

CABINET DECISIONS – 10 JANUARY 2020

1. Cabinet has agreed to instructions being conveyed to the Attorney General's Office for the drafting of the Gender Equality Bill. The objects of the proposed Bill are, inter alia, to

- (a) promote, protect and regulate gender equality in public and private spheres;
- (b) eliminate gender-based discrimination, ensure that human rights of men and women are guaranteed and acknowledged in existing as well as the proposed legislation in order to achieve gender equality;
- (c) provide for gender equality principles that aim at reducing socio-economic inequalities so as to achieve substantive equality in all spheres, that is socially, economically and politically;
- (d) provide for equal opportunities for both men and women and create responsibilities of all entities, public and private, to eliminate barriers that lead to gender discrimination; and
- (e) promote equality and gender balance between family roles, unpaid care work and employment for men and women.

2. Cabinet has taken note that the commercial operations for the Metro Express have started as from 10 January 2020. The operating hours for the commercial operations are from 06 00 hours to 22 00 hours, with an expected headway of 15 minutes.

The Metro Express Cards, also known as MECards, have been put on sale as from 4 January 2020 at the 16 ticketing machines located at the seven train stations. The MECards are also being sold at three additional locations, namely Emmanuel Anquetil Building, Air Mauritius Building in Port Louis and SICOM Tower in Ebene as from 7 January 2020. The MECards for Senior Citizens and Persons with disabilities are available free of charge as from 8 January 2020 at Rose Hill Central Station. The MECards for students would be available as from 13 January 2020.

A feeder bus scheme is operational as from 10 January 2020 and would be free for all passengers up to the end of February 2020.

3. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the meeting chaired by the Prime Minister following the passage of cyclone Calvinia and of the actions that would be taken to strengthen the measures put in place to mitigate the impact of such natural calamities.

Following the passage of the cyclone and the persistent heavy rainfall since the beginning of the year, a preliminary survey conducted by the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (FAREI) and the Small Farmer's Welfare Fund (SFWF) has indicated a 40 percent damage to food crops in the Northern, Southern and Central parts of the country. No major damage has been observed in sheltered farming units and no shortage of crops such as tomatoes, cucumber, sweet pepper and lettuce has been felt. However, the Agricultural Marketing Board would be importing carrots, cabbage and beans in order to cater for any shortage of such crops in the market. Under the Crop Loss Compensation Scheme, eligible planters who have suffered crop losses would be paid compensation upon the completion of the loss assessment exercise.

Cabinet has also taken note that in the context of the forthcoming Cavadee and Maha Shivaratree festivals, some 10,000 coconuts and 55,000 lemons would be imported.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Special Education Need Authority (Registration of Special Education Needs Institutions) Regulations under the Special Education Need Authority Act. The Regulations would provide for, inter alia, -

- (a) payment of fees and levying of charges;
- (b) registration of Special Education Needs Institutions, their teaching/non-teaching staff and resource persons; and
- (c) administration and management of these institutions.

The Regulations shall be deemed to have come into operation on 19 December 2019.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the spread of devastating bush fires destroying natural habitats and precious wildlife in Australia and also of the state of alert that has been declared in various regions including Canberra. Consequently, the High Commission of the Republic of Mauritius in Canberra has been temporarily closed to the public. In case of any emergency, officers of the High Commission may be contacted on the phone or by email. A Press communique has already been issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in that connection.

The Prime Minister, on behalf of the Government of Mauritius and in his own name has conveyed his deepest condolences to the Government of Australia for the loss of lives in this dreadful event. Government is following up on the situation prevailing in that country.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised for the celebration of the Spring Festival at national level, including –

- (a) the inauguration of a Beijing House-Museum of Chinese Traditional Cultural Heritage on 18 January 2020 at Flic en Flac;
- (b) a Chinese Spring Festival Parade and Fair in the streets of Port Louis on 23 January 2020. Shows with the participation of local and foreign artists and demonstrations of Chinese handicraft and cuisine would also be held;
- (c) a Gala Show on 25 January 2020 at the J & J Auditorium, Phoenix comprising performances by the China Oriental Song and Dance Troupe; and
- (d) a Cultural Show on the occasion of the Lantern Festival on 9 February 2020 at the Caudan Arts Centre, Port Louis.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the implementation of an SMS based platform by the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms to disseminate important messages to public officers through mobile services.
