisés de venir prendre les enfants plus tôt. La crèche qui aurait dû être ouverte les samedis, n’est pas ouverte les samedis. Donc, il y a plusieurs *deficiencies* que j’ai notés moi-même. Par exemple, lorsque j’ai visité la crèche, la cour était jonchée des feuilles mortes et d’immondices alors que le NCC payait un gardien à plein temps.

Donc, tout cela a été note. C’est pourquoi mon ministère, en collaboration avec le National Children’s Council, a organisé deux réunions. Une première réunion le 01 octobre et une deuxième réunion le 10 octobre. Ensuite, il y a une troisième réunion qui était présidée par le secrétaire du National Children’s Council où certaines décisions ont été prises.

Lors de la première réunion – je pense que c’était lors de la première réunion qu’il a été décidé que la dame en question prenne la charge de cette crèche. La dame est qualifiée. Elle est détentrice d’un certificat de HSC mais je ne suis pas au courant du tout, des frasques dont parle madame la députée.

Si la députée est au courant qu’il y a des telles frasques, je pense qu’étant donné qu’elle est membre du gouvernement, elle aurait pu venir me voir directement parce que ces accusations, ces frasques, comme elle le dit, pourraient mettre la vie de ces enfants-là en danger. Je pense qu’en tant députée responsable, elle aurait dû venir vers moi, venir me voir, m’informer de la situation.

Toujours est-il, Madame la présidente, que je vais prendre en considération les allégations que madame la députée a faites et je vais bien sûr prendre les mesures appropriées pour le bien-être des enfants.

Madam Speaker: Vous allez enquêter ?

Ms Navarre-Marie: Je vais prendre en considération les allégations que Madame la députée a faites et je vais bien sûr prendre les mesures appropriées pour le bien-être des enfants.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Can I take a point of order, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: Yes.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Recently, you have ruled and it is in the Standing Orders. A Member cannot make allegations, accusations, like we have just heard, without

producing evidence. Therefore, can I ask you to rule that the hon. Member should produce evidence about the accusations and allegations which she has made?

Madam Speaker: Yes, I think you should do that.

Also, may I add? Of course, it is a subject that I master perhaps better than all of you. Maybe also I should add: tell us more about the National Children Council itself.

Yes, *madame*!

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie. Avant de poser ma supplémentaire, je donne...

Madam Speaker: Bien sûr.

Ms Anquetil: ...par rapport à la réflexion de la ministre. Alors, Madame la présidente...

Madam Speaker: Non, non. Vous répondez d'abord au *point of order*.

The Deputy Prime Minister: I have taken a point of order and you have ruled.

Madam Speaker: There has been a point of order, and I have asked you. I have already ruled. Il faut donner...

Ms Anquetil: Ecoutez, Madame la présidente, c'est dans les rapports de l'*Ombudsperson for Children*. Vous savez, l'*Ombudsperson for Children* depuis des années émet des rapports sur les *shelters*, et c'est clair et net.

The Deputy Prime Minister: On the same point of order, she cannot refer to all the reports. Tell us what report, on what occasion.

Madam Speaker: Which one? Which date? Where?

Ms Anquetil: Je ne les ai pas avec moi. Mais de toute façon, à la station de Grand Baie, on peut avoir tous les détails. Alors, ma...

The Deputy Prime Minister: It is not good enough. It is not good enough at all!

Madam Speaker: Non, non. Mademoiselle, ce n'est pas possible de continuer comme ça. C'est dommage d'ailleurs que l'opposition ne soit pas là parce qu'à chaque fois on me dit que je regarde juste un seul côté.

Moi, j'ai été *Ombudsperson* pendant 12 ans. Vous allez vous référer à mes rapports ? J'en ai parlé de tout ça. Donc, dites-nous !

Ce que vous avez dit à propos de cette dame, c'est probablement vrai. Mais comme on a dit pour les membres de l'opposition, de la même manière, vous devez nous produire ce que vous avez dit là. Vous devez nous produire cela.

On ne peut pas faire comme il y avait la fameuse question de monsieur Quirin, je me souviens, ce qui avait enflammé la Chambre. On ne peut pas ! Parce que chaque semaine, moi aussi je vois comment les choses se passent. C'est un sujet qui ne vous tient pas seulement à cœur. Ça me tient aussi à cœur.

Allez-y ! Donnez-nous vos documents.

Ms Anquetil: Alors, mes documents, la ministre a dit que c'est suite à deux visites qu'elle a effectuées en octobre et novembre. J'ai les dates aussi.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Septembre.

Ms Anquetil: Septembre ! Voilà, exactement !

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

Madam Speaker: Oui.

The Deputy Prime Minister: That is not the point!

Ms Anquetil: Je voudrais déposer...

The Deputy Prime Minister: I take the floor on a point of order, if the hon. Member will sit down. She cannot now reply to the Minister without telling us. If she cannot today produce the evidence, okay. But take a pledge to produce it as soon as possible.

Madam Speaker: Yes, do that!

Ms Anquetil: Alors, tout à fait. Alors, pour répondre au *point of order* du...

Madam Speaker: Deputy Prime Minister.

(Interruptions)

Ms Anquetil: Je vais déposer les informations demandées. Il n'y a pas de souci à ce sujet.

Madam Speaker: D'accord !

Ms Anquetil: Je vais les déposer à la librairie de l'Assemblée nationale. Je tiens toutefois à dire que malgré le changement de direction ; moi, j'ai des photos que je tiens à déposer.

Madam Speaker: Est-ce que ces photos sont authentifiées ?

Ms Anquetil: Non, qu'est-ce que vous voulez dire par authentifiées ?

Madam Speaker: Eh ben !

Ms Anquetil: Ce sont des photos de la cour, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: C'est exactement ce que j'ai fait avec l'opposition ! Mademoiselle, j'ai fait la même chose avec l'opposition. Soit vos photos sont authentiques, soit comment la ministre peut savoir ? Ne venez surtout pas m'accuser – maintenant, non seulement on m'accuse de voir que le gouvernement, mais on m'accuse aussi de voir qu'un parti politique. Ça, je n'accepte pas ! Je n'accepte pas !

Vous êtes venus me dire ; j'ai entendu tout cela, je suis fatiguée d'entendre ce genre de truc. Moi, je ne joue pas à ce jeu-là. Donc, vous faites comme l'opposition. *Same rules for everybody!*

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, if I may? The issue...

Madam Speaker: Vous allez vous aussi vous mettre de la partie ?

Mr Mohamed: Not at all! I am just only trying to help the process.

Madam Speaker: Be careful! Be careful!

Mr Mohamed: What I am trying to do is help the process.

Madam Speaker: Aah, well!

Madam Speaker: What you are saying is totally true unless she took the photographs herself.

Ms Anquetil: That's it!

Madam Speaker: Okay. You took the photographs yourself?

Ms Anquetil: That's it. Voilà ! Moi-même. Les photos ont été prises le 4 décembre 2025. Deux photos de la cour parce que bien sûr je n'ai pas accès à l'intérieur et que je voudrais déposer à l'Assemblée.

Madam Speaker: Je pense que la ministre a dit...

The Deputy Prime Minister: *C'est extrêmement grave.* She is saying that she took the pictures herself.

Madam Speaker: Yes, she said.

The Deputy Prime Minister: This must be substantiated.

Madam Speaker: No, we have to believe her that she took the pictures herself.

But laissez-moi voir les photos. Quelqu'un m'emmène les photos, s'il vous plaît ? Vous ne savez pas ; vous êtes en train d'ouvrir la porte de sésame là. Faites bien attention.

Alors, est-ce que, Madame la ministre, autant que je me souviene...

Passez ça à la ministre. C'est dégueulasse, bien sûr. Passez ça à la ministre.

Est-ce que vous avez vu tout ça ? Vous avez visité là-bas, Madame la ministre ?

On fait un procès. On n'est pas dans une situation de questions-réponses-là. On est en train de faire un procès, l'honorable Premier ministre.

Mr Juman: Mais, Madame la ministre même a...

Madam Speaker: Un Premier ministre...

Ms Anquetil: Elle-même elle a trouvé des maldonnes.

Madam Speaker: Mais voilà !

Ms Anquetil: Elle l'a dit ! La ministre a dit qu'il y a des maldonnes là-bas !

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Mais je lui montre. Je lui montre.

(Interruptions)

Ms Anquetil: Justement ! Je ne comprends pas.

Madam Speaker: Il vous faut savoir ce que vous voulez dans la vie. Vous voulez sauver les vies des enfants ou bien vous voulez faire un procès ?

Ms Anquetil: Oui, tout à fait ! Tout à fait !

Madam Speaker: Ça ressemble à ce que vous avez vu, Madame la ministre ?

Ms Navarre-Marie: Oui, exactement. Ça ressemble à ce que j'avais vu lors de ma première visite, c'est-à-dire le 30 septembre. Mais depuis, ça a changé.

Madam Speaker: D'accord.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, again, on the same point of order. We would have been satisfied if the hon. Member had said ‘These are the pictures which I have taken myself on a given date.’ We would have accepted her word.

Madam Speaker: It is alright. It is alright. Now, we have sorted it out.

Ms Anquetil: Ma question supplémentaire !

Madam Speaker: Oui, mais n’oubliez pas que vous nous devez un document qui vient du rapport de l’*Ombudsperson* de je ne sais pas quelle année.

Ms Anquetil: Oui.

Alors, ma deuxième supplémentaire. Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. La ministre est-elle au courant que, vendredi après-midi dernier, le *Chairman* du *NCC*, c’est-à-dire du *National Children Council*, s’est rendu dans cette garderie pour une réunion avec le personnel au cours de laquelle il a déclaré que si des informations concernant la garderie venaient à circuler, la ministre elle-même viendrait vérifier les téléphones du personnel ?

Ms Navarre-Marie: Mon Dieu ! Mon Dieu !

Ms Anquetil: Justement !

Ms Navarre-Marie: C’est du n’importe quoi !

Ms Anquetil: La ministre va-t-elle ordonner...

(Interruptions)

Mais c’est quelqu’un qui l’a dit dans la réunion ! C’est le président qui l’a dit dans la réunion. La ministre...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Mademoiselle, excusez-moi ! Je ne sais pas ; je n’arrive plus à suivre et à comprendre ce que nous faisons dans cette Chambre. Vous êtes en train de faire...

Vous étiez là-bas ? Vous étiez au courant ? Vous étiez au courant ?

(Interruptions)

Madame la ministre, vous restez tranquille, s’il vous plaît !

Vous étiez au courant de ce qui s’est passé dans cette réunion ? Moi, je ne porte pas du tout le *National Children Council* dans mon cœur, mais vous étiez présente ?

Ms Anquetil: Non.

Madam Speaker: Aah!

Ms Anquetil: Je n'étais pas présente !

Madam Speaker: Vous êtes au courant de ce qui s'est passé ? Comment êtes-vous au courant ?

Ms Anquetil: Il m'a été rapporté.

Madam Speaker: Non, non, non ! *Hearsay evidence. Hearsay evidence! We are not going to have this! No hearsay evidence!*

Ce n'est pas possible ça ! Je vais vous donner un conseil d'ami, de maman. Tout dépend de ce qui est vraiment votre objectif en posant cette question. Là, on n'a pas d'opposition. Vous êtes dans un même gouvernement. Ça dépend de votre objectif. Moi, je vois un petit peu aussi là. Personne n'est dupe là. Personne n'est dupe !

Ms Anquetil: Alors, mon objectif, Madame la présidente, puisque vous posez la question, c'est connu de tout le monde que j'ai un objectif clair et net : c'est la protection des femmes et des enfants. Que je sois un membre de l'opposition ou du gouvernement, ma ligne de conduite, elle reste la même. C'est un combat pour la justice.

Et je suis encore plus sensible puisque cette garderie à résidence Florida à Baie du Tombeau, ce sont des enfants issus de familles vulnérables.

Madam Speaker: Vous êtes en train de faire un *statement* ! *Statement! You are giving me a statement.*

Ms Anquetil: Vous m'avez posé une question, Madame la présidente. Je peux poser...

Madam Speaker: Non, vous me répondez que c'est ça votre objectif.

Ms Anquetil: Oui. Tout à fait.

Madam Speaker: Allez-y ! Vous pouvez avoir un supplémentaire.

Ms Anquetil: Alors, je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. La ministre a dit dans sa réponse que les mesures de sécurité sont là. Très bien ! La ministre peut-elle indiquer à la Chambre si son ministère envisage l'installation de caméras de surveillance – puisqu'il n'y en a pas du tout dans la garderie – d'un système de *fingerprint* ainsi que le rehaussement du mur

entourant le bâtiment ? Une demande qui avait été refusée sous l'ancien régime par nul autre que moi-même ! Merci.

Madam Speaker: Madame la ministre, allez-y !

Ms Navarre-Marie: Je vais transmettre le message au *National Children Council's Board*.

Madam Speaker: Mais, Madame la ministre, faites bien attention. Vous êtes ministre.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Oui.

Madam Speaker: C'est toujours le *National Children's Council*. Regardez bien ce texte de loi – *under the correction of the Attorney General* – regardez ce qu'est le *National Children's Council* et quel est son rôle.

Ms Navarre-Marie : Madame la présidente, je connais parfaitement le rôle du *National Children's Council*. Comme j'ai expliqué la dernière fois, le *National Children's Council* a dû prendre certaines responsabilités, vu qu'il n'y a pas d'autres organismes qui prennent ces responsabilités-là. C'est-à-dire, la garderie et le *shelter*.

Madam Speaker : Okay. Au moins on est au courant de cela, mais il faudra peut-être penser plus loin.

Next question ! Alors, nous avons fini.

The question B/1224 has been withdrawn.

NATIONAL TRANSPORT CORPORATION – BUSES PURCHASED (2019-2025) – OPERATIONALITY & PERFORMANCE

(No. B/1224) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the National Transport Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) the number of buses purchased since 2019 to date, on a yearly basis, and
- (b) whether –
 - (i) all buses thereof are operational on all routes;
 - (ii) it intends to purchase new buses any time soon, and
 - (iii) the different makes of buses are beneficial thereto in terms of performance and, if so, give the relevant details thereof.

(Withdrawn)

Madam Speaker: No. B/1225, donc, c'est à vous l'honorable Ms Anquetil!

**BAICHOO MADHOO GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – NEW PRE-PRIMARY
BUILDING**

(No. B/1225) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the Baichoo Madhoo Government School, he will state if his Ministry plans to put the new pre-primary building, ready since 2023 in operation.

Dr. Gungapersad: Madam Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. Member for this question. I am informed that the building for the new pre-primary block of Baichoo Madhoo Government School was fully completed and handed over to the Ministry of Education by the then Ministry of National infrastructure...

Madam Speaker: Attendez, l'honorable minister! The Chief Whip is not happy. Please sit down. Tell us.

Ms Anquetil: Juste pour dire que je n'entends pas la réponse. Merci.

Madam Speaker: Oui, pourquoi vous n'entendez pas ? Dites clairement !

Ms Anquetil: Il y a du bruit.

Madam Speaker: Où il y a du bruit ? Dites-nous clairement !

Vous avez peur de nous dire ?

Ms Anquetil: Non, je n'ai pas peur.

Madam Speaker : Mais dites-moi clairement !

Ms Anquetil : Je viens de vous dire qu'il y a du bruit !

Madam Speaker : Ça vient d'où le bruit ?

Mr Mohamed: She does not know from where.

Madam Speaker: Ah, she does not know?

Mr Mohamed: Otherwise, she would have said it.

Madam Speaker: Mais moi je le sais. Allez-y, l'honorable ministre ! Pas une mouche qui vole pendant que le ministre parle.

Dr. Gungapersad: I take the answer again.

I wish to thank the hon. Member for this question. I am informed that the building for the new pre-primary block of Baichoo Madhoo Government School was fully completed and handed over to the Ministry of Education by the then Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development, now Ministry of National Infrastructure, on 23 November 2021.

However, it is regrettable to note that from 23 November 2021 to November 2024, the previous government did not take the necessary steps to make this facility operational.

My Ministry is presently finalising the outstanding internal arrangements required for the operationalisation of the pre-primary block. These include: the provision of furniture and school materials, the deployment of the required personnel and the completion of all compliance checks for early childhood facilities in accordance with established standards.

Madam Speaker, I will ensure that the new pre-primary block becomes operational as soon as possible once the remaining preparative measures have been completed. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister, I heard you. Yes, questions!

Ms Anquetil: Just one please!

Madam Speaker: Supplementary!

Ms Anquetil: *One Supplementary.* Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. Je remercie l'honorable ministre pour sa réponse et l'honorable ministre prévoit-il d'effectuer une visite des lieux très prochainement compte tenu de l'éminence de la rentrée scolaire ? Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

Dr. Gungapersad: C'est avec plaisir que je vais le faire, je demanderais à l'honorable député et les autres députés de la circonscription s'ils veulent venir ensemble. C'est avec plaisir qu'on va le faire pour s'assurer que très prochainement on commence avec ce *pre-primary school unit* à Baichoo Madhoo Government School.

Madam Speaker: Merci, l'honorable ministre. *Yes, hon. Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka.*

AGRICULTURAL LAND CONVERSIONS – FARMING & FOOD PRODUCTION – PRESERVATION MEASURES

(No. B/1226) **Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to agricultural land, he will state the extent thereof converted for commercial and residential purposes over the period 2019 to 2024, indicating the measures being envisaged for the protection and preservation thereof for farming and food production purposes in the face of the urgency to ensure food security.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you, hon. Member. Madam Speaker, I am informed that the extent of agricultural land that has been issued with a land conversion permit for commercial and residential purposes over the period 2019 to 2024 is 1568 hectares. I am tabling a list of all land conversion permits issued during that period.

I wish to draw the attention of the House that over the past years prime agricultural land has indeed been depleted from the land bank earmarked for agricultural activities. As a result, it has become a challenge for the agricultural sector to respond to the increasing demand for food production.

My Ministry has taken several measures to bring an equilibrium between infrastructural development and agricultural activities to ensure continuous food security including the following since June 2025 – no land conversion permit is being issued for commercial or residential project on prime agricultural land, such projects unless it is a project of national interest will instead be directed on bare land classified as marginal.

This year a land suitability map of Mauritius has been developed by the Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute whereby land has been classified as having high, moderate or low or marginal agricultural potential based on criteria such as topography of land, mechanisation potential and amount of rainfall. Based on this land suitability map 2025, landowners will now have visibility on the type of projects that may be undertaken on the land.

In line with PART III of the Sugar Industry Efficiency Act, as subsequently amended, for all land conversion permits granted, applicants need to plough back within a period of two years at least 50% of the proceeds arising from the conversion into sugar production as field or factory level owned to diversification within the sugar sector. They need to fully compensate for loss in agricultural production by, of course, generating and the equivalent

amount of such production for at least one crop cycle of eight years by putting under sugarcane cultivation, other land belonging to applicants. Alternatively, they need to implement projects relating to water and energy saving irrigation projects.

At the level of the Ministry, since 2025, promoters converting agricultural land to agricultural purposes are required to provide an undertaking to carry out agricultural activities. They are requested to inform my Ministry of the exact extent of land they will plough back and indicate the site where agricultural activities will be reinstated. They are required to work under the guidance of MCIA and the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute in elaborating agricultural activities to be undertaken. The monitoring and further evaluation of these activities are carried out by Mauritius Cane Industry Authority and FAREI through regular site visits.

FAREI has carried out extensive consultation with farmers, suppliers and other stakeholders, so as to develop a Precision Farming Grant Scheme to support innovative farmers in adopting advanced technologies that can increase productivity while ensuring long-term environmental and economic sustainability.

Madam Speaker, other accompanying measures have been implemented to encourage planters to adopt smart agricultural practices than opting for traditional modes of farming. Encouraging the farming community to shift to vertical farming, hydroponics, aeroponics, aquaponics, digitally controlled climate –the light, the temperature, the humidity, the carbon dioxide – for indoor crop production yield in 10 times more per unit area and is also a water efficient system.

Presently, the financial incentives for a planter to shift from conventional to sheltered farming are –

1. grant of Rs500,000 for construction of the greenhouse and a planter can benefit the Rs500,000 for a second time, and
2. imported greenhouse is exempted from customs duty VAT when imported by planter;
3. planters having a minimum 500 m² under hydroponic cultivation benefit duty-free exemption on single and double cab vehicles.

Madam Speaker, I wish to highlight that preserving our agricultural land is not merely an environmental obligation but a strategic imperative for safeguarding national food security and ensuring the sustainable development of our country.

The decision we take today guided by prudence, scientific evidence and long-term vision will determine the resilience of our agricultural sector for generations to come.

It is therefore essential that all stakeholders remain committed to protecting productive land, promoting judicious land use and reinforcing the foundation of a self-reliant and sustainable Mauritius.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister. Yes, hon. Dr. Ms Thannoo?

Dr. Ms Thannoo: Will the Minister kindly investigate traditional farming methods implemented by the Navdanya movement, by the Rural Women's Assembly, methods that are low-tech and that ensure resilience for long-term and the protection of the land? Thank you.

Dr. Boolell: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. Dr. for putting the question. She can rest assured we are not going to depart from traditions but we are going to put the premium necessary to make sure that there is an outcome. Having said so, we cannot also forgo our interest in relation to technology, where there is a constant breakthrough.

Madam Speaker: Yes, of course. Yes?

Dr. Ms Thannoo: Madam Speaker, in the era of climate crisis, the only method that has proven to work is the method implemented by the Navdanya movement without pesticides. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes?

Dr. Boolell: Madam Speaker, since our hon. friend is well versed, I would like to be enlightened and I am here to learn since we are all on the learning curve. Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: So sweetly said, hon. Minister. Maybe you both should meet.

(Interruptions)

The same goes for all of you because questions are very interesting but getting things done really is more interesting.

Okay, next question, hon. Caserne!

PUBLIC HOSPITALS – PARKING SLOTS SHORTAGE – MEASURES

(No. B/1227) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to each of the public hospitals, he will state the –

- (a) number of parking slots available thereat, indicating the number thereof assigned for public use, and
- (b) measures being envisaged to address the shortage of parking slots thereat.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, the number of parking slots available for public at the main regional hospital is as follows –

- Jeetoo Hospital: 8;
- Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital: 210;
- Flacq Hospital: 158;
- Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital, Rose Belle: 137;
- Victoria Hospital: 90;
- Brown Sequard: 76;
- Subramania Bharati: 32;
- Long Mountain: 50;
- Mahebourg: 54;
- Souillac: 14;
- New Cancer Hospital: 24;
- ENT: 26.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that there is a shortage of parking for the public. Measures taken are as follows –

- Region 1: At Jeetoo Hospital – Arrangements are being made for some 25 additional parking slots to be available. Nevertheless, the public is being allowed to use vacant staff parking slots during visiting hours, that is from 6.30 to 7.00 hours and 15.30 to 17.00 hours;
- Region 2: Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Hospital – In addition to the existing parking, a new parking behind the Catering Unit is operational since June 2025, providing 40 additional parking slots for the public. Additional 15 slots have been provided behind the ward which serves as parking for the public and the nursing

staff. Madam Speaker, a new parking area has been identified in the vicinity of the hospital.

- At Long Mountain Hospital, a new proposal for additional parking spaces is under preparation in collaboration with the Ministry of National Infrastructure.
- At Mahebourg Hospital, due to the old structure of the hospital and special constraints thereat, provisions cannot be made for additional parking spaces.
- Region 5: At Victoria Hospital, there is unfortunately no space in the premises for additional parking. However, the public is being allowed to use staff parking during visiting hours, that is, from 6.30 to 7.00 in the morning and from 15.30 to 17.00 in the afternoon.
- At the National Cancer Centre, measures have been taken for provision of some additional 40 parking for the public near the hospital. I am informed that a plot of land to an extent of 1,266.26 m² has been acquired with the Ministry of Housing and Lands and has been vested in my Ministry for use as a parking area for the National Cancer Centre.

The project is in the pipeline and financial clearance is being sought to start the project.

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

Mr Caserne: Thank you. Madam Speaker, may I request the hon. Minister with regard to Jeetoo Hospital, the number he has mentioned, that is 25, is the space already available or will he have to seek for additional space for creation of additional slots of parking?

Mr Bachoo: Well, I am informed that a plot is available where 25 additional parking slots can be made available. So, I will have to try to find out where that plot is.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. Aumeer?

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Minister, in the light of the new Subramania Bharati, Eye Hospital whether he would make arrangements to have a holding area for buses which are coming daily now to drop patients and wait at times, causing quite a backlog on the exit route that exits from the roundabout of Moka onto the motorway? Thank you.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, I am aware of the problem. I definitely need to get a plot of land for that purpose and we are going to contact the Ministry of Housing and Lands so

that they can help us in doing that work. I am really aware of the problem that is being created every day in the morning and even in the evening.

Madam Speaker: Excellent. Yes, one last question!

Dr. Prayag: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Could the hon. Minister consider to have a multi-storeyed level parking at SSRN Hospital and even to get his Ministry to inform the staff, the security guards who cater for public coming during visiting hours to say what you have just said, that they are allowed during visiting hours in the hospital? Thank you.

Mr Bachoo: I have already mentioned that some 40 additional parking slots are being prepared, 40+15 and as the hon. Member is fully aware, in the years to come, we are going to have a brand-new hospital at Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Hospital.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Now time is up. The Table has been advised that questions B/1231, B/1234, B/1236 have been withdrawn. Thank you very much everyone.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

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

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

BAD WEATHER ALLOWANCE – REGISTERED ARTISANAL FISHERMEN

(4.20 p.m.)

The Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries (Dr. A. Boolell): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Dr. Boolell: Madam Speaker, with your permission I wish to make a Statement on the issue of payment of Bad Weather Allowance to registered fishermen. I am informed that registered artisanal fishermen in Mauritius are entitled to payment of Bad Weather Allowance of Rs800 per day. As at date, there are 2,546 registered artisanal fishermen and an amount of around Rs40 million is disbursed on a monthly basis as Bad Weather Allowance.

With a view to ascertaining the genuineness of registered fishermen, my Ministry has submitted the list of 2,546 fishermen to the Mauritius Revenue Authority and the Central Business Registration Department. These institutions have been requested to confirm the number of fishermen who are involved in other economic activities. Section 122(e) of the Fisheries Act provides that the supervising officer of my Ministry shall deregister a fisherman when it has been proved that he is involved in gainful employment.

Madam Speaker, let me clearly state to the House, payment of Bad Weather Allowance will be effected to compliant registered fishermen, including those holding a fish-related Business Registration Number. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you!

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Law Reform Commission Bill (No. XXXI of 2025) was read a first time.

Second Reading

THE ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) BILL

(No. XXX of 2025)

Order for Second Reading read.

(4.21 p.m.)

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister, take a deep breath!

The Minister of Land Transport (Mr Osman Mahomed): Madam Speaker, I move that the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill (No. XXX of 2025) be read a second time.

The Bill, Madam Speaker, relates to a very fundamental matter, that is, the preservation of human life and reduction of family sufferings as a result of road casualties and fatalities. Every year, we publish statistics of road accidents. We see the numbers and debate the trends for a while but numbers, Madam Speaker, have a way of sanitising tragedy. Behind every figure in those statistics, there is a grieving mother, a father who will not see his siblings grow up, a young professional whose potential and aspirations have been cut short or even a family which has been plunged into poverty because the breadwinner was taken away by a reckless act on our roads.

The number of serious injuries and fatalities on our roads have become a silent pandemic, to repeat the words used by Jean Todt, the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Road Safety.

Madam Speaker, you had introduced Mr Todt to this House on Tuesday 08 April this year as the guest of the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, himself a great proponent of road safety, who announced during his speech on the budget exercise the re-introduction of the penalty point system in January 2026.

So, here we are with the presentation of this Bill less than five months later with a penalty point system which is different from the first version of 2013, in terms of the broader spectrum of offences it covers, the use of technology, the innovative redemption of points facility, several amendments to other sections of the Road Traffic Act, and many others with, however, the overarching objective remaining the same, that is, change in psychology of driving – a simple universal principle!

Driving is a privilege and not a right. If you abuse of that privilege, you will lose it!

I see on the list of orators today that the Leader of the Opposition will intervene on this Bill and I can sense it, amongst others, that he will surely put forth the argument that there has not been any consultation thereon, maybe.

Madam Speaker, I have personally communicated...

Madam Speaker: Don't pre-empt what he is going to say. Give him a chance!

Mr Osman Mahomed: During the PNQ, he had questioned about it.

Madam Speaker: Don't say!

Mr Osman Mahomed: I have personally communicated and provided a lot of explanatory information on the Bill outside the House, in the press and so have many of my hon. colleagues, to whom I am thankful.

The Bill has come for Second Reading today after 12 days from the date it was published on the website of the National Assembly, that is, on Friday 28 November 2025. So, ample time was given during which I had even invited one and all to make their views known

either by writing to my Ministry or to let their views be heard in this House through their elected representatives.

During the period 10 March 2013 to 27 July 2015, the Penalty Points System brought about evidence-based results as the number of fatalities on the road had dropped by 13% to 137. There were indeed 108 fatalities in 2010, 152 in 2011 and 156 in 2012.

The provisions relating to the Cumulative Road Traffic Offence (CRTO) were amended a first time in 2018 and again a second time in 2023 to reduce the number of offences leading to disqualification of a driver's licence from an initial 6 offences to 5 offences in 2018 and subsequently to 4 offences in 2023 because the CRTO was not giving the desired results.

Still because the CRTO was not performing, it was amended again in 2024, so to speak for the third time, to enlarge the spectrum of offences from 11 offences to 23. This was supposedly, again, so to speak, to catch more traffic offenders and disqualify them, upon committing four offences within a shorter period of time.

But then, as the 2024 elections were imminent, the amendment to extend the total spectrum of offences from 11 to 23 was not proclaimed.

Again, for the second time, ten years down the line in 2024 after a first time in 2015, cheap politics took precedence over road safety in Mauritius.

So, I let the hon. Leader of the Opposition to draw his own conclusion. He, who had questioned me during the Private Notice Question on Friday 07 February 2025, has asked me to state the measures being taken to address the increasing number of road accidents.

Today, I am standing in this House with a sense of responsibility as Minister under whose remit falls the subject of road safety. We have come forward with a concrete piece of legislation to replace the non-performing CRTO left behind by the MSM government, and like I said earlier, still prevalent today.

We have taken on board nitty-gritty of the specific concerns the Leader of the Opposition raised during that PNQ, and I am here referring to the problem, for example, of illegal rally of motorcycles. He was quite elaborate on this question; it is a very pertinent question.

I must stress that this offence is included in the Third Schedule of the Bill and it justly carries the highest number of points, that is, 8 to 10 points out of a total of 15 points.

But then, Madam Speaker, the legislation will not bring the desired results without effective enforcement by the Police and other authorised officers.

Allow me, now, to respond to criticisms levelled against the Bill. Some have qualified the reintroduction of the Penalty Points System as a punitive measure that also seeks to replenish the coffers of Government with payment of more fines.

I beg to differ. Under the CRTO, a driver's licence could be disqualified as he has committed only 4 offences. The proposed Bill provides for a disqualification when 15 points have been exceeded, meaning that the person can no longer drive on reaching 16 points. Someone committing offences carrying 2 points, for example, will only be disqualified after committing such offences 8 times repeatedly over 36 months because you get 15 points for 36 months.

As regards the nonsensical criticism of bringing more money to the coffers, I have to emphasise that none of the offences listed in the Schedule to the Bill under penalty points have had their accompanying fines increased. So, that argue does not hold water!

The aim is not to generate revenue through fines, but to restore discipline on our roads, and to those who still persist and commit mistakes in a repetitive manner, to learn it the hard way – to have them removed from driving or riding on our roads until they have decided to improve their behaviours.

The provisions laid down in the Bill are corrective rather than punitive in approach. The figures demonstrate them all. Between 2013 and 2015, when the Penalty Points System was prevalent, 9 persons only were disqualified from holding a licence. Yet, the number of fatalities had dropped by 13% while between 2015 to date, under the CRTO, 249 drivers have been disqualified and 2 licences have been cancelled.

So, let all drivers, in particular professional drivers, take note of this fact before drawing hasty conclusions or allowing themselves to be misguided.

Madam Speaker, the Penalty Points System has the critical “fear factor”, which is non-existent in the CRTO. The genius of the system is that the points allocated to any driver is

constant and visible to him that any further offence will bring him closer to disqualification or cancellation of his licence. The possibility for him to lose the tremendous privilege of driving following a disqualification is the strongest psychological effect prompting a driving behavioural change in him.

By the way, a distinction has to be made between disqualification and cancellation. In the latter case, the driver or rider has to take the test all over again.

Madam Speaker, the re-introduction of the Penalty Points System is not a trial-and-error experiment that we are now resorting to like the previous government was doing with the CRTO. I have explained earlier the several changes that occurred over the last 10 years. The Bill is the product of a collective and profound reflection designed to meet an urgent national concern.

It is a proven system adopted by several developed nations. Its re-introduction aligns our country with proven international best practices. Wherever the Penalty Points System has been in operation, it has shown significant and immediate positive impacts on road safety. I am optimistic for the same results in our country.

The hon. Attorney General, whom I am very thankful to, has qualified this Bill as being technical one rather than a philosophical one.

Allow me, therefore, without any further ado, to delve into the technical clauses of the Bill.

Clause 4 introduces a crucial instrument of accountability, which is the Penalty Points Certificate. This certificate serves as a record of a driver's accumulated penalty points and in line with our commitment to digital governance, this record will be accessible to every driver via a secure digital platform, that is, the MoKloud. This ease of accessibility allows drivers to monitor their points which in turn serves as a deterrent to irresponsible driving behaviour. Clause 4 also defines the permitted maximum number of 15 points, during a period of 36 months.

For Provisional Driving Licence holders (commonly known as learners) the maximum limit is set at 10 points. The objective is to inculcate in them safe, responsible and disciplined driving habits from the very start of their driving practice.

For Competent Driving Licence holders and holders of International Driving Permits, the permitted maximum number of points is 15, again over 36 months. A driver who has reached 16 points, shall upon application from the Licensing Officer, that is, the police, be disqualified by the Court for such period of time as the Court shall determine.

Clause 5 relates to an existing power of the Court to disqualify a person from holding a driving licence. The amendment being brought sets the maximum delay within which the Court should forward any license which has been surrendered to it subsequent to the disqualification of the license holder to the Licensing Officer. The maximum delay has been set at 30 days.

Madam Speaker, questions have been raised as to why the present Bill does not cater for allocation of penalty points relating to driving under the influence of alcohol, drug or other intoxicating substance, and dangerous driving.

I have to reassure the House that the Road Traffic Act already provides for harsher sanctions spanning from cancellation of licence, imprisonment of up to 8 years for second time offenders and with fines which have been doubled in this present Bill to Rs500,000 for second time offenders. But then, I will invite hon. Members to read clauses 6 and 7 of the present Bill together with the second Schedule to the Road Traffic Act.

In the interest of time, Madam Speaker, if needed, I can table information in relation thereto. Because if I talk about this, it is going to be too lengthy.

I wish to undertake, if needed, I can table it!

Madam Speaker: Yes, table it, please!

Mr Osman Mahomed: I will give you later. I wish to underline that any disqualification may be from either holding a licence or obtaining a licence. The latter is relevant to the question raised. The Licensing Officer then keeps a record which will prevent the disqualified person from applying for a Provisional Licence for such period as the Court has determined.

So, it's not true to say that there will not be any effect to a person not holding a license at the material time of the accident because many people have said that people who have no licenses, will not be penalised because they don't have license. But then they will be barred

from applying for a license between a period of ranging from 12 months to 24 months if they are caught because the police will keep a record on this.

Clause 8 of the Bill sets out the process for allocation of penalty points and also the period of effectiveness of any penalty points allocated.

In all circumstances, penalty points are allocated by the Court in addition to any other sentence, including monetary or custodial, which it deems fit to pass. While allocating penalty points, the Court may, where appropriate, where the licence holder has exceeded the maximum number of points, disqualify the person from holding or obtaining a licence or even cancel the driving licence as the case may be.

In the Bill, appeal procedures have been provided against the determination of the Court for either allocating a number of points, or disqualifying a person from holding or obtaining a licence or even against the cancellation of the licence. Where there is an appeal, any determination or decision of the Court is suspended pending the outcome of the appeal.

As regards the effectiveness of penalty points, every point allocated shall remain effective for a period of 36 months or until it has been taken into account for the purpose of a disqualification order. Through a collaborative mechanism set out between the Court and the Licensing Officer, accumulated penalty points will be managed efficiently and accurately.

There seems to be a misunderstanding on this issue among the public as gathered from interventions made in the media. The law is very clear. Only the points which have been allocated and have “matured” or let us say, actually it’s called “ripe”, so to speak, for a period of 36 months will be erased automatically. The others will still appear on the penalty points certificate until their turns for the 36th month have come.

Clause 8 also allows any license holder to apply for and obtain a hard copy of the penalty point certificate in his respect from the Licensing Officer on payment of a prescribed fee, over and above his status, he can obtain a copy free of charge, anytime on MoKloud.

Clause 9 inserts a new section (i.e. Section 123H) in the main Act. This section sets out in details the period for which the Court shall disqualify a person from holding or obtaining a driving licence where that person has exceeded the permitted number of penalty points.

In a nutshell, the Court shall disqualify for a period of not less than 6 months nor more than 12 months holders of all types of licences be it local or international.

Questions have also been raised as to how the Bill will cater for those driving without holding a driving licence. Clause 9 provides a more severe sanction for any person without holding a driving licence. His disqualification, like I said earlier, will be for a period of 12 months over and above what other legislations cater for.

This Clause also provides that any person who has been disqualified shall surrender his licence or permit to the Court as soon as possible but not later than 5 days of any Court order made in that respect for retention. This process sends a strong message of deterrence to repeated offenders. It reinforces the seriousness and awareness of the loss of privilege of driving.

Clause 9 also provides that the Court shall order for every person whose licence is disqualified for any period of time to follow a rehabilitation course, which shall be approved by the Licensing Officer, that is the Police, before the licence is restored to him.

By virtue of the same section of the law, a person who is a licensed driving instructor will have to surrender his driving instructor's licence as well for retention in the event that his driving licence is disqualified.

Clause 10, focuses on the possibility for redemption of points and this is a novelty as compared to the last version of the penalty points system. The holder of a driving licence or international driving permit who has accumulated at least 10 points but not more than 14 penalty points may apply to the Court for the redemption of a maximum of 3 points. An application form has been prescribed for that purpose. The person has to complete a rehabilitation course before applying for redemption of points.

It needs to be explained that, the redemption of a maximum of 3 penalty points shall relate to the last offence, implying that, if a person was allocated only 2 points for his last offence, only 2 points will be redeemed. If 4 points or more were allocated for the last offence, only 3 points shall be redeemed.

The holder of a licence who applies for the redemption of points may do so subsequently only after 36 months. I think this is an important point to be retained. The holder of a provisional driving licence cannot apply for any redemption of points – meaning learners.

Madam Speaker, the possibility for redemption of points is fundamental as it establishes a clear pathway for drivers to reduce their penalty points through an educational

intervention and reduces the possible risks of disqualification. The contents of the course shall be defined by the licensing officer.

This Clause underscores the fact that this government's commitment to road safety is not at all about taking away licences maliciously, as some are pretending. It is verily about educating drivers, rewarding corrective driving behaviour and ultimately reducing the number of road accidents on our roads.

Clause 11 and 12 are not of significance to the Penalty Point System. The first one increases the maximum fine for offences committed under the requirements of the Road Traffic Act from Rs100,000 to Rs200,000 and the second one deals with the renumbering of schedules attached to the Act.

Clause 13 establishes the procedure for determining the number of penalty points to be referenced on a Fixed Penalty Notice where only one offence is detected on the FPN, the notice shall mention the lowest number of penalty points specified in that range of points for that offence. Where more than one offence is set on a single FPN, the lowest penalty points in the offence carrying the largest range of points shall be inserted in that notice. Where there are two or more offences within the same range of penalty points, the FPN shall make reference to the lower number of points of any of the offences.

Clause 14 of the Bill establishes the payment process with regard to fix penalty notices and the manner in which the District Court shall endorse the notice with the appropriate penalty points and communicate same to the licensing officer.

Clause 15 relates to instances where a person does not pay the fixed penalty and the case eventually goes to the court for determination. It also provides that where a person is convicted, the court shall allocate the highest number of penalty points for that offence. Where there is more than one offence in the notice, the court shall allocate the highest number of points in respect of the offence carrying the highest range of penalty points. So, depending on whether you go to the court, you will get the lowest lows of points or highest highs of points in case you lose at the court.

Clause 16 and 17 deal with speeding offences detected by means of a photographic enforcement device for which the police causes a notice, in short PEDN, to be served on the owner of vehicle used in commission of the offence. The same principle of allocation of penalty point is applied in the case of PEDN as that applied for a fixed penalty notice. The PEDN has only one offence recorded therein and the lowest number of penalty points is

referenced in the notice served on the offender. However, in the event the penalty is not paid and the matter is referred to the court, the court shall allocate the highest number of points for that offence.

Madam Speaker, questions have been raised in several quarters as to why a range of points have been provided for each offence instead of fixed number of points. This approach gives licence holders the choice to admit outright the commission of the offence and thus pay the minimum penalty to be allocated the lowest number of penalty points. For those who decide to refer the matter to the court and are found guilty, the law provides for a maximum fine and highest number of penalty points to be inflicted. It is note-worthy that the Penalty Point System of 2013 also had a range of points and its application did not pose any administrative or legal problem.

Clause 18 to 23 cover mainly the repeal and replacement of schedules. Clause 24 of the Bill addresses transitional arrangements, specifically it makes provision, detailing how disqualifications imposed under the repeal section of the law dealing with the CRTO will be legally dealt with during the transition to the new provisions set out in the Bill.

Madam Speaker, the Bill is not a copy paste document of the previous 2013 legislation. It cannot be compared to the times and times amended legislation which constitutes the CRTO. This Bill is an improved and comprehensive piece of legislation which is designed to cope with our present road safety challenges and response as much as possible to the call of the hour in terms of road safety.

The new schedule of offences comprises 33 traffic offences as compared 19 under the 2013 legislation, covering various aspects of road safety. This expansion in the number of offences is critical as it plucks in several loopholes and addresses dangerous driving behaviours which were previously dealt with only by fines; a course of enforcement which lack deterrence for repeated offenders. All the offences listed in the schedule prioritise factors identified in road crashes data namely in four categories which is –

- Speed – for example, driving at excessive speed;
- Distraction – for example, the use of mobile phones whilst driving;
- Restraint – for example, the non-use of seatbelts and failure to use child restraints;

- Recklessness – for example, dangerous driving, overtaking over continuous white line, and failing to comply with traffic signals.

The thresholds and values in this Bill have been specifically calibrated to align with evidence-based standards used in the most successful jurisdictions. The range of penalty points are in no way arbitrary; they are correlated with the frequency and severity of an offence contributing to fatal and serious crashes.

Madam Speaker, one key aspect of the modernisation of the Penalty Point System is the Penalty Point Certificate. There will not be any driving licence counterpart as there was in the first penalty point of 2013. The digital e-counterpart will incorporate sophisticated QR-code for security and authenticity purposes. To ensure the accurate and real time management of the Penalty Point System, a comprehensive IT enhancement programme integration will be undertaken across the following key government entities for a seamless inter-operability among each of these platforms and to securely link these 3 systems principally.

1. The Revenue Collection and Case Management System of the judiciary;
2. The Integrated Driving Licence Management of the Police;
3. The National Land Transport Authority IT System.

Madam Speaker, countries like Singapore and the UK, which have a penalty point system in operations since decade, both of fatality rates per 100,000 population are 1.9 per 100,000 and 4.7 respectively. The rates of fatalities reflect the high level of discipline and good drivers' behaviour achieved through strict application of the traffic laws and effective enforcement. In the case of our country, our fatality rate is 10-11 per 100,000, which is five to six times more than Singapore population and has remained constant for a decade.

We need to benchmark ourselves with countries which have been successful and try our best through all possible means to lower our fatality rates. This is the ambition of this government and one of the priority objectives of my Ministry and I sincerely hope that we succeed.

To conclude, Madam Speaker, the legislation we are passing today, will determine the road safety of our citizens for tomorrow. I am optimistic that it will contribute to save lives and consequently reduce the suffering of many families. I reiterate that the philosophy of the Bill is for safe driving to be inculcated and duly rewarded and for recklessness to be addressed with utmost severity and swift consequences.

It is also an opportunity to bring our legal framework on road safety at par with international norms while emphasising discipline and responsible driving. For all good intents behind the reintroduction of the Penalty Point System, I am convinced that hon. Members in this House will uphold this Bill. Let this Assembly be remembered as the one which finally took the bold and decisive step to curve carnage on our roads. Let us together give our citizens the safety they deserve while using our roads. It is my sincere duty to acknowledge the dedication of all those who have been involved in the preparation of this significant piece of legislation.

I wish to extend my deepest appreciation and thanks to the officers of the Prime Minister's Office, the Attorney General's Office, police department, the NLTA, the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit and the staff of my Ministry who form part of the committee I chaired on the subject matter. Their diligent efforts, collaborative spirits and expert advice have been instrumental in meticulously drafting and refining this critical Bill.

Above all, I would like to thank the hon. Prime Minister for his firm and unwavering support in enabling the introduction of the Bill and the hon. Deputy Prime Minister as well. This morning, he actually called me for more details. I am thankful to the hon. Attorney General for always lending a helping hand and invaluable advice whenever required, and I look forward to working with the hon. Minister of ICT as regards the digitalisation aspect, which remains a *sine qua non* for the successful implementation of this legislation.

By passing this Bill, Madam Speaker, we are not merely imposing new rules; we are laying the essential foundation for a long-term vision, a disciplined road network and a nation where road trauma is significantly reduced.

On this note, Madam Speaker, and with these remarks, I commend the Bill to the House.

Dr. Boolell rose and seconded.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Maybe, we can raise for tea. Yes. Thank you very much.

At 4.51 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.42 p.m., with Madam Speaker in the Chair

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, please be seated!

Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(5.43 p.m.)

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr G. Lesjongard): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me the floor to intervene on the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill. Here we are again, Madam Speaker, having another debate in this House on the Road Traffic Amendments.

This time, it is for the reintroduction of the Penalty Points System. Honestly, Madam Speaker, I cannot understand why it took a whole year for the Government to reintroduce a system that was implemented before. I recall when I put a PNQ to the hon. Minister back in February, he had stated that they are working on the reintroduction of that system. In the month of July, I had put another question to him. At that time, he had said that Cabinet had approved. It is only six months later that this piece of legislation is being introduced in the House.

Madam Speaker, I still remember how critical the current Minister was with regard to our road traffic system back in his days in the Opposition. I believe one year down in his mandate now, he has seen the amount of work that has been done and the challenges that still remain, it is safe to say that he has been humbled, Madam Speaker.

Nevertheless, we are not here today to discuss on the performance of the hon. Minister, and I shall not stoop to that level by being demagogical on the number of...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Il est toujours en train de faire du bruit.

One moment! Do you mind staying in your seat so I can see at the back who is mumbling?

Come inside. Do not go outside.

Mr Lesjongard: Is this okay?

Madam Speaker: Will the hon. Member, back bencher, please let him speak?

(Interruptions)

Mr Etwareea: If he has something to say, yes.

Madam Speaker: Non, non. Mais vous, ce n'est pas le moment.

Mr Lesjongard: May I now, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: Please, carry on.

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you. Like I was saying, I shall not stoop by being demagogical on the number of deaths on our roads even though that number has already exceeded the number of the previous year. As we say, one death on our roads is too many, Madam Speaker.

Mais en fait, aujourd’hui, le comportement de certains automobilistes est – si je peux faire une comparaison – comme ces internautes qui démontrent une agressivité sur les réseaux sociaux. C’est malheureusement une tendance très dangereuse au niveau de notre société.

Madam Speaker, the Penalty Point System – let us be blunt – was an utter failure when it was introduced back in 2013. *Permettez-moi, pour étayer ce que je suis en train de dire, de citer l’extrait d’un hebdomadaire, le Week-End du dimanche 30 novembre, qui écrit ceci avec un type qui dit pourquoi le permis à points de 2013 a échoué. On retrouve dans cet article...*

Madam Speaker: C’est un article récent ?

Mr Lesjongard: Oui, très récent. C’est au mois de novembre, le dimanche 30 novembre 2025, Madame la présidente.

Dans cet article, on se sert des termes tels que « C’est un système trop lourd. Des points mal enregistrés. Transmission lente. Dossiers incomplets. Suspension erronée. Application illégale d’un district à un autre district. Contestations [et le ministre en a fait part] des chauffeurs professionnels. »

Voilà un peu ce que disait cet article, Madame la présidente.

Unfortunately, nothing in the present Bill offers a solution to all the reasons of the failure of the Penalty Point System back in 2014. Therefore, we are simply going backwards.

Now, during the previous mandate, Madam Speaker, whether we like it or not, considerable progress had been achieved with regard to road traffic. For example, road safety was introduced in the school curriculum from Grades 1 to 6 as we all firmly believe that education is key in changing this mindset of *hors-la-loi* that presently we see on our roads.

But unfortunately, I have to raise an issue in this House, Madam Speaker, to the attention of one and everybody, but especially to the Prime Minister. Somebody has brought that to my attention, Madam Speaker. Somebody who has been convicted for numerous traffic offences, and it goes over the years.

If you will allow me, Madam Speaker, I will refer to some of those traffic offences where he has been convicted. For example –

- Convicted on six occasions of one or more offences under CRTO;
- Disqualified for all types of vehicles for two years;
- Failing to give notice for non-renewal of motor vehicle license;
- Failing to give particulars of driver;
- Exceeding speed limit by not more than 15km/h;
- Failing to produce driving license on demand;
- Insurance vignette not affixed;
- Exceeding speed limit by more than 15km/h;
- Exceeding speed limit.

Madam Speaker: What are you citing to us, please?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, somebody...

Madam Speaker: No, but what are you citing exactly?

Mr Lesjongard: Convictions.

Madam Speaker: Convictions of somebody?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, for traffic offences.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr Lesjongard: Why am I citing this? Because I understand that he is...

(Interruptions)

Let me finish what I am saying.

Madam Speaker: No, the...

Mr Lesjongard: He has been recruited as an Adviser in the actual Government, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Oh, okay.

Mr Lesjongard: That is why I am citing this! Otherwise, why would I waste the time of the House?

Madam Speaker: No, if you say...

Mr Lesjongard: Using a handheld microphone or telephone handset whilst driving.

Mr Etwareea: It is totally irrelevant!

Mr Lesjongard: Failing to produce driving license on demand or photocopy thereof.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, just one moment!

(Interruptions)

Will everybody let me do my job?

(Interruptions)

I do not mind you are saying all this, but start by saying why you are saying it. Then, we will understand! And who you are talking about?

Mr Lesjongard: I will come to that also, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Non, non. Sinon on se dit que vous parlez de n'importe qui. Je ne sais pas.

Mr Lesjongard: I have said. I have said, Madam Speaker. That person I am mentioning, he is an Adviser...

Madam Speaker: Now, you are saying! Now, you are saying!

Mr Lesjongard: ...of a Minister in Government.

Madam Speaker: Now, you are saying!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, I have said that.

Madam Speaker: But when you started talking...

Mr Lesjongard: Okay, Madam Speaker, there is a long list of convictions.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr Lesjongard: Okay?

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Donn so nom!*

Madam Speaker: Exactement!

Mr Lesjongard: No, Madam Speaker, I will not.

(Interruptions)

I will give it to the Prime Minister later.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. It is not fair he throws this around, and he says he is an Adviser.

Madam Speaker: He is an Adviser to which Minister?

The Deputy Prime Minister: So, people will think he is any Minister's Adviser. Give us the name!

Madam Speaker: He is an Adviser in which Ministry?

The Deputy Prime Minister: On a point of order, it is unfair.

Madam Speaker: In which Ministry is he advising?

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, ...

Madam Speaker: If that person was advising me, I would like to know.

Mr Lesjongard: He is an Adviser in the Ministry of Public Infrastructure.

Madam Speaker: Okay! Good. What I would suggest, hon. Leader of the Opposition, you have made your point. Can you please refer us to the documents that you have got and tell us where these documents emanate from?

Is it made public? Has it been made public? *Il faut me dire!*

Mr Lesjongard: Do you want me to table the document, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: No, table it if it is authentic and if it has been made public.

Yes, table it if it has been made public. *On n'a pas besoin de cacher les choses.*

Mr Lesjongard: Whether it is 20 years ago, Madam Speaker, you cannot recruit somebody who has been convicted for so many offenses that is why I raised this issue whilst we are debating on the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill.

Mr Gunness: *To 'nn bliye to leader ti touy dimounn!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: You have to give him...

Madam Speaker: So, what has happened now?

Mr Lesjongard: I will continue.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr Lesjongard: Now, another issue that happened and shocked everybody was video of a biker over speeding on the motorway and mocking a patrol officer on his way and the hon. Minister, I think he was wrong in doing that – decided to meet that biker. He should have left that to the competent authorities to deal with that biker.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Madam Speaker on a point of order!

Madam Speaker: No! You mean on a point of personal explanation?

Mr Osman Mahomed: The biker asked to meet me but I did not meet him.

Madam Speaker: Okay. It was not the point of order.

Mr Lesjongard: He said on media that he met him. Now, Madam Speaker, with regard to drug abuse, necessary amendments were brought to the law to allow the police to detect drugs in the bloodstream or urine of a driver and this was a major breakthrough in law enforcement.

Now, at the beginning of the year, the hon. Prime Minister in a reply to PMQT put to him by hon. F. Quirin, mentioned that only for the month of January, 13 drivers have been tested positive to drugs. What I would have expected, what I would have wished is that that the hon. Minister tells us up to now, how many drivers have been tested positive to drugs.

Madam Speaker, let me say a few words on the cumulative road traffic offences system which is being abolished today with this legislation. What we should know is that this system led to the cancellation of approximately 13 driving licences over the past two years.

At first among 11 offences, a driver or motorcyclist ran the risk of suspension of their licence if they committed four offences in a span of 24 months. The law, Madam Speaker, was amended in 2024 to add 12 more offences to this list, some of which I know have been included in the present Bill, such as –

- failing to wear high visibility clothing as a rider;
- breach of lane discipline on dual carriageway;
- failing to give way when coming from a less important road, and also

- taking part in a rally.

And these inclusions, Madam Speaker, already existed in the legislation. 10 additional offences, now, have been included in the present legislation to reach, like the hon. Minister had said earlier, a total of 33 offences. But, just one reference, let me refer to offences 2 and 3 regarding headlamps and rear lamps during darkness which I agree Madam Speaker is a hazard. But what if it happens while the person is driving? So, he will now lose four points and it seems to me this is very harsh, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, we are now moving from a system where a driver or rider was allowed a maximum of four offences from a list of 23 offences in a span of 24 months to a system of points based on categories of offences on a list of 33 offences over a span of 36 months.

Personally, Madam Speaker, I believe the present system has been subjected to some slight modification and repackaged in order to give the impression that this government is acting upon the urgency of the situation on our roads. However, any new amendments should be a step forward whereas I believe that these amendments bring us backwards.

En résumé, Madame la présidente, le ministre nous propose du déjà vu et avec l'attribution de licence graduelle qui figurait déjà dans les amendements de 2024, cela vient confirmer cette théorie.

Now, the hon. Minister might argue as to why the previous government did not proclaim the 2024 amendments. Well, I can tell the hon. Minister, you have had one year and yet you did not do it, waiting for some 112 deaths on our roads and now you are proposing the penalty point system which, like I said earlier contains the same offences, Madam Speaker.

Mr Mohamed: Atone my friend. Atone!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, the previous government was also coming forward with a driver and educative centre and I wonder what happened in one year on this project since I understand that the land had already been identified.

Now, with regard to – and the hon. Minister mentioned that in his speech – fines that are on the way up. Now, considerable increase for certain offences is present in the amendment brought to the House today. But let me remind the hon. Minister because he made mention to that in his speech – that when they were sitting on the Opposition bench and when those fines

were increased under the previous legislation, this is what they said, Madam Speaker. And I refer to the hon. Minister to what hon. Dr. Boolell said when he intervened on the legislation during that time and I quote –

“With that substantial increase in fine, you might as well take my vehicle because the fines are so excessive. I won’t be able to pay”.

Another quote, Madam Speaker –

“This is not the reason why the government has to rip off taxpayers directly or indirectly.”

Although I agree that we should increase the fines, Madam Speaker. Now, some who intervened at that time even suggested that this would provide police officers with excessive powers and the opportunity to abuse the system and take bribes in order for drivers to retain their licences.

Yes, it is in the Hansard that is why I am quoting that, Madam Speaker.

Madame la présidente, la loi était suffisamment, à mon avis, sévère mais le problème sur nos routes est beaucoup plus profond. Déjà notre flotte de véhicule sur nos routes est passée à 743 190 véhicules – un record, on doit l’accepter. Généré par la brillante idée de ce gouvernement d’augmenter la taxe sur les véhicules soi-disant pour les rendre ‘inaccessibles’ à une certaine classe, mais cela a résulté à un *panic buying* à la veille de la présentation du dernier budget. Avec une flotte de plus de 740 000 véhicules sur nos routes, cela nous fait en moyenne environ 250 véhicules par kilomètre de route, soit le double de la moyenne mondiale. Et qui dit plus de véhicules, Madame la présidente, dit aussi une augmentation de la probabilité des accidents sur nos routes.

Autre fait qui est intéressant – et je dois le souligner – en ce qui concerne les bus électriques, je constate que l’honorable ministre favorise ce programme, c’est-à-dire, on aura une flotte de véhicules, de bus électriques qui nous viennent de l’Inde et de ce fait, dans cette démarche, cela nous permet de faire d’une pierre deux coups, c’est-à-dire d’utiliser l’énergie propre et en même temps, encourager les mauriciens à voyager par le transport public et de ce fait, réduire le nombre de véhicules sur nos routes. Par contre, ce qui est navrant, Madame la présidente, c’est de constater que le gouvernement ne va plus de l’avant avec l’extension du Metro Express, car cela aurait permis de diminuer davantage le nombre de véhicules sur nos routes, et de ce fait, les accidents.

Mais, Madame la présidente, le problème le plus grave demeure cette fâcheuse culture de voyous sur nos routes, cette tendance de certains automobilistes et motocyclistes de faire exprès d'enfreindre les règles sur la route. C'est pourquoi j'ai cité un peu plus tôt, Madame la présidente, le cas de ce monsieur. Comme on dit dans le langage créole ; *gagn nissa lor larout*.

(Interruptions)

Comme si les lois sont là pour ne pas les respecter, et puis se vanter autour de son entourage comme ce motard que le ministre – et il me dit maintenant qu'il ne l'a pas rencontré – et qui roulait, il faut le dire, Madame la présidente, peut-être à plus de 150 kilomètres par heure sur l'autoroute. Mais, je pense que ce n'est pas le permis à points qui va faire disparaître cette culture auprès des chauffards, car il faut tout de même qu'il y ait des contrôles de police sur nos routes, afin d'intercepter ces bandits. Mais, leur constat aussi, Madame la présidente, c'est que la situation du *law and order* dans le pays est déplorable. On aurait pu demander aux policiers de faire ce travail, mais ils sont surmenés en ce moment-ci et il y a un flagrant manque d'effectifs, et en plus de ça comme je l'ai dit, ils ont du pain sur la planche.

Madame la présidente, c'est l'ancien gouvernement qui avait adopté la politique de zéro tolérance sur l'alcool au volant, mais force est de constater que beaucoup échappe toujours à la loi et malheureusement, Madame la présidente, c'est les innocents qui perdent leur vie. Permettez-moi, Madame la présidente, de citer un jugement, le jugement Durocher en 2008 avait renversé une loi qui permettait à la police de suspendre le permis de conduire et avait statué que seul un magistrat avait ce pouvoir. Depuis, rien n'avait été fait jusqu'à l'amendement de 2024, et j'aimerais que le ministre aujourd'hui considère cet amendement de façon à demander à la cour de suspendre immédiatement le permis d'une personne impliquée dans un accident fatal et testée positive à un alcotest ou à un test de drogue. Je pense que j'aurais le support de pas mal de membres de cette auguste Assemblée dans cette démarche et tout conducteur, Madame la présidente, pris en flagrant délit ne pourra pas reprendre le volant avant que la cour ne rende son verdict.

Madame la présidente...

(Interruptions)

Mr Osmand Mahomed: C'est déjà dans la loi.

Mr Lesjongard: Madame la présidente, le Premier ministre – je me réfère à lui comme il a fait des commentaires – avait même suggéré qu'il fallait faire saisir les véhicules de tels

accusés. Ben, j'aimerais bien savoir combien de ces véhicules ont été saisis à ce jour, surtout après les tristes événements par exemple, de Camp Levieux et de Cité la Cure.

Madame la présidente, on ne peut non plus tolérer qu'une personne passe à travers les mailles du filet en invoquant le refus de se soumettre à un *alcotest* ou à un *drug test*.

(Interruptions)

Tout refus...

(Interruptions)

Tout refus doit être considéré comme un délit plus sévère qui devrait entraîner une plus grosse amende, et pourquoi pas une perte de points considérable. Selon les statistiques, Madame la présidente, les motocyclistes et surtout les jeunes sont les plus vulnérables. Peut-être que le gouvernement devrait considérer à revoir cette section de la loi qui permet à un mineur de conduire une moto avec un simple *learner*.

Madame la présidente, il est impératif aussi – ça je pense qu'on le voit sur nos routes – de légiférer sur l'utilisation des *scooters* électriques. Je l'admets, c'est un moyen de transport pratique, mais souvent conduit sur les routes principales de notre pays par des personnes qui n'ont pas eu une formation adéquate et très souvent qui ne portent pas de casque, Madame la présidente.

Ms Anquetil: Ça c'est vrai !

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Là tout le monde est d'accord.

Mr Lesjongard: Oui !

Madam Speaker: Oui, ce n'est pas fait pour ce genre...

Mr Lesjongard: Oui, s'ils sont d'accord permettez-moi d'ajouter ; autant de choses, Madame la présidente...

(Interruptions)

...qui sont absentes de ce projet de loi.

Madame la présidente, je suis assez sceptique par rapport à la mise en chantier de cette législation. Il y a chaque année en moyenne 1 350 000 décès dans le monde sur les routes. Nous sommes une petite île et pourtant, le constat est aussi alarmant chez nous. Aujourd'hui,

le gouvernement propose de revenir à un système qui a échoué, avec les mêmes paramètres et les mêmes problèmes. Mais, je ne veux pas être pessimiste, Madame la présidente, car il y va de la vie de nos concitoyens, et ce genre de sujet doit rester apolitique et l'intérêt supérieur de notre pays, de nos concitoyens doit primer.

Toutefois, Madame la présidente, le ministre du Transport terrestre nous a beaucoup critiqué de son temps dans l'Opposition. Aujourd'hui, c'est à son tour de gérer cette situation qui empire de jour en jour, et je lui souhaite bon vent. Merci.

Madam Speaker: Merci beaucoup. Alors, nous avons Dr. Boolell, *yes? He was on his feet before I could see him.*

(6.11 p.m.)

The Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries (Dr. A. Boolell): Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. I have listened – like all of us – intently to the speech delivered by the hon. Leader of Opposition...

The Deputy Prime Minister: Not all of us, some are absent.

Dr. Boolell: Yes, some deliberately chose to be away from you, the Leader of the Opposition. I think overall, he has been rather fair. His criticisms are well meant. One of his regrets is that we should have proclaimed the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill, moved by the then Minister, hon. Ganoo in 2024. Other than that, let me remind the hon. Leader of Opposition that this Bill was not thrust upon us. It was a Bill well prepared and moved by the hon. Minister who has a lot of milestones.

As he has said, there was a Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General who came to tender advice to us on road safety, and that his presence was largely due to the intervention of our Prime Minister.

Let me state very clearly that when it comes to road safety and road security, we have no lessons to learn from the Opposition. If you may recall, in 1997, the Prime Minister, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, stated emphatically that the link road from La Vigie to Nouvelle France should be closed because it was the corridor of death with its two lanes. Then, the Prime Minister met – if my memory serves me right – the President of the EU Commission, and funding was obtained to turn this corridor of death into a dual carriageway to cater for the needs of motorists and to drive safely on a dual carriageway. So, this is important.

It is good to remind ourselves of the governance of a Prime Minister and a Deputy Prime Minister, and all of us, that we are a government which acts in the interest of the public, and we put safety and road security first.

When we go through the provisions of this Bill, what is the main thrust, as I said? It is deterrence. And deterrence is high on our agenda. It is a message which is being conveyed loud and clear to all road users.

One should not forget that in his speech, when he moved his Second Reading, the then Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail reminded us that the road network, as of April 2024, stands at 686,704 vehicles on our road. Earlier, the Leader of the Opposition stated that electric cycles have to be registered. But they have to be registered, first and foremost, with the National Land Transport Authority. It is going to be done.

This Bill, Madam Speaker, has its merits, and the merits far outweigh any of the points that have been raised by the Leader of the Opposition. We were cautious. I recall when we were discussing our electoral programme – I think all of our good friends will recall – it was an issue that was raised, flagged and flogged, and we stated very clearly that we are going to introduce the Penalty Points System. That was said. I recall hon. Anil Bachoo was there. There were almost wide discussions, and the technicians who were with us highlighted the merits of Penalty Points System.

Since the last 10 years, Madam Speaker, there has been progressive decline in road safety and security. When we do a comparative study and look at the contrasts, it stands to reason that the decision taken by the hon. Minister, with the support of technicians, after advice was tendered by Mr Todt, the Penalty Points System is the best. I recall what it was when I was in New Zealand. In New Zealand, they have what they call the Demerit Points System. The Demerit Points System is no different from our penalty system and it is very effective.

So, as a loving nation, we have to look at safety and security priorities. If we love our children, if we love our people, we have to make sure that safety and security are all encompassing, and rest largely on prevention, education, good infrastructure, fitness centre. We have to inculcate the values of responsibility on our drivers. Safe driving – click clunk! But make sure that when there is a click clunk of the safety belt, the message conveyed is safe driving because we know what are the consequences.

Notwithstanding deterrence, repeated offenders cannot get away with murder. Repeated offenders will have to bear their consequences. When we look at the primary purpose of the Bill, it is clear. It is to create an effective mechanism that promotes better – the word “better” is there – compliance with traffic regulations, and the ultimate goals of enhancing the safety of road users and encouraging responsible driving behaviour. The key note is responsible driving behaviour.

The Cumulative Road Traffic Offences introduced in 2015 was initially, of course, intended to improve road safety by disqualifying drivers after they committed a host of specific traffic offences, but it failed to deliver. We are yet to find out what are the expected outcomes. The expected outcome is that there has been no outcome. The outcome is that we had no choice, but to ensure that we come up with the Penalty Points System. Despite their alleged best endeavour, several amendments were brought to the then Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill to make the Cumulative Road Traffic Offences harsher. Over the years, from 2018 to 2023, the number of offences required for disqualification was adjusted.

So, we are now introducing – the Minister has moved the Bill – the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill (No. XXX of 2025), and it is indeed a turning point. The Penalty Points System is an effective deterrent, as I have said, especially for repeated offenders who risk having their driving licences suspended or cancelled. But the good thing to note is that the proposed system is fair, transparent and clearly outlines the consequences of irresponsible driving. The Cumulative Road Traffic Offences mechanism, which is still in place, operates as a reactive measure, addressing offences only after a driver has already accumulated a certain number of convictions. This driving has shown its limits.

The Bill makes a vast difference. It encourages and reinforces disciplined driving. Compliance with road safety rules is vital. It becomes a legitimate reflex condition, and drivers have to act cautiously as a consequence of each traffic violation committed.

Madam Speaker, I have said it and it is good to reinforce that the Penalty Points System introduces an essential deterrent effect that the Cumulative Road Traffic Offences lacks. Its strength lies in the fact that the points assigned to a driver serve as a continual and visible reminder that any additional offence bring him closer to having his licence suspended or cancelled. So, the threat of losing the valuable privilege of driving acts as a powerful psychological motivator, prompting meaningful changes in driving behaviour.

Let us now look at the salient features of the Bill which have been stated loud and clear by the Minister, but it is good to reinforce some of them. I will refer to the main features.

The 33 offences will now carry penalty points as against 19 during the first deployment of the system. And, there is no doubt the proposed system will be a more effective response to the rising traffic toll of fatalities recorded on our roads in recent years. In the proposed Bill, provision is made for a range of penalty points to be allocated to each offence instead of a fixed number of points.

Moreover, when an offence is detected on the fixed penalty notice or the photographic enforcement device notice, reference shall be made to the lowest number of penalty points in respect of that offence. Whereas if a person doesn't agree with a fixed penalty point or the photographic enforcement device notice, he can go to court, that's as of right and the court shall allocate the highest number in the range of penalty points if person is, of course, guilty. This will encourage a speedy settlement of fines. I have heard that detection of an offence would be difficult if a driver has burned the traffic light because a person will not be caught on camera as there is no camera sometimes at specific places. But this is going to be addressed.

Now, the Bill provides for penalty point certificate and the digital version, of course, we have to move with constant breakthrough in technology, the digital version of which can be accessed any time on the MoKloud platform. And, this is the essence of this Bill, moving with technology and making it accessible to one and all within the comfort of your room at the time when they are probably, they are also worried but at the same time enjoying arm chair comfortability. Only a hard copy of the certificate duly provided and certified by the police will be against payment. Digital access to the certificate will allow the individual to better monitor the penalty points and adjust the behaviour on the roads.

The Bill, as per clause 9, allows for a permitted maximum number of penalty points, I think that was said by the hon. Minister in relation to a holder of provisional license, it's 10 points; 15 for competent license holder but all points will be valid for a period of 36 months and the holder of an international driving permit will also be entitled to a maximum of 15 points.

Madam Speaker, of course, a person who has been disqualified, and we refer to clause 9, the person who has been disqualified, has no choice but to surrender his license to the court which shall be retained as long as the disqualification is in force. Basically, what I am saying

is that this Bill is a very thorough; no stone has been left unturned and credit goes to the experts and to the State Law Office, to have prepared a Bill which has substance and a Bill which not only will act as a deterrent but it's a Bill which has all its merits.

Madam Speaker, let me refer to a PQ which was put to the hon. Prime Minister. I am not going to go over the fines because that will be spelt out, I am sure, when the hon. Minister will make his concluding remark. But there was a PQ with two supplementaries put to the hon. Prime Minister by hon. Dr. Aumeer, at the last Sitting. And, the hon. Prime Minister's reply said it all, 'no retreat no surrender over life and livelihood'.

Madam Speaker: Of course!

Dr. Boolell: We have a high incidence of road traffic accident. Enough is enough. Drink, drug, drive is not only an offence but a serious misdemeanour, a serious crime.

Madam Speaker, the purpose is not only to convey a message but the message has to be received loud and clear. And, there is notwithstanding a deterrence but the provisions of the law are there to be applied as and when required in relation to offences and the gravity of the offences.

Life is precious. Those who are victims suffer tremendously on all counts and waiting for a case to be heard and damages to be paid is hell. This tragedy deserves to be addressed and justice should not be denied or delayed. The Court has been impressed to deliver a judgement within reasonable time and we all know what it means for a wheel bound victim to wait.

One of the most important aspects of the legislation is the increase in the fines relating to causing death by dangerous driving or causing death by careless driving which under the influence of alcohol, drug or intoxicating substance, the sentence can be – intoxicating substance from Rs50,000 to Rs100,000. The second, for subsequent conviction will carry maximum fine of Rs500,000.

But the forensic scientific lab has to deliver. It has to be able to carry out the test and tell with certainty and reliability as to the level of drugs in the blood of the alleged offender.

Madam Speaker, there are so many issues that can be raised and discussed but let me make it clear that I have intervened to convey a message – deterrence, first and foremost. If we are going to drive, make sure that we drive carefully. Afterall, we are here to protect lives

and as a responsible Government, we have moved a legislation which has substance and the substance is there to safeguard and to protect those whose lives are important to all of us.

Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Seeburn!

(6.28 p.m.)

Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, it is with a deep sense of response that I rise today to speak in support of the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill. A Bill that introduces the long-awaited point-based system. A reform whose time has not only come but whose importance can no longer be ignored as it addresses an important issue that affects every road user and every family in our country, that is, road safety.

Madam Speaker, in recent years, our nation has witnessed a troubling and persistent rise in road accidents. Every statistic is more than a number, sometimes a mother grieving the loss of a child, a family shattered overnight or sometimes someone's future is tragically cut short as stated by the hon. Minister of Land Transport.

Madam Speaker, these are matters of serious concern. These are realities for too many Mauritians. We must act decisively. We must reduce road death and serious injuries. Our road once a symbol of connectivity and progress are increasingly becoming a space of danger, uncertainty and loss.

Madam Speaker, the situation on our road demands honesty and boldness from all of us, including the hon. Leader of the Opposition who made several observations on this Bill, yet he did not express any disagreement.

Road accidents in Mauritius are claiming lives, inflicting devastating injuries, thus leaving families and communities in grief. These tragedies carry not only emotional consequences but also social and economic loss.

Madam Speaker, we must ask ourselves – are we prepared to remain silent, passive while tragedies multiply? Are we willing to tell our citizens that we saw the warning signs, yet we failed to act. The answer is no, Madam Speaker. Today we are confronted with a simple duty. A duty to act before another life is lost. This amendment is a firm answer to that

call. It establishes an effective framework for better compliance with traffic laws. It aims to enhance the protection of road users and foster a culture of responsible driving.

Madam Speaker, at the heart of this amendment, is the reintroduction of the penalty point system, the *permis à points*. The reform establishes a structured approach that holds offenders accountable, a system that discourages repeated dangerous driving behaviour. By assigning penalty points for traffic offences and suspending or restricting licences when drivers accumulate too many points, thus encouraging better and safer driving behaviour.

This is a well-drafted legislation by the State Law office introduced by the Minister of Land Transport which addresses nearly all the major issues.

Madam Speaker, the amendment promotes deterrence and promotes drivers' responsibility. By assigning demerit points to traffic offences, the system gives drivers a tangible accumulating penalty beyond one-off line. Knowing that repeated infractions can lead to licence suspension or revocation, this will make careless drivers more cautious.

Madam Speaker, studies around the world have shown that drivers who approach the threshold of licence loss, significantly reduce their probability of committing further offences. The system further helps to identify and remove repeat and high-risk offenders. It further gives the authority a tool to remove persistent dangerous drivers because they cause serious accidents.

Madam Speaker, the Bill reintroduces a modern penalty point system covering 33 different traffic offences. It is our duty as protectors of public safety to ensure that the system is adopted and implemented effectively. Our aim is to correct driving behaviour and build a culture of responsible driving. We must ensure that the system will function, it will deter and above all, save lives. It will further require a nationwide education campaign so that every citizen understands the 33 offences, how point accumulates and how points can be redeemed through rehabilitation programmes, thus making it fair and transparent.

The reform introduces something crucial that has been missing for too long – a structured and transparent system of accountability, a deterrence against repeated violations, a behaviour shift from impunity to responsibility, a national commitment for prevention over cure.

Madam Speaker, most importantly, it sends a message – loud, clear and united across this House. The life of every citizen and every road user matters more than the convenience

of few reckless drivers. Few accidents mean lower burden on hospitals, less cost for insurance and damages, and stronger social stability.

Madam Speaker, this is a government that does not wait for tragedy to escalate before acting. We are serious. This amendment tackles these driving behaviours by introducing consequences that change mindsets and habits. If we are serious about reducing road accidents, we must confront the root cause and tackle the main reasons which are speeding, drunk driving, dangerous overtaking, driving while distracted over mobile phone use, ignoring traffic signals among others. These causes high risk of road accidents leading to loss of lives, serious injuries, emotional trauma for families or even economic loss for the country.

Madam Speaker, the amendment is to deter reckless driving. It is to create accountability and encourage safer driving habits with a view to reduce fatalities and accidents. It is not about punishment but rather about prevention and protection. The amendment to the Third Schedule now clearly assigns penalty points that ranges to 33 road traffic offences grading according to seriousness from 2 to 10 points for the most dangerous violations.

What does this tell us? It tells us that the law finally differentiates between minor offences and a dangerous act with casualties and deaths. For example, riding a motorcycle without wearing a helmet carries 2 to 4 points, failing to give uninterrupted passage to a pedestrian on a crossing carries 2 to 4 points, and speeding beyond 15km but not more than 25km above the limit also results in a 2 to 4 points while grossly dangerous conduct such as dangerous driving attracts the highest point penalties under the schedule.

Madam Speaker, some may claim that the system is too severe but to answer it directly, a careful driver will never meet the limit of this system. As hon. Dr. Boolell, earlier said, the penalty point system is the best system to address these issues.

Madam Speaker, the Bill also offers a path of redemption. Drivers who accumulate 10 to 14 points may apply to the court for redemption of up to 3 points after completing a rehabilitation course which may further encourage better driving culture. This shows that the amendment does not merely punish; it reforms, rehabilitates and protects.

Madam Speaker, countries around the world that have adopted the penalty point system have claimed that it has worked. The system has helped to change driving behaviours. It improves accountability and most importantly, save lives. Furthermore, international

experience shows that a penalty point licence, when embedded in strong enforcement education, can significantly reduce crashes, injuries and death.

Japan has used a point-based system for decades and as part of a broader and safer framework, helped over long-term fatality rates with reduced accidents. Spain's penalty point system produced a clear reduction in drivers involved in road accidents with injured people. Australia also used a point-based system and authorities have reported a decline in casualties during intensified enforcement windows. Israel's evaluation of a point demerit-based system showed large drops in violations and meaningful reduction in accident involvement among drivers.

Madam Speaker, systematic reviews confirms that the approach can cut harmful outcome by around one fifth when properly implemented. Today, our Government proposes the same because we believe the safety of Mauritians are not negotiable. The reform places Government of Mauritius on the right side of progress, aligning our laws with effective global standards.

Madam Speaker, let us be clear; it is a system designed to protect and not to punish. It is a lifeline for families. It is a national necessity. The population wants the Parliament to act. Citizens want safer roads with more responsible drivers and less road tragedy.

Madam Speaker, the law alone does not stop reckless driving but consequences do. When you know that dangerous driving behaviour on the road carries measurable personal consequences that is, penalty points with the risk of driving licence cancellation, you drive differently, you think differently and you act differently.

Madam Speaker, this is a listening, caring and responsible government doing what is right. The people watching us today in villages, towns, homes and hospitals do not want symbolic gestures. They do not want politics as usual; they want actions, responsibility and protection. They want to know that this Parliament has listened and today, we are answering them with prevention, responsibility and leadership. The greatest right we can protect today is the right of every road user to reach home safely.

Let this Parliament be remembered that we collectively choose to save lives on the road so as to make a safer and better Mauritius. The Bill is the most significant step in a decade towards safer road, responsible drivers and a more disciplined society. It requires the support of the House with conviction and unity, and with this shared belief that every life lost on our road, is one life too many.

Madam Speaker, with these words, I thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Yes, hon. Ms Henriette-Manan.

(6.40 p.m.)

Ms D. Henriette-Manan (Third Member for Rodrigues): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I shall be short but I hope to the point.

A life lost on our road, is a stark reminder that every journey we take, carries responsibility, not certainty. This is what makes this amended Bill before this august Assembly today so crucial. Our roads have claimed far too many lives, inflicted deep pain on families and created havoc across our society.

As decision makers, we cannot stand aside and simply watch and pray. Action is imperative and I commend this Government for taking decisive steps and addressing the issue with the urgency it demands. A new approach was needed; a new approach is being proposed. Bravo to the hon. Minister and his team.

The Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill is an important legislative reform aimed at modernising our traffic regulations and strengthening road safety. Rodrigues welcomes this reform, but again, it must be adapted to the unique realities of our island.

Although in recent years, Rodrigues has seen a significant increase in the number of vehicles on the road. Despite this growth, we remain one of the regions with the lowest number of serious road accidents. On average in recent years, up to 2024, Rodrigues has recorded between 175 and 200 road accidents per year, including around four fatal accidents in 2024. The highest number of deaths by road accidents registered over the last five years in a specific year being six recorded in 2021. These numbers are relatively low compared to mainland Mauritius.

However, we have still experienced tragic road fatalities, reminding us that safety can never be taken for granted. With the rise in traffic, especially two-wheelers, we must anticipate future risk. That is why we welcome measures that aim to strengthen, control and discourage those who intend to disregard the road traffic code. One of the most important elements of this legislative reform is the strengthening or introduction of a point-based driving license. A point-based driving license promotes responsibility and encourages

prudence on road. It sanctions dangerous driving fairly. Those regular offenders are deterred from repeating these offences.

It encourages safer behaviour without penalising responsible road users and it educates, as it is mentioned that offenders whose license had been suspended, need to follow road safety classes before being submitted back their driving license.

For Rodrigues, this system is particularly relevant as it acts as a preventive tool deterring speeding and reckless driving, especially driving under the influence of alcohol or intoxicating substances, and it acts as a fair mechanism even on our small island.

However, for the system to work properly, enforcement is capital. To ensure effective enforcement, our traffic officers must be better equipped. This means to be equipped with modern speed radars, have reliable communication tools, have vehicles adapted to Rodrigues' topography and regular specialised training. A law cannot be effective if the officers enforcing it lack the appropriate tools.

Rodrigues cannot be left with insufficient enforcement capabilities. A point-based license without proper control would be a law in principle, not in practice. Now, no one disputes that Rodrigues has a challenging topography. Winding roads, narrow bends, several sections passing through villages and rural areas, these make high speeds naturally unsafe. But this does not mean that the current speed limit capped at 50km/h should remain frozen in time. That limitation was set many years ago and does not fully reflect the evolution of our vehicle fleet nor the improvement of several road sections and the current mobility needs of our people.

In many areas, the limit has become outdated and people are being sanctioned unfairly. Visitors as well as Rodriguans often question this limit. With the introduction of the Penalty Points System, it becomes even more unfair. I therefore propose a measured and sensible revision of speed limits differentiated according to road category, but again, any increase, even a modest one, must go hand in hand with stronger enforcement.

Another persistent issue affecting road users in Rodrigues, far more than on the mainland, is the presence of unattended animals on the roads. Only last week, a road accident occurred as a result of cattle crossing the roadway.

It is therefore imperative that such situation, which is defined as offences under the Road Traffic Act Part IX Section 156, be clearly redefined to include animals left unattended and that the offences are accompanied with more strict penalties. Increase in fines, for

example, and better enforcement in order to deter livestock owners from allowing these incidents to continue.

Too often, owners face no consequences, enabling these violations to persist with complete impunity. Lastly, I cannot discuss amendments to the Road Traffic Act without emphasising the urgent need to upgrade our existing road infrastructure and construct new roads so that all Rodriguans can enjoy road facilities similar to those in the Republic. The RRA, our regional Government, up to now, included has done their best with the resources available. But I appeal to the Central Government to continue its support as there are still critical roads in Rodrigues that need to be built to connect citizens to essential services.

For example, in Anse Fémie, residents who owns vehicles often have to leave them miles away from their homes due to the lack of proper access roads. Madam Speaker, hon. Members, Rodrigues remains one of the regions with the lowest number of serious road accidents, as I stated. This is an achievement we must protect. But the rising number of vehicles, the growing use of two-wheelers and recent tragic accidents are clear signals. We must strengthen our legislative framework and enforcement.

I, therefore, request that the Act be adopted, but to include those amendments to the Road Traffic Act mentioned which are specific to Rodrigues. Only then can we truly ensure safety, support development and guarantee that mobility goes hand in hand with responsibility for every Rodriguan.

With these words, I support the Bill submitted to the House.

Madam Speaker: Very good! Before you were born, there were no vehicle on the road.

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Premie fwa mo al laba, ti ena enn veikil!*

Madam Speaker: *Exact!* Only one! Anyway, people used to walk for long distances. They were very fit!

The next speaker, hon. Jugurnauth!

(6.50 p.m.)

Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River): Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to debate this Bill in this august Assembly. I rise today as a back bencher of the Government with a solemn responsibility to support the hon. Minister and the policies of the Government while also giving voice to the legitimate

concerns, aspirations and expectations of the constituents who have entrusted us with a mandate.

My duty is not merely to endorse, but to contribute, to refine, to question and to propose improvements that strengthen the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill before us. Road safety is not a theoretical matter. It is a national necessity. Every statistic represents a family devastated, a life interrupted, a future altered. The reintroduction of the Penalty Point System is a step towards creating a culture of responsibility and discipline on our roads.

A culture that many nations such as the UK, Singapore, Australia, Ireland and other countries have successfully cultivated. For such a system to succeed in Mauritius, it must inspire confidence, Madam Speaker. It must be firm, but also fair. It must discipline repeated offenders without unfairly punishing those who make honest isolated mistakes.

I take for example, the offence of failing to wear a seatbelt while the safety imperative is an unquestionable. The sanction must be proportionate.

I propose that the first offence attract a warning or fine, preserving penalty points deduction for repeated offences. This progressive approach mirrors the best practice of several jurisdictions and avoid alienating responsible drivers who may commit an unintentional lapse.

Madam Speaker, a similar logic applies to minor mechanical defect. A citizen may leave home with all lights functioning, only for a rear lamp to fail due to the vibration or poor road safety conditions – should such a driver immediately lose points?

If safe city footage can confirm that the lights were functioning earlier, Madam Speaker, then justice requires that such evidence be admissible. It is not leniency, it is fairness.

This brings me to a broader inconsistency. The law rightly penalises speeding. Yet, a vehicle fitness inspection, the accuracy of the speedometer, central to speed compliance, is not systemically verified. How can we demand strict adherence to speed limit if the very instrument used to measure speed is neglected during fitness checks?

Legislative coherence demands that the system supporting enforcement be reliable as the penalties being posed. Hon. Members, modern law must be supported by modern tools.

Madam Speaker, I agree with the hon. Minister, he took on board the partnership with the Ministry of Technology to introduce a dedicated national road safety mobile application. Such an application provides real-time access to –

- (i) Penalty point status;
- (ii) Notify drivers of mechanical issues detected during inspections;
- (iii) Facilitate access to road safety footage for legitimate defence;
- (iv) Centralised payment of fines and bookings of fitness inspections;
- (v) Store digital vehicles document and dashcam footage.

Enable enrolment in rehabilitation programme countries leading in digital governance like Estonia, South Korea and many other countries have demonstrated how such platforms improve transparency, efficiency and public trust.

Rehabilitation is another indispensable pillar. International experience shows that education reduces repeated offenses more effectively than punitive measures alone. The Bill makes provisions allowing drivers to redeem points throughout structured rehabilitation courses in a progressive initiative that deserves full support.

Madam Speaker, the Bill is a commendable step but like any legislation, it benefits from refinement. With the improvements proposed: proportionate penalties, technological safeguard, legislative consistency and digital innovation, we can build a road safety framework that is both firm and just, modern and human.

I, therefore, express my full support for this Bill with the conviction that the amendments proposed today will be considered by my colleagues to serve our citizens and make our roads safer for all.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I also note that the hon. Leader of the Opposition is agreeable partly with us.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Dr. Ms Thannoo!

Dr. Ms B. Thannoo: Madam Speaker, I beg to move for the adjournment of the debate.

Dr. Boolell rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Friday 12 December 2025 at 3.30 p.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned!

There is an adjournment matter. I promise, just a few minutes. I promise. Please, go ahead hon. Ms Collet.

MATTER RAISED

(6.59. p.m.)

RODRIGUES – CYBER SECURITY CHALLENGES – REMEDIAL MEASURES

Ms M. R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues): Merci beaucoup, Madame la présidente. Rapidement avec votre indulgence, je souhaite soulever un problème et adresser une question à l'honorable ministre des Technologies et de l'information, de la communication et de l'innovation. À Rodrigues le numérique offre de nouvelles opportunités de communication et d'ouverture sur le monde mais, il expose aussi la population à des risques. Le cyber harcèlement et la désinformation fragilisent la confiance, alimentent les divisions et menacent la cohésion sociale.

Dans une île isolée où les ressources pour contrer ces dérives restent limitées, le défi est clair : profiter des avantages de la connectivité tout en protégeant la communauté surtout notre jeunesse contre ces dangers. Il nous faut promouvoir l'unité et la sécurité dans notre île.

Je souhaiterais demander à l'honorable ministre s'il peut indiquer, s'il compte envisager des mesures afin d'assurer la protection de nos citoyens en ligne pour Rodrigues et pouvoir mettre fin à la désinformation et violence numérique. Merci.

Madam Speaker: Merci. L'honorable ministre!

The Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation (Dr. A. Ramtohul): I thank the hon. Member for this question. The issue of cyber security,

misinformation, disinformation and malinformation is a global issue and we all know that just like many other developed countries are facing that problem, so is Mauritius and so is Rodrigues.

So, the whole Republic is facing that problem. We actually connected Rodrigues to digital map of the Republic through the MARS cable and we are very glad today that there are different connectivity options including low Earth orbits satellites as well which we added as part of what we are doing at the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation.

We have an online platform for reporting cybercrimes, Madam Speaker, and that platform earlier, while we captured the data and the statistics for the whole Republic, we did not differentiate from those reports that were coming out from Rodrigues, for issues specifically for Rodrigues.

Just yesterday, we actually amended that application so that when somebody from Rodrigues is reporting a case of cybercrime that person will have the opportunity to indicate that the report is coming from Rodrigues.

This will enable us to collect data that and we can then devise policies which are evidence-based. So, this is the first point. The second point is that we also intend to create some ambassadors who can in turn sensitise our people in Rodrigues, especially our children. Statistics has it that most of those people who suffer from cybercrime happen to be women as we stated last week at the Parliament.

Therefore, actually during the month of January, we intend to have a campaign for Rodrigues and that campaign will focus on child online protection along with protecting the rest of the society.

We hold at heart the interests of Rodrigues and the legal amendments that we intend to bring, will be applicable to Rodrigues Island as well. Together with the hon. Prime Minister, we are working on a strategy which can help not only reduce cybercrime but also help resolve cases of cybercrimes faster.

Madam Speaker, this is my response to the question raised by the hon. Member. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Bravo! Bravo!

Madam Speaker: May I ask those who want to help me tomorrow, hon. Rookny, anybody who wants to help me tomorrow with the debate on Human Rights which is the last day for the 16 days, please, to come and see me immediately, so that we know what to do tomorrow morning. Thank you.

Now, the House is really adjourned.

At 7.02 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Friday 12 December 2025 at 3.30 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TRIBUNAL – COMPOSITION – PENDING CASES

(No. B/1185) 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 Equal Opportunities Tribunal, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) names of the former President and members thereof;
- (b) present composition thereof, and
- (c) number of pending cases, if any, thereat.

Reply: The Equal Opportunities Tribunal is established in accordance with section 34 of the Equal Opportunities Act and consists of a President and two Members, who are appointed by the Public Service Commission. The post of President and Members of the Equal Opportunities Tribunal are established in the Civil Establishment Order.

Since the establishment of the Equal Opportunities Tribunal in 2012, the posts of President and Members of the Tribunal are filled on a part-time basis in as much as the low number of cases being referred to the Tribunal.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that Mr Denis Henri Vellien was assigned the duties of President of the Equal Opportunities Tribunal during the period 13 June 2012 to 22 February 2022. Thereafter, his services were retained on a contractual basis from 23 February 2022 to 21 August 2022. Following the expiry of the contract of Mr Vellien, Mrs Sulakshna Beekarry-Sunassee, in her capacity as Assistant Solicitor-General, was assigned the duties of President of the Equal Opportunities Tribunal from 26 August 2022 to 02 May 2023 until her appointment as Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court on 03 May 2023.

A recommendation has already been made to the Public Service Commission for the filling of the vacancies on a part-time basis.

As regards part (c) of the question, I am informed that as at date, there are 29 cases pending before the Equal Opportunities Tribunal.

RODRIGUES – NATIONAL POLICE BAND – RECRUITMENT EXERCISE

(No. B/1186) Ms D. Henriette-Manan (Third 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 National Police Band, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) where matters currently stand concerning the recruitment exercise therefor, and
- (b) when was recruitment last carried out for the Rodrigues Police Band and whether consideration will be given to proceeding with recruitment therefor in view of its current understaffing and the recurrent need to bring officers of the National Police Band to perform for major ceremonies in Rodrigues.

(Withdrawn)

POLICE QUARTERS – LODGING VACATION – ALTERNATIVE ACCOMODATION

(No. B/1187) Ms S. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Police Officers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof having had to vacate their lodging in police quarters on retiring due to sudden or serious illness, indicating –

- (a) the time allocated thereto and their families to find alternative accommodation, and
- (b) whether consideration will be given for a review of the current practice in such circumstances.

(Withdrawn)

**SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – TAXI OPERATORS – REPORTED
AGGRESSION CASE**

(No. B/1188) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the taxi operators at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the measures being envisaged to –

- (a) ensure the security thereof, especially, following the recent reported case of aggression on or about 15 November 2025 on the chairman of the taxi operators, and
- (b) prevent any illegal taxi operation thereat and if there is any reported case of alleged illegal transfer of taxi licence to operate thereat.

Reply: As the House may be aware, the issue of illegal operation of taxi services at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport by out-based taxis and other vehicles has been ongoing for quite a number of years.

On 09 December 2024 and 21 October 2025, two meetings were held by the hon. Minister of Land Transport in the presence of the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, and other hon. Members of the National Assembly of the constituency, with relevant stakeholders with a view to ensuring effective and efficient taxi services at the airport. The following recommendations were made –

- (i) enhance police presence at arrivals and enforcement at the airport;
- (ii) CCTV camera surveillance to be effective;
- (iii) the display of taxi counters to be more conspicuous, and
- (iv) wearing of uniforms by drivers to be included as a condition of the taxi licence.

Another meeting was held on 17 November 2025 at the level of the Ministry of Land Transport following which a letter was issued on 28 November 2025 to the Commissioner of Police to take necessary measures to enhance security at the Arrival concourse for the safety and security of the taxi operators based at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport.

In regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, on Saturday 15 November 2025, Mr Y.A., a taxi driver operating at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport reported an incident to the Airport Police

involving Mr A.U. The latter was allegedly canvassing two female tourists and heading towards his vehicle. When Mr Y.A. informed the tourists that Mr A.U. was an illegal taxi operator, an altercation broke out between them. Mr A.U. physically assaulted Mr Y.A. as a result of which the latter got injured. Thereafter, Mr Y.A. was conveyed to Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital, Rose Belle for medical attention and was discharged the following day.

Police has recorded the statement of Mr Y.A.

On 23 November 2025, the accused Mr A.U. was interviewed by the Police in connection with the case of “Simple Assault”. On 04 December 2025, he called at Airport Police Station, accompanied by Counsel, where his defence statement was recorded.

A further statement of the victim Mr Y. A. will be recorded.

Furthermore, the Police is awaiting the medical reports from the Government Medical Officer, to be included in the case file.

Upon completion of the enquiry, Police will decide whether to prosecute the accused Mr A.U. for the offence of “Simple Assault”.

The Airport Police is responsible for policing in the precinct of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport and its vicinity. They are also assisted by the personnel of the Criminal Investigation Division and Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit as well as other external agencies, such as the Customs Anti-Narcotics Section of the Mauritius Revenue Authority, Airports of Mauritius Ltd and Airport Terminal Operations Ltd.

The airport area is also under CCTV cameras surveillance manned by Airports of Mauritius Ltd.

The Airport Police and personnel of the Mauritius Revenue Authority carry out regular stop and check of persons and vehicles in the compound of the airport for the prevention and detection of illegal activities.

I am further informed that following the incident which occurred on 15 November 2025, the Officer-in-Charge of Airport Police has taken the following additional measures with a view to ensuring security and preventing illegal taxi operations at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport –

- (i) Police presence has been increased at strategic locations by deploying more Police Officers on foot and mobile patrols;

- (ii) the Illegal Taxi Squad of the Airport Police responsible for preventing illegal taxi from operating in the compound of the airport has been reinforced with additional personnel being deployed for duty;
- (iii) taxi operators and employees working at the airport are being sensitised to report illegal activities, including illegal taxi operating in the compound of the airport for prompt police actions;
- (iv) joint crackdown operations are being carried out twice weekly by Airport Police and Criminal Investigation Division to prevent illegal taxis from operating at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport;
- (v) the Airport Police is working in close collaboration with Airports of Mauritius Ltd with a view to identifying suspicious vehicles detected through CCTV Cameras, and
- (vi) the National Land Transport Authority has been requested to carry out targeted operations at the airport.

As regards illegal transfer of taxi licenses to operate at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, no such complaint has been reported to the Police so far.

Government will look into the whole issue of operations of illegal taxi at the airport, including the car park thereat. A new Smart Car Park system is being implemented and is expected start operating tentatively on 15 December 2025. Installation of equipment has been completed and the configuration of the system is in progress.

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – DEPARTURE & ARRIVAL – BIOMETRIC PASSPORT INTRODUCTION

(No. B/1189) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the departure and arrival of passengers at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) the measures being envisaged to streamline the different processes thereat with a view to avoiding long queues, indicating, in each case, the timeframe for the implementation thereof, and
- (b) where matters stand as to the –

- (i) implementation of a new border control management system, and
- (ii) introduction of the biometric passport.

Reply: Numerous representations have been made since a number of years by passengers and economic operators regarding delivery of various services and particularly long queues at the check-in and immigration counters, at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport. My Government will soon be introducing a new E-Border Management System and the biometric passport, to improve immigration services.

This new E-Border Management System will include, inter-alia, Advance Passenger Information system, biometric identification of passengers, real time border surveillance, automated border control gates for self-service eGates, risk profiling and eVisa. The new System will provide a fully integrated, digital and intelligence-driven platform for an enhanced travellers' experience and contribute in positioning Mauritius as a trusted and efficient travel hub in the region.

As regards the biometric passport, also known as e-Passport, it will incorporate biometric data stored in a microchip for easy recognition of the passport holder.

Given that the new E-Border Management System and the biometric passport will be interfacing with each other, the technical specifications of both projects are being worked out concurrently.

I am informed that, in the meantime, the following short-term measures have been taken by the Airports of Mauritius Co. Ltd to streamline the processes and to improve the overall preparedness at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport for the upcoming peak season –

- (i) optimization in allocation of check-in counters to airlines;
- (ii) dedicated lanes for priority passengers which include Business Class, First Class and passengers with special needs;
- (iii) coordination with the Airport Police for crowd management at entry gates to avoid congestion;
- (iv) deployment of additional screening staff;
- (v) enhanced coordination with ground handling teams to reduce delays in baggage handling and delivery, and
- (vi) modification and improvement of the carousel to enhance the delivery of arrival baggage.

As I have stated in different fora, in order to be a first-class destination, we need to have a first-class airport. That is why my Government is coming up with projects which will

modernise the whole system and infrastructure of the airport by leveraging new technologies to enhance the passenger experience.

CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMISSION – NATIVE INCLUSION – OUTER ISLANDS SPECIFICITIES

(No. B/1190) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth 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 Constitutional Review Commission that will be set up, he will state whether –

- (a) consideration will be given for the inclusion of a native of the Outer Islands, including Rodrigues, Chagos and Agalega to form part thereof, and
- (b) the specificities of the Outer Islands will be addressed by same.

Reply: The Constitutional Review Commission, now being finalised, stands as a solemn pledge by Government to revitalising democratic principles and strengthening governance to bolster public confidence in the autonomy of Government institutions.

In view of the complex and sensitive nature of constitutional reforms, it is imperative that the exercise be led by experts who possess not only solid constitutional acumen but also a thorough understanding of the distinctive historical, social and institutional context of Mauritius.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the Chairperson has already been identified and the Attorney General shall meet him in the days to come to discuss and finalise the composition of the Commission. The House will appreciate that, at this stage, it would be premature to take any commitment on the membership of the Commission.

As regards to part (b) of the question, I would like to reassure the House that in this historic engagement with democracy, Government will ensure that the Commission is mandated to examine all constitutional matters relevant to the governance, administration, and rights pertaining to the Republic as a whole. This will necessarily include the distinct circumstances, needs and developmental realities of Rodrigues, Agalega, the Chagos Archipelago, and any other Outer Island.

AIR MAURITIUS LTD. – AIRPLANES SALE – AUDIT FINDINGS

(No. B/1191) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External

Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the external audit performed on the sales of the airplanes by Air Mauritius Ltd. after it entered voluntary administration, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether the auditor's report is ready and, if so, indicate whether same will be tabled or otherwise dealt with.

Reply: I presume that the hon. Member is referring to the independent forensic investigation which was commissioned by the new Board of Air Mauritius Ltd., appointed soon after the General Elections.

Following a proper procurement exercise, on 23 April 2025, the Board of Air Mauritius Ltd. appointed KROLL Middle East Consultancy Ltd. to conduct an independent forensic investigation with the following terms of reference –

- (i) the rationale for sale/disposal of five aircrafts (two A340-300, two A319-100 and one A330-200) during the voluntary administration in 2020/2021;
- (ii) leasing of two A330-200s in 2022, and
- (iii) the order of one additional A350-900 in 2023.

KROLL has indicated that its report has not yet been finalised and a meeting has been tentatively scheduled with Air Mauritius around mid-January 2026 to review the status of the exercise. Upon submission of the report, the Board of Air Mauritius will examine the findings and decide on the appropriate course of action.

The other parts of the question, therefore, do not arise.

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

(No. B/1192) Mr R. Beechook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Covid-19 (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of individuals prosecuted for breaches thereof, indicating the number of –

- (a) convictions secured, and
- (b) fines imposed and total quantum of revenue collected in terms thereof.

(Withdrawn)

DRIVING LICENCES – BIOMETRIC DRIVING LICENCE, TRACKING SYSTEMS & MONITORING MEASURES

(No. B/1193) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the driving licence, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases of fake ones identified over the past ten years, indicating the number of drivers involved in accidents found to be holding fake ones or non and outcome of cases lodged against them, and
- (b) state whether he will consider –
 - (i) introducing biometric driving licence, automated licence plate recognition and in-car computer systems to track flagged vehicle and drivers, and
 - (ii) recommending the monitoring of the licensing department.

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY ACT – RODRIGUES ELECTORAL SYSTEM – REVIEW

(No. B/1194) 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 proposed introduction in the Assembly of proposed amendments to be brought to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act and electoral reform for Rodrigues, he will state where matters stand, indicating whether urgent consideration will be given thereto.

Reply: In the Government Programme 2025-2026, we stated that “*Government will embark on wide consultations to implement inclusive and participatory reforms aimed at modernising the electoral process and bringing celerity in the access to justice over electoral matters.*”

In this context, a Communiqué was issued by my Office on 02 December 2025, inviting all stakeholders, including Political Parties, Academia, the Mauritian Diaspora, Trade Unions, NGOs and Civil Society Organisations, and the public at large to submit their proposals and suggestions to my Office by Friday 30 January 2026. Rodrigues will have the opportunity to submit its proposals for electoral reforms.

With regard to the amendments to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act, my Office has received proposals from the hon. Member, following a meeting that hon. Mrs Franchette Gaspard Pierre Louis, Minority Leader of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and Deputy Leader of *Organisation du Peuple de Rodrigues*, has had with the Deputy Prime Minister on 25 September 2025.

At a recent meeting that hon. Grandcourt, Chief Commissioner of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, has had with the Deputy Prime Minister, it has been agreed that a Committee will be set up to look into the review of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act and the Electoral System.

I am informed by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly that its Executive Council has not yet approved any amendment to be brought to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act.

On receipt of proposed amendments from the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, consultations will be undertaken with all relevant stakeholders with a view to ensuring a comprehensive review of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act.

PLAINE CORAIL AIRPORT – INSUFFICIENT PARKING SPACE – ACTIONS

(No. B/1195) 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 Plaine Corail Airport, in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Airports Holdings Ltd., Airport of Mauritius Ltd. and Airport of Rodrigues Ltd., information as to whether the issue of insufficient parking space thereat will be addressed pending the implementation of the new airport development project, indicating –

- (a) the number of parking slots currently available for motorcycles, vehicles and buses, and
- (b) whether consideration will be given for the provision of additional temporary parking slots along the Route de l'Autonomie and/or opposite or adjacent to the Plaine Corail Police Station.

Reply: I am informed by Airport of Rodrigues Ltd that no complaint has been received regarding insufficient parking space at the Plaine Corail Airport. This has also been confirmed by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

With regard to part (a) of the question, Plaine Corail Airport has a parking capacity of 120 slots as follows –

- (i) Cars/Hatchback/Pick-up/SUV - 88

(ii)	Motorcycles	-	25
(iii)	Buses	-	4
(iv)	Taxis	-	3

The fees charged for parking are Rs20 for Cars/Hatchback/Pick-up/SUV and Rs40 for bus/lorry/minibus. It is free for motorcycle. These fees are fixed and have been last reviewed in the year 2012.

My attention has been drawn to the inefficiency in the management of the parking space thereat. The following issues have been noted –

- (i) fixed nominal parking fees irrespective of duration of parking time;
- (ii) absence of control in the parking area with an average of 39 vehicles parked for more than one day, and
- (iii) collection of fees manually by a parking collector during flight operations only.

To address these issues, Airport of Rodrigues Ltd is proceeding with the reallocation of existing parking bays, thus releasing approximately 25 parking slots currently used by airport personnel, for the public. Staff vehicles will be relocated to a designated green space area.

In addition, appropriate tariffs would be introduced for long-term parking. Daily and overnight parking rates will be implemented within the next six weeks. Prior to their application, an information and awareness campaign will be rolled out to ensure users are adequately informed.

Moreover, a time-based charging system supported by automated parking management equipment will be introduced within six to nine months, to streamline entry, exit, and fee collection.

With regard to part (b) of the question, Airports of Rodrigues Ltd will coordinate with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the Police to secure temporary parking facilities in designated spaces opposite and adjacent to the Plaine Corail Police Station, should the need arise.

I wish also to inform the House that the New Runway Project at Plaine Corail makes provision for 223 parking slots for the public.

INCOME SUPPORT SCHEME – BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/1220) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the income support scheme aimed at easing the financial burden of people aged 60

but below the pension age deriving an income not exceeding Rs 10,000 or has a household income of less Rs 20,000, if married, he will state the –

- (a) number of individuals having benefitted thereunder category-wise, as at to date, and
- (b) sustainability thereof over the next financial year.

Reply (The Prime Minister): This Government inherited a very precarious situation with regard to the sustainability of the Basic Retirement Pension (BRP). The previous government, in spite of warnings from several experts on the dangers ahead, completely turned a blind eye to the problem. This was most irresponsible and we could not let this situation continue.

There was an urgency to save the pension system for future generations of retirees. If we had continued on the same path followed by the previous government, there would be no pension for future elderly citizens. We, therefore, brought about the necessary reforms.

As a compassionate Government, we could not be insensitive to those persons relying mainly on the BRP for a living.

That is why following the gradual transition of the eligibility age for the Basic Retirement Pension (BRP) to 65 years as from 01 September 2025, Government has decided to provide a monthly Income Support of Rs10,000, including an end-of-year bonus, to persons reaching the age of 60 years who will no longer be eligible for the BRP, but who rely mainly or solely on the BRP for their livelihood.

The Income Support is payable to eligible individuals whose monthly income does not exceed Rs20,000 for a couple and Rs10,000 for a single person household. Beneficiaries of the Income Support include housewives, retirees, employed and self-employed that meet the criteria.

In addition, beneficiaries of the Basic Invalidity Pension, the Basic Widow's Pension and the Invalidity Allowance who turn 60 years are not concerned by the Income Support since they will continue to receive their respective pensions until they qualify for the BRP.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed by the MRA that over the period 01 September 2025 to 04 December 2025, Rs63.8 million has been paid as Income Support, including an end-of-year bonus, to 1,803 beneficiaries comprising –

- (a) 455 single individuals, and

- (b) 1,348 individuals who are married.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the MRA that following an analysis carried out, it is forecasted that in the financial year 2026/2027, on average, 6,000 persons will benefit from the Income Support every month. This will represent an estimated amount of Rs780 million in that year as Income Support.

As regards sustainability of our pension system, the Commission of Experts set up by Government is currently studying the issue and will make recommendation on appropriate reforms.

FÉDÉRATION MAURICIENNE DE JUDO – CLUBS SEEKING AFFILIATION

(No. B/1229) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the *Fédération Mauricienne de Judo*, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand regarding the 18 clubs seeking affiliation thereto, indicating –

- (a) the ruling of the Sports Arbitration Tribunal in relation thereto, and
- (b) whether any decision has been taken pertaining to the recognition thereof and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

WORKPLACE INSPECTIONS – COMPLIANCE & MONITORING

(No. B/1231) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to workplace inspection, he will table the list thereof carried out by each department/section of his Ministry since June 2025 to date, indicating –

- (a) in each case, the –
 - (i) name and address of the establishment;
 - (ii) principal sector of activity, and
 - (iii) number of employees gender-wise, by age group, grade-wise or by occupational category and any other relevant employment particulars as recorded during the inspection, and
- (b) the actions taken in case of non-compliance with the laws and regulations, including the number of employers prosecuted, if any.

(Withdrawn)

DISTRICT COUNCILS – SUSPENDED STAFF – PENDING CASES

(No. B/1232) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to staff members of district councils suspended from duty, he will state the number of pending cases thereof at his Ministry, indicating –

- (a) the main causes thereof and
- (b) whether consideration will be given to fasttracking the resolution thereof.

(Withdrawn)

TAXI OPERATORS WELFARE FUND – CONTRIBUTIONS – SUM DISBURSED – BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/1234) Mr R. Beechook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the Taxi Operators Welfare Fund, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the quantum of contributions collected from taxi operators as at to date, indicating the total sum disbursed therefrom under each scheme and corresponding number of beneficiaries, and
- (b) state whether a review regarding contribution thereto is being envisaged and, if so, indicate where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

PORT AREA – CRUISE TERMINAL – TAXI OPERATORS –RESTRICTION

(No. B/1236) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the taxi operators, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof allowed to work in the Port Area, especially, at the Cruise Terminal, indicating –

- (a) their normal base of operation, and
- (b) whether there is any restriction for taxi operators based in the northern region to avail themselves of this opportunity and if so, indicate the reasons therefor.

(Withdrawn)