

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 04 APRIL 2025**

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Constitution (Amendment) Bill and the Criminal Code (Amendment) Bill into the National Assembly.

The object of the Constitution (Amendment) Bill would be to repeal section 7(2) of the Constitution so as to provide that any law which authorises the infliction of any description of punishment, such as torture or inhuman or degrading treatment, would be held to be inconsistent with, or in contravention of, the Constitution. This amendment to the Constitution had been rendered necessary with a view to implementing certain recommendations made by the United Nations Committee against Torture at its meeting held on 30 November 2017, during the review of Mauritius on its fourth periodic report.

The Criminal Code (Amendment) Bill would also be introduced to implement certain recommendations made by the United Nations Committee against Torture. Accordingly, manslaughter committed by any person on his spouse, as well as on his accomplice, at the very moment he finds them in the act of adultery would no more be an excusable offence.

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2. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation (Repeal) Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill would be to provide for the repeal of the Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation Act.

The National Parks and Conservation Service would, under the Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and National Parks Act, take over the functions and powers of the Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation and the Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden would henceforth be managed, administered, conserved, maintained and developed by the National Parks and Conservation Service. The Bill would also provide for matters connected and related thereto and, consequently, the Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and National Parks Act would be amended.

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3. Cabinet has agreed to the –

- (a) promulgation of the Income Tax (Financial Assistance for Payment of Special Allowance) (Amendment) Regulations 2025 to provide financial support to employers of the transportation sector, including Metro Express Ltd, facing financial difficulties for the payment of the 14<sup>th</sup> Month Bonus; and
- (b) payment of salary compensation 2025 to employers in the transportation sector, including Metro Express Ltd, facing financial difficulties for the period January to June 2025.

The amount of financial support for the payment of 14<sup>th</sup> Month Bonus payable to the enterprises would be as follows –

- (a) full amount of the 14<sup>th</sup> Month Bonus paid to full-time employees if the enterprise had incurred losses or its profits for the year of assessment 2023-2024 were reduced by more than 50% when the impact of the increased National Minimum Wage in January 2024, Salary Compensation 2024 and 14<sup>th</sup> Month Bonus were factored in; and
- (b) 50% of the 14<sup>th</sup> Month Bonus paid to their full-time employees if the enterprise's profits were reduced by more than 10% but not exceeding 50% when impact of the increased National Minimum Wage in January 2024, Salary Compensation 2024 and 14<sup>th</sup> Month Bonus were factored in.

The amount of financial support for the payment of salary compensation 2025 would be, inter alia, as follows –

- (a) Rs610 monthly per employee where the employer had incurred losses or whose profits for the year of assessment 2023-2024 would be reduced by more than 50% after appropriate adjustments including payment of the 14<sup>th</sup> Month Bonus and salary compensation 2025 were factored in; and
- (b) Rs305 monthly per employee where the employer profits for the year of assessment 2023-2024 would be reduced by more than 10% but not exceeding 50% after appropriate adjustments including payment of the 14<sup>th</sup> Month Bonus and salary compensation 2025 were factored in.

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4. Cabinet has taken note that following the outbreak of Chikungunya in Mauritius since 15 March 2025, 19 local cases and seven imported cases had been reported as at 01 April 2025. As regards Rodrigues, three cases had been detected, two of which were imported. The Ministry of Health and Wellness in collaboration with other Ministries, Departments, Parastatal Bodies and private sector entities, was taking all necessary public health and containment measures to minimise the spread of the disease in Mauritius and Rodrigues. In view of the prevailing situation regarding Chikungunya, control measures in Mauritius and Rodrigues were being reinforced.

Cabinet further noted that the Chikungunya (Health Assessment of Incoming Passengers from Reunion Island) Regulations 2025 would be promulgated to provide for any person travelling to the Republic of Mauritius from Reunion Island, except citizens or residents of Mauritius, airline and vessel crew and transit passengers to produce a PCR test certificate certifying a negative result for Chikungunya, prior to embarkation.

The regulations would also provide that all incoming passengers from Reunion Island may, at the health counter of the Port and Airport in Mauritius or Rodrigues, be required to –

- (a) answer questions about his health or relevant circumstances, including travel history and information about other persons with whom he might have travelled or had contact with;
- (b) produce any document and give any information that might assist in assessing his health; and
- (c) provide his contact details or such other sufficient and precise information so that he might be contacted immediately.

Any person who contravenes the regulations shall commit an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding Rs10,000 and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years. The regulations would be effective as from 09 April 2025 and be valid until 08 May 2025.

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5. Cabinet has taken note of an Executive Order by the President of the United States implementing a “Reciprocal Tariff Policy” aimed at addressing large and persistent annual United States trade deficits in goods. The Executive Order imposes a baseline 10% tariff on all imported goods as from 05 April 2025. In so far as Mauritius is concerned, the tariff, based on the trade deficit between Mauritius and the United States, has been fixed at 40%.

A Working Group had been set up at the level of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to discuss the possible impact of that policy measure and the way forward for Mauritius, in consultations with relevant public and private stakeholders, including the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Mauritius Export Association and Business Mauritius.

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6. Cabinet has taken note that the Dental Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment) Regulations 2025 would be promulgated to provide for the recognition and listing of three additional dental institutions, namely Barkatullah Vishwavidyalaya and Kaloji Narayana Rao University of Health Sciences of India as well as Centro Escolar University of Philippines.

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7. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Health and Wellness was reviewing the mechanism regarding cases of alleged medical negligence within Public Health Institutions. A Medical Negligence Committee, chaired by Mrs Rajamanee Veerapen, Senior Adviser, was being set up to investigate cases of suspected medical negligence. The Medical Negligence Committee would convene any officer concerned and the complainant(s) for further explanations and submit a report with recommendations to the Senior Chief Executive of the Ministry of Health and Wellness within two weeks.

In addition, the following measures were being introduced to improve patients' safety in the healthcare system –

- (a) weekly mortality meetings chaired by the Regional Health Directors to review cases of death reported in the hospitals, identify preventable causes, and address lapses in care. Monthly reports would be submitted to the Director of Health Services for follow-up; and
- (b) clinical auditing across all health regions to identify errors with a view to reducing medical negligence. In the same line, healthcare providers would be trained in auditing, and findings would be incorporated into the Continuing Professional Development Programme. Monthly audit reports would be submitted to Regional Health Directors to track progress and ensure continuous improvement in care.

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8. Cabinet has taken note of the holding of the First Mauritius–European Union Partnership Dialogue on 10 April 2025 in Mauritius. Partnership Dialogues between the European Union and each member of the African, Caribbean, and Pacific States Organisation are provided for under the Samoa Agreement. It seeks to modernise the partnership to address contemporary global issues and aims at transforming the traditional donor-recipient model into a partnership of equals.

The agenda for the Partnership Dialogue would include, inter alia, Economic and Trade Issues, Ocean Affairs and Maritime Security, Climate Change, Biodiversity and Food Security, European Union Global Gateway Initiative, Human Rights and Governance as well as Research, Innovation and Artificial Intelligence.

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9. Cabinet has taken note that the African Senior Weightlifting Championships would be held from 20 to 28 April 2025 in Mauritius. Participants from some 20 countries and Mauritius would be represented by 16 senior weightlifters at the Championships.

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10. Cabinet has taken note of the performance of the Export-Oriented Enterprises sector over the period January to December 2024, compared to the corresponding period in 2023. The Export-Oriented Enterprises sector comprises 228 firms employing some 31,400 workers, including expatriates. After a rebound in 2022 (post COVID-19) to reach an all-time high of Rs49.9 billion in exports value, the Export-Oriented Enterprises sector experienced two subsequent years of decline. The value of exports of the Export-Oriented Enterprises sector, which stood at Rs48 billion over the period January to December 2023, decreased by 5.3% to reach Rs45.5 billion (Rs-2.5 billion) during the corresponding period in 2024.

The Export-Oriented Enterprises sector comprises several sub-sectors, regrouped into two main categories, namely “Textiles & Clothing” and “Non-Textiles”. Only the “Live Primates”, “Textile (Yarn & Fabrics)” and “Medical Devices” sub-sectors registered an increase in the value of exports in 2024. All other sub-sectors experienced decline in the value of exports where the “Jewellery and Precious Stones” sub-sector was the hardest hit during that period.

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11. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of *Les Assises de L'Industrie 2025*, held on 13 February 2025, which aimed at identifying challenges and constraints hindering industrial growth and proposing remedial actions to reinforce the reputation of Mauritius as a regional manufacturing hub. Some 120 representatives from public and private sector organisations, having a major stake in supporting industrial development in the country participated in the *Assises*. The recommendations emanating from *Les Assises de L'Industrie 2025* were being examined by the Ministry of Industry, SME and Cooperatives in consultations with relevant stakeholders.

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12. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperatives in the 21st General Session of the African-Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO) Conference held in New Delhi. The Minister intervened during the Country Statements by Ministers and expressed his gratitude to AARDO for its collaboration for more than 50 years, through the provision of a wide range of courses to enhance the knowledge and upgrade the skills of human resources.

In the margins of the Conference, the Minister had bilateral meetings with the Minister of State for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises of the Republic of India, the Minister of State of Rural Development and Communication of the Republic of India and the Minister of Agriculture, Hydraulic Resources and Fisheries of the Republic of Tunisia.

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13. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation in the AI Action Summit in Paris. The objective of the AI Action Summit was to establish scientific foundations, solutions and standards for sustainable AI for collective progress and in public interest. The Minister intervened as speaker in the Ministerial Panel on AI Readiness Assessment in Action on the theme “Preparing AI for the World. Preparing the World for AI.” His intervention related to the key lessons and best practices learnt in readying Government policies, strategies, and people for the AI transition and the challenges and opportunities available.

In the side-line of the Summit, the Minister had several meetings with, inter alia, the Secretary General of the International Telecommunications Union, the Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Information, Communications and Digital Economy of the Republic of Kenya, the Chief Executive Officer of Google, the Permanent Delegate of Latvia to UNESCO and the Chief of the Small Island Developing States Section of UNESCO.

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14. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation in the Global Digital Summit 2025 under the theme “Digital Pathways for All”, in Washington D.C. The objective of the Global Digital Summit 2025 was to have under one roof, the major partners and clients of the World Bank, including representatives from both the public and private sectors, for knowledge sharing, open exchange and valuable discussions about working together on cutting-edge digital technologies.

In the side-line of the Summit, the Minister had several meetings with, inter alia, the Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy of the Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy of the United States State Department, the Secretary General of the International Telecommunications Union, the Director General and the Director-General Elect of the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization and representatives of the World Bank.

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15. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the –

- (a) Council of the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare, with Ms Anuja Ghoorah as part-time Chairperson;
- (b) Pharmacy Board, with Dr Ashwamedsing Dinassing, Acting Director General, Health Services as part-time Chairperson;
- (c) Dangerous Chemicals Control Board, with Dr (Mrs) S. Gaya, Head Occupational Health Unit as part-time Chairperson;
- (d) Board of the National Women’s Sports Commission, also known as the *Commission Nationale du Sport Féminin* with Mrs Noëlle Sindy Christian as part-time Chairperson;
- (e) Licensing Board of the National Land Transport Authority, with Mr Mohammad Hisham Ahmed Oozeer as part-time Chairperson;
- (f) Appeal Committee of the National Land Transport Authority, with Mr Sandilen Calliapen as part-time Chairperson;
- (g) Motor Vehicle Insurance Arbitration Committee, with Mr Nadeem Hyderkhan as part-time Chairperson;
- (h) Executive Committee of the National Women Entrepreneur Council with Mrs Rehema Fatuma Koylash as part-time Chairperson;
- (i) Board of the National Women’s Council, with Mrs Anoo Murachpersad–Lanfray as part-time Chairperson; and
- (j) Board of the National Adoption Council, with Mrs Marie Corina Catherine Christ as part-time Chairperson.

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