

CABINET DECISIONS – 05 FEBRUARY 2021

1. Cabinet has agreed, in principle, to consultations being held with stakeholders and the public in general on the proposed amendments to the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Act with a view to addressing the problem of misuse and abuse of social media in Mauritius.

2. Cabinet has agreed to a subsidy being allocated to bus operators for the acquisition and installation of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras in buses, under the Bus Modernisation Scheme. The installation of CCTV Cameras on board buses would deter assaults and larcenies and would also enhance the security of commuters availing public transport and ease identification of offenders. The National Land Transport Authority would also put in place a mechanism to ensure that subsidies are disbursed only after receipt of documentary evidence confirming that the CCTV cameras have been installed and after verification of the buses at the level of the Vehicle Examination Stations.

The Bus Modernisation Scheme framework would be revised so that newly imported buses operating under a Road Service Licence would have to be equipped with a CCTV Camera system. The Road Traffic (Construction and Use) Regulations 2010 would also be amended to make it mandatory for all existing buses licensed for the carriage of passengers to be equipped with functional CCTV cameras. A moratorium would, however, be provided.

3. Cabinet has taken note of latest developments regarding the construction of the National Wholesale Market at Five Ways, Belle Rive and the arrangements being made for its operations by the Agricultural Marketing Board thus entailing the closure of all regional auction markets. The National Wholesale Market project has four main objectives –

- (a) to improve the financial livelihood of the planters;
- (b) to provide quality produce at an affordable price to the consumers;
- (c) to ensure more transparency and traceability of the source of agricultural produce traded at the National Wholesale Market; and
- (d) the creation of a modern marketing infrastructure for the handling of fruits and vegetables which would be compliant with relevant legislations and agricultural and food norms/standards.

The building which has a surface area of 35,000 m² would provide space for wholesalers as well as for a Planters' Corner. The National Wholesale Market is expected to be operational by July 2021.

4. Cabinet has agreed to amendments being brought to the implementation modalities of the 100 Sheltered Farms project from a “ready to operate” basis to a grant formula. With a view to encouraging more people/farmers to undertake cultivation of food crops under protected culture, the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security would come up with a grant formula and this review would enable the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute to assist a larger number of farmers.

A revised sheltered farming scheme is being proposed with a view to promoting entrepreneurship and empowerment amongst people willing to undertake cultivation of crops. This concept would take on board planters, charitable institutions, educational bodies and households interested in gardening. In addition, the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security would also cater for 25 Mini Sheltered units to be allocated to the National Empowerment Foundation, 10 to Rodrigues Regional Assembly and five to Agalega.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the imposition of a one-year safeguard measure in the form of a 10 percent customs duty on imports of edible oil (soyabean, sunflower and blended oil) from COMESA countries. The Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2021 would be promulgated in that respect and would be effective as from 22 February 2021.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the implementation of the Youth Empowerment Programme Against Drugs by the Ministry of Health and Wellness in collaboration with the National Drug Secretariat of the Prime Minister’s Office, the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation and other relevant stakeholders. The Programme is a community based anti-drug campaign initiative targeting different regions across the island. The objective of the Programme is to empower young people and other members of the community to enable them to sustain drug prevention activities in their respective locality and surrounding region.

The Programme would be implemented in two phases, namely a Training of Trainers to be held in 20 regions by a core team of persons who are knowledgeable and well acquainted in community drug prevention programme. It would be conducted from 1800 hours to 2000 hours in SILWF Centres/Community Centres and NGO Centres. The second phase would be a roll out phase with the objective of sustaining activities against drugs in the 20 regions.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the launching, by end February 2021, of the Public Sector Transformation Scheme by the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council. The Public Sector Transformation Scheme would encourage innovative companies and start-ups to develop applications for the public sector. The development and implementation of the Scheme would aim at supporting public-sector agencies, through innovative collaborative projects which would test new approaches and technologies, for improving business processes as well as enhancing service delivery.

A Call for Proposal from innovative companies, SMEs, incubators, incubatees and start-ups would be launched by the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council. The proposals would be expected to demonstrate the following –

- (a) they can provide an innovative solution to a clearly identified existing issue/problem benefiting the public at large;
- (b) they are able to deliver an innovative product or service for testing and validation within a short to medium term;
- (c) they can be implemented with minimal changes after the testing/validation period; and
- (d) they have the potential to be scaled up and/or adopted across different public sector organisations/bodies.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the school calendar for primary and secondary education sub-sectors for academic year 2021-2022 which would be as follows -

PRIMARY

| 1 st Term | 2 nd Term | 3 rd Term |
|---|---|--|
| Monday 14 June 2021 to Friday 27 August 2021 Monday 14 June 2021 New entrants admitted to Grade 1 Tuesday 15 June 2021 Resumption for all classes | Monday 13 September 2021 to Friday 03 December 2021 | Monday 10 January 2022 to Friday 15 April 2022 |

SECONDARY

| 1 st Term | 2 nd Term | 3 rd Term |
|---|---|--|
| Monday 14 June 2021 to Friday 27 August 2021 – Except for Grade 12 Grade 12 Thursday 01 July 2021 to Friday 27 August 2021 Monday 14 June 2021 New entrants admitted to Grade 7 Tuesday 15 June 2021 Resumption for Grades 8,9,10,11 and 13 | Monday 13 September 2021 to Friday 03 December 2021 | Monday 10 January 2022 to Friday 15 April 2022 |

9. Cabinet has taken note of the alarming situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world and the spread of the new variants of the virus. With regard to Mauritius, there has been no local transmission in the community since 26 November 2020. As at 5 February 2021, 584 cases of COVID-19 had been registered. There were currently 33 active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius. The existing sanitary protocols are being reviewed to ensure stricter control at the level of the airport, port, quarantine centres and treatment centres. The public should continue to observe strict sanitary precautions.

Cabinet has also taken note that as at 4 February 2021, more than 1,000 frontliners have been vaccinated against COVID-19.

10. Cabinet has taken note that at the 38th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union, Mrs Karoonawtee Chooramun, Head, Child Development Unit, Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare, was elected as member of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, for a term of five years. The other elected members are from Uganda, Zimbabwe, Angola, Mauritania, Nigeria and Burkina Faso.

11. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade represented the Prime Minister at the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) Defence Minister's Conclave convened by India on the side-lines of the Indian biennial air show Aero India 2021 in Bengaluru. The Conclave witnessed the participation, either physically or virtually, of over 20 countries. For this edition, the meeting deliberated on the theme '*Enhanced Peace, Security and Cooperation in the Indian Ocean*'.

In his keynote address, the Minister of Defence of India and Chair of the meeting, expounded India's vision for Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR). He also spoke of the donation by India of COVID-19 vaccines to some neighbouring countries, including Mauritius as part of India's efforts to address humanitarian crises in IOR countries.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade underscored the importance that Mauritius attaches to the valued multi-faceted partnership with India, including in the maritime sectors and expressed gratitude for the donation of COVID-19 vaccines to Mauritius. He recalled the active participation of Mauritius in various regional cooperative actions on maritime security and stressed the need for continued engagements with development partners on maritime security.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the training programme of the Civil Service College, Mauritius for the calendar year 2021. All Supervising Officers of Ministries and Departments have been requested to carry out their Training Needs Assessment and develop a Training Plan for the systematic training of their officers as recommended in the PRB Report 2016.
