

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2026

1. Cabinet has taken note, with concern, that the legislative process with regard to the Diego Garcia Military Base and British-Indian Ocean Territory Bill in the United Kingdom (UK) has been delayed and will be activated as soon as an agreement between the UK and the United States is reached. Government is following-up closely on the matter.

Cabinet has further taken note of the recent stand taken by the Government of the Republic of Maldives whereby it no longer recognises the sovereignty of the Republic of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago and is now objecting to the UK-Mauritius Agreement. In view thereof, Cabinet has decided to immediately suspend all diplomatic relations with the Republic of Maldives.

Cabinet has also taken note that the injunction filed by the “BIOT Citizens” led by Mr Misley Mandarin has been called before the British-Indian Ocean Territory Administration (BIOTA) Court on Thursday 26 February 2026 and the Court has, on the undertaking of the UK Government, extended the stay of the Removal Order up to 13 March 2026, when the matter will be heard on its merits. The BIOTA Court has also acceded to a request by the UK to order that no new persons be transported on the Chagos Islands.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Prime Minister in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Impact Summit, at the invitation of HE Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, in New Delhi. The Mauritian delegation comprised the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation, the Mauritian High Commissioner in India, senior officials from the Prime Minister’s Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, as well as the Chief Executive Officer of Mauritius Telecom. The Summit was on the theme “*AI for All and Welfare for All*” and witnessed the participation of some 20 Heads of State and Government.

During his address at the Leaders’ Plenary, the Prime Minister stressed the urgent need to ensure that the gap in AI divide does not widen between developed and developing countries and called for the transformative power of AI to be at the service of humanity at large. He urged for dedicated initiatives, including the development of an enabling environment to foster a level-playing field so that countries, particularly Small Island Developing States, do not lag behind. The Prime Minister enjoined leaders to consider implementing an equitable international governance framework that promotes safe and trusted use of AI tools. He highlighted the need to foster partnerships among nations so that AI works towards the common good and acts as a socio-economic enabler.

The Prime Minister took the opportunity of his participation in the AI Summit to promote the Special Economic Zone, to be set up at Côte d’Or, and which will be designed to attract investment and geared towards promoting the economy of the future, including the digital economy and AI. He emphasised that in line with the Digital Transformation Blueprint 2025-2029, Mauritius will accelerate its transition towards a high-income innovation driven and digitally enabled economy and is looking forward to entering into strategic partnerships with high-end companies in the field of AI, Data Centres, Cloud Infrastructure and Fintech.

The Prime Minister had a one-to-one meeting with Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi and discussed several issues of bilateral, regional and multilateral interests, including –

- (a) the forthcoming Indian Ocean Conference to be hosted by Mauritius from 10 to 12 April 2026;
- (b) assistance in the Port Sector;
- (c) the India-Mauritius Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA). Prime Minister Modi assured of the continued stance of India of not taking any action that would undermine the benefits that Mauritius currently enjoys under the DTAA;
- (d) the setting up of a Special Economic Zone at Côte d'Or; and
- (e) the America India Connect Cable Connection project announced by the Chief Executive Officer of Google during the Summit.

The Prime Minister also met with Dr S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India who reiterated the readiness of India to enhance bilateral cooperation as per the outcomes of the official visit of Prime Minister Modi to Mauritius in March 2025 and the Prime Minister's State Visit to India in September 2025.

In the margins of the Conference, the Prime Minister met with HE Mr Bharrat Jagdeo, Vice President of Guyana, Dr Kristalina Georgieva, Director General of the International Monetary Fund and Mr Natarajan Chandrasekaran, Chairman of the TATA Group of Companies.

The Minister of Information Technology, Communications and Innovation intervened in the ICT Minister's Forum where he presented the AI Vision Strategy for Mauritius which is articulated on a fair, accountable, inclusive and responsible AI framework. He also advocated for AI safety through regulatory and governance mechanisms and stressed for institutional readiness and appropriate oversight structures. In the margins of the summit, the Minister of Information Technology, Communications and Innovation held bilateral meetings with, inter alia, the Minister of State for Electronics and IT, representatives of the Centre for Development of Telematics, Mistral AI, NVIDIA, Google, Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre and VisionPlus.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the provision of Rs1.1 billion voted in the 2025-2026 Budget for the payment of passage benefits to public officers was exhausted by end November 2025. As a result, a significant number of applications for encashment of passage benefits have been kept in abeyance since December 2025. In order not to deprive public officers of their dues, Cabinet has agreed to –

- (a) an additional budgetary provision of Rs50 million being made for the payment of passage benefits to public officers who had already submitted their applications by end-December 2025, as well as to new applicants, provided that these are for travel, medical and educational purposes supported by appropriate documentary evidence; and
- (b) the deferment of payment of passage benefits for pending cases and new applications for purposes other than medical, educational, and travel to July 2026. Those who had already applied by end-December 2025 would be paid the passage benefits in July 2026 on the same terms as prior to the implementation of the 2026 PRB Report, i.e., they would be paid in full.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Health and Wellness effecting part payment of Rs170 million for the outstanding claim in relation to Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 vaccines to African Vaccine Acquisition Trust.

The Commitment Undertaking and the Participation Agreement signed by the previous regime in May 2021 for the procurement of around 1.1 Million doses of Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 vaccines created an obligation on Government for the payment of the total amount due and that there was no possibility of substitution. Only 439,200 doses of Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 vaccines have been procured and there was an outstanding balance of 691,200 doses which have never being procured but for which payment was still required. An outstanding amount USD5,421,697.41 (around Rs243 million) with interest compounded on a daily basis was due in respect of these 691,200 doses of Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 vaccines.

Cabinet further noted that an amount of USD5,999,040 (around Rs277 million) was also due in respect of 599,040 doses of Pfizer vaccines. The contract agreement had been signed with Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech Manufacturing in October 2022 for the procurement of 999,140 doses of Pfizer vaccines. Only 400,140 doses had been supplied in December 2022 and the payment for the outstanding balance is still due.

Cabinet has also taken note that, on the other hand the Russian authorities have agreed to waive an amount of USD11,243,500 (around Rs521 million) which was due for the Sputnik V vaccines.

Cabinet has noted, with concern, that no procurement procedures have been followed for the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines during that period. It is understood that the decision for the supply of vaccines was taken during the High Level Committee on COVID-19 chaired by the former Prime Minister. However, no records of such decisions are available.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Land Transport issuing drafting instructions to the Attorney-General's Office to amend the Road Traffic (Amendment) Regulations 2021 so as to extend the moratorium on the expiry date of Provisional Driving Licences (Learner) for autocycle/motorcycle, currently scheduled to lapse on 01 March 2026, as transitional relief pending broader reforms to the driving test framework. The validity period of the Provisional Driving Licences (Learner) will be extended for a period of one year.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the appointment of Mr Yogendranath Servansingh, Mr Noor-Ud-Diin Ruhomaun and Dr Guy Rivaltz Julien Quenette as members of the National Road Safety Council.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Optical Council (Amendment) Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to amend the Optical Council Act 2021 so as to –

- (a) empower the Optical Council of Mauritius to regulate, in addition to the profession of opticians, the profession of orthoptists;
- (b) review the composition of the Optical Council of Mauritius with a view to addressing the anomaly with regard to public sector representation; and
- (c) abolish the pre-registration examination for opticians as well as orthoptists.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Higher Education (Use of Artificial Intelligence) Regulations 2026 which will apply to the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the higher education sector in Mauritius. The regulations will confer upon the Higher Education Commission the authority and the duty to -

- (a) issue guidelines, directives and standards to regulate the use of AI across all higher education institutions operating in Mauritius;
- (b) prohibit uses of AI that may lead to bias, breach of academic integrity, plagiarism, or violation of data protection, intellectual property, copyright and cybersecurity laws;
- (c) appoint ad hoc working groups drawn from higher education institutions, professional bodies and other stakeholders to advise the Commission;
- (d) promote academic research on the use of AI in higher education;
- (e) conduct periodic reviews to ensure that policies remain current and aligned with best practice; and
- (f) require institutions to take corrective measures within prescribed timeframes where non-compliance is identified.

The regulations will also impose clear obligations on every higher education institution.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the status reached in the Local Government Reforms being undertaken with a view to conducting a thorough review of the entire local government system, so as to ensure that it reflects present realities and enables Local Authorities to respond more effectively to the needs of local communities. The Inter-Ministerial Committee under the chair of the Minister of Local Government met on four occasions and came up with proposals.

In order to ensure that the reform framework is inclusive, coherent and aligned with national priorities and constituency realities, consultations were held with all the elected members, both at local and national levels.

A Local Government Reform Cell has been set up at the level of the Ministry of Local Government. The Cell is currently analysing proposals received from the public and various organisations following the public consultation exercise. In addition, all views and comments received during the Consultative Workshop and the Consultative Meeting are currently being examined.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the setting up of an Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Price of Bread under the chair of the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection and comprising the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity and the Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperatives.

11. Cabinet has taken note of complaints regarding alleged inappropriate behavior of Mr Frédéric Pavaday, a former music teacher of Loreto Junior School at Curepipe. The nature of the allegations relates to abusive conduct of the teacher against two students during their time at the school.

Senior officials of the Ministry of Education and Human Resource had a meeting with the President of the Parent Teacher Association and a parent on 24 February 2026 to discuss how the Ministry of Education and Human Resource can extend its support to the students and parents of the aggrieved parties. The Ministry of Education and Human Resource proposed to offer psychological assistance to students and parents requiring same.

The support of the Ministry of Education and Human Resource aims to ensure the emotional safety and well-being of students during this period of heightened public concern regarding child protection protocols, mandatory reporting, and institutional responsibilities in educational settings.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the decision of the Supreme Court in the matter of Okiyo Maritime Corp v State of Mauritius ipso Ferney Ltd, Segal Sail Charters Ltd, Louis Jean Jerome de Chasteauneuf, Guy Harel, Club Nautique de Pointe Désny, Sandy Point Land and Sea Pty Ltd delivered on 23 February 2026.

Okiyo Maritime Corp, the registered owner of the MV Wakashio had lodged a case before the Supreme Court for the registered owner to set up a limitation fund by way of bank guarantee issued in favour of the State of Mauritius, an order directing that the said limitation fund be jointly managed by the Applicant and the Respondent in order to settle claims admitted by the Applicant and the Respondent and/or as directed by a Court of law and such other Order or Orders that the Supreme Court may deem fit and reasonable in the circumstances. On 23 February 2026, in its judgment, the Supreme Court authorised the Applicant to set up a limitation fund only for the payment of claims not related to oil pollution damage and to set up a bank guarantee for the sum of Rs719,658,463.31.

The State of Mauritius will, therefore, not be able to make any claim in excess of the sum of Rs719,658,463.31 for any non-oil pollution damage resulting from the MV Wakashio oil spill.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the National Fintech Strategy Report which is aligned with the Financial Services Strategy 2025–2030 launched in July 2025. The Report sets out a comprehensive and coordinated framework to position fintech as a central driver of Mauritius' digital economy and its future competitiveness as an International Financial Centre. It proposes an integrated approach spanning over regulatory modernisation, digital-infrastructure readiness, talent development, innovation and investment facilitation, international market positioning and financial inclusion.

The Strategy Report was developed with the technical support from the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and reviewed by a Technical Fintech Committee comprising representatives of relevant Ministries and regulatory bodies. The Strategy is structured around six mutually reinforcing pillars designed to build a future-ready, innovation led ecosystem capable of supporting the evolution of financial services in an increasingly complex and technology-driven global market.

The National Fintech Strategy Report also includes a coordinated policy, execution, and skills development so that Fintech becomes a core engine of digital-economy growth. It recognises that the continued success of Mauritius as a financial centre requires greater agility, interoperability, innovation-readiness and trust-building measures in a rapidly evolving global financial landscape. The Strategy aims to provide a clear policy direction, execution pathway and skills-development agenda for the country to build a future-ready fintech ecosystem.

14. Cabinet has agreed to the Drains Infrastructure Construction Ltd proceeding with the implementation of the project "Flood Mitigation Measures in the region of Vallée des Prêtres under Phase 1 - Construction of floodwall along eastern boundary of River Latanier over a stretch of 240 metres near Morcellement Ramlagun".

15. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Health and Wellness, “La Fondation de la Société de Pneumologie de L’Océan Indien (SPOI), Paris, France” and “La Fondation de l’Académie de Médecine, Paris, France”.

The aim of the SPOI is to promote access to pulmonary care, particularly through the support and development of bronchoscopy to evaluate pulmonary fibrosis and assess interstitial lung diseases for proper treatment protocol for countries in the Indian Ocean region. The objectives of signing the Memorandum of Understanding are to –

- (a) raise public awareness of the challenges faced by Indo-Oceanic populations;
- (b) develop an interventional pulmonology service in each SPOI member country, including Mauritius, with the aim of promoting access to respiratory care to a greater number of patients;
- (c) provide specialised equipment for diagnosis and treatment;
- (d) provide capacity building through structured training of medical and paramedical staff; and
- (e) establish a sustainable service integrated with public hospitals.

16. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care (TFSMC) and F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd (ROCHE) for collaboration to conduct a gap analysis on clinical trials at the National Cancer Centre in Mauritius. The objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding are, inter alia, to –

- (a) establish a structured collaboration between the TFSMC and ROCHE so as to assess the current framework for conducting clinical trials in Mauritius, with focus on the National Cancer Centre as a clinical trial site;
- (b) identify gaps in processes, infrastructure, regulatory and operational readiness for clinical trials and benchmark these against international standards, including Good Clinical Practice; and
- (c) provide a framework, recommendations and an action plan to strengthen national capacity for clinical trials and support the development of clear standards adapted to the local context.

The proposed gap analysis would provide Government and relevant institutions with an evidence-based assessment of the current state of readiness for international clinical trials, together with prioritised recommendations tailored to the Mauritian context and aligned with international scientific and ethical standards.

17. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation and the International Institute of Information Technology, Bangalore for collaboration on Digital Public Infrastructure.

The Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation is currently pursuing the implementation and strengthening of its Digital Public Infrastructure to enhance secure digital service delivery, interoperability among public institutions and trusted digital transactions for citizens and businesses. Digital Public Infrastructure is the digital backbone on which e-government and digital economy services run.

18. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius tabling its Initial Schedule of Commitments covering sectors under Business and Environmental Services in the context of the second round of Southern African Development Community Trade in Services negotiations.

19. Cabinet has agreed to private Higher Education Institutions providing Foundation Programmes for students, including international ones, who do not meet direct entry requirements for undergraduate studies, as is the case for public Higher Education Institutions. The Foundation Programmes will be introduced in private Higher Education Institutions subject to the approval of the Higher Education Commission in order to adapt the entry requirements to higher education to the secondary school exit qualifications across countries.

An accredited Foundation Programme is a pre-degree academic programme of a duration of one year or two semesters with four modules per semester with one module in English language in each semester. The programme is designed to prepare learners for entry into the first year of undergraduate degree programme in a specified field of study. A Foundation Programme is an integral component of a defined progression pathway within a Higher Education Institution.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised in the context of World Obesity Day, which is observed annually on 04 March with the aim of raising awareness and advocating for solutions to the global obesity crisis. The theme for this year is “8 Billion Reasons to Act on Obesity.”

To commemorate World Obesity Day 2026, the Ministry of Health and Wellness will organise an official ceremony on 04 March 2026. The programme will comprise a keynote address and a panel discussion, with around 200 participants. In addition, the following activities will also be held -

- (a) an Inter-College Poster Competition, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Human Resource, for students of Grades 7, 8 and 9 to raise awareness about obesity;

- (b) Health and Physical Activity promotion events at Recreation Centres;
- (c) radio talks and television programmes on MBC TV centred on the theme “8 Billion Reasons to Act on Obesity”;
- (d) talks and sensitisation campaigns at Community Centres, Women Centres, Social Welfare Centres, schools and in urban and rural settings on the risk factors of obesity and preventive measures;
- (e) distribution of informational pamphlets during screening activities; and
- (f) an exhibition on healthy lifestyles and balanced diets organised in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

21. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Conference entitled “Mobilising the private sector for sustainable trade and investment in Africa’s agrifood sector”, organised jointly by the Governments of Romania and Kenya in Nairobi, Kenya.

The Conference brought together high-level representatives from African governments, the private sector and international partners to discuss policy options to enhance trade and investment in the agrifood sector in Africa. Mauritius has been recognised by the OECD as a key partner in advancing sustainable development, trade, investment, and regional integration through the African Continental Free Trade Area. The Conference addressed challenges and opportunities for enhancing trade and investment in Africa’s agrifood systems.

The Minister intervened in the session on “Bringing Sustainable Investment and Finance into the Agrifood Sector in Africa,” and shared Mauritius’ experience in the development of the sector and highlighted the challenges that the country faced after transforming the sugar industry following the phasing-out of the Sugar Protocol. He showcased the evolution of the sugar industry transitioning into the cane industry, highlighted the challenges faced by Small Island Developing States and emphasised opportunities for youth and women in agriculture. The Minister had bilateral meetings with the OECD, the Australian Trade & Investment Commission and the International Seed Federation.

22. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Attorney-General in the meeting of Commonwealth Law Ministers and Senior Officials in the Republic of Fiji. Commonwealth Law Ministers, Attorneys General and Senior Officials met to discuss legal issues of interest to Commonwealth member countries. The theme of the Meeting was “Anchoring Justice in a Changing Tide: Strengthening the Rule of Law for a Resilient Future”. A number of topics were discussed during the meeting namely –

- (a) Democratic Resilience and Participation;

- (b) Justice and Artificial Intelligence;
- (c) Maritime Boundaries and Sea Level Rise;
- (d) Combating Misinformation and Disinformation in Electoral and Other Democratic Processes; and
- (e) Challenges in Third-Party Funding of Civil Litigation in the Commonwealth and in Asset Recovery.

In the margins of the meeting, the Attorney-General attended side events, including one organised by the Government of Singapore on the United Nations Convention on International Agreements Resulting from Mediation (the Singapore Convention) adopted in 2019.

23. Cabinet has taken note of the recent participation of the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning in the Global Business Summit organised by the ETNow -Times Group in New Delhi. The Summit brought together global leaders, including Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, and focused on economic transformation, investment, artificial intelligence, and global development trends.

The Minister participated in a high-level panel on translating trade agreements into economic outcomes and highlighted Mauritius' role as a strategic bridge between India and Africa, as well as the strengths of the Mauritius International Financial Centre.

In light of the recent Indian Supreme Court ruling in the Tiger Global case, the Minister engaged with Indian authorities to clarify the implications for Mauritian operators. Meetings were held with the Revenue Secretary of India, and Chairman and senior officials of the Central Board of Direct Taxes.

24. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in the 48th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and the 39th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union (AU), held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on the theme "Ensuring Sustainable Water Availability and Safe Sanitation Systems to Achieve the Goals of Agenda 2063."

The Minister intervened on agenda item "Peace and Security" to convey Mauritius' gratitude for the AU's consistent recognition of our sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia.

On the AU institutional reform, the Minister advocated for the operationalisation of the African Court of Justice as a cornerstone of respect for the rule of law, and insisted that reform must guarantee equitable representation, while respecting the particular circumstances of island States and smaller Member States.

On the sidelines of the AU Executive Council and Summit, the Minister had meetings with, inter alia, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ghana, the Minister of International Relations of Botswana and the President of the Pan-African Parliament. The Minister also attended the following continental meetings –

- (a) 35th Forum of Heads of State and Government of the African Peer Review Mechanism;
- (b) Pre-Summit Meeting of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change;
- (c) Inaugural Session of the Sub-Committee on the Implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area;
- (d) Italy-Africa Summit;
- (e) Meeting with the Corporate Council on Africa; and
- (f) Meeting with the Africa Peer Review Mechanism.
