

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING - FRIDAY 20 MARCH 2026**

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Certificate of Character Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to repeal the Certificate of Character Act 2012 and replace it with a less stringent legislation, with a view to reducing barriers to employment and social reintegration of persons who have been convicted of an offence, subject to certain criteria.

The Bill will provide for revision in convictions which are borne on a person's certificate of character, other than convictions for serious offences that will still appear on a person's certificate of character. Accordingly, in addition to a person having been granted a free pardon or having been discharged absolutely or conditionally, no conviction will appear on a person's certificate of character where having been convicted -

- (a) he has been given only a fine not exceeding Rs50,000, in lieu of Rs5,000, and two years, in lieu of five years, have lapsed since the date of his conviction;
- (b) he has, irrespective of whether he has been given a fine, been given imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years and 10 years have lapsed since the date of his conviction; or
- (c) the offence was committed when he was under 18 years of age.

It is also being provided that where a person's certificate of character specifies that he has been convicted of a crime or misdemeanour -

- (a) his employer shall not discriminate against him where the crime or misdemeanour is not related to the employment; or
- (b) his prospective employer shall not discriminate against him where the crime or misdemeanour is not related to the employment for which he is being considered.

\*\*\*

2. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Anti-Money Laundering, Combatting the Financing of Terrorism and Countering Proliferation Financing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill into the National Assembly.

The object of the Bill is to amend various enactments with a view to improving the country's efficiency in combatting criminality, including money laundering, terrorism financing and proliferation financing. Necessary measures and safeguards

are being provided so as to make it even more difficult for criminals to use and abuse the country's administrative and financial systems, and to combat these crimes in a more efficient manner.

Additionally, the Bill reflects the country's determination to continuously adhere to international standards, including those of the Financial Action Task Force on anti-money laundering, combatting the financing of terrorism and countering proliferation financing.

\*\*\*

3. Cabinet has agreed to the proclamation of section 9 of the Protection of Elderly Persons Act, to enable the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity to make regulations for the application of elderly persons' protection orders.

The Protection of Elderly Persons Act, which was proclaimed with effect from 01 September 2006, with the exception of section 9, and subsequently amended in September 2016, provides for the legal and administrative framework to specially safeguard the rights of elderly persons, promote their well-being and ensure that they are protected from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Section 9 of the Act provides for the Court to issue an Elderly Persons' Protection Order where it is satisfied that there is reasonable cause to believe that an elderly person has suffered, is likely to suffer or is suffering an abuse. Since that section was not proclaimed, the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity could not apply for Protection Orders and had to refer cases of violence against the elderly to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare, for prosecution under the Protection from Domestic Violence Act.

Other amendments to the Protection of Elderly Persons Act are currently being worked out at the level of the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity in consultation with the Attorney-General's Office.

\*\*\*

4. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of an Umbrella Line of Credit Agreement of INR41 billion (around Rs21 billion) with the Export-Import (EXIM) Bank of India. During the State Visit of the Prime Minister to India in September 2025, the Government of the Republic of India agreed to extend a Special Economic Package of USD680 million to Mauritius, which comprises the following -

(a) Grant of USD25 million as Budgetary Support -

The process for this grant has already been finalised and the disbursement was made in November 2025.

(b) Grant of USD215 million for the following Projects -

(i) New Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital;

- (ii) Ayurvedic Centre of Excellence (AYUSH);
  - (iii) Veterinary School and Animal Hospital; and
  - (iv) Provision of helicopters.
- (c) Blended Finance of USD440 million, comprising a Grant of USD8 million and a Line of Credit of USD432 million, for the following projects -
- (i) New Air Traffic Control Tower at the SSR International Airport;
  - (ii) Motorway M4;
  - (iii) Ring Road Phase II project; and
  - (iv) Port equipment by the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd.

\*\*\*

5. Cabinet has taken note that following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and the Government of the Republic of India in September 2025 for the grant of Rs500 million for the implementation of the second phase of small development projects, a sum of Rs23.8 million will be earmarked for each of the 21 constituencies, including Agalega.

In line with the MoU, the proposed projects will relate primarily to socio-economic development, particularly the creation of infrastructure in the education, basic health care or community development sectors. Livelihood activity, skill development, renewable energy, conservation of environmental and cultural heritage, empowerment of women and child welfare, and disaster risk reduction shall be primary themes of the projects. Projects are being identified for implementation across the different constituencies.

\*\*\*

6. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and the Government of the Republic of India on Cooperation in the Oil and Gas sector, following an appeal made by the Prime Minister to the Indian Prime Minister for assistance in the supply of petroleum products through a Government-to-Government agreement.

The objectives of the MoU are, inter alia, to -

- (a) cooperate in the supply of petroleum products on the basis of reciprocity, mutual benefit and in strict respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity;

- (b) cooperate to strengthen energy security and maintain supplies of petroleum products to Mauritius;
- (c) promote cooperation in the fields of biofuels, including capacity building; and
- (d) enter into programmes and working plans to implement any activity under the MoU.

The MoU establishes the framework under which the Government of India, through the Indian Oil Corporation Limited, would supply petroleum products to the Government of Mauritius, represented by the State Trading Corporation on a Business-to-Business basis.

\*\*\*

7. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Income Tax (Common Reporting Standard) (Amendment) Regulations 2026.

The “Addendum to the Multilateral Competent Authority Agreement on Automatic Exchange of Financial Account information (CRS MCAA)”, which provides for additional information which is to be reported as part of the annual filings of a reporting financial institution, was signed in December 2025.

The Income Tax (Common Reporting Standard) (Amendment) Regulations 2026 will, accordingly, give effect to these enhanced reporting requirements under the Common Reporting Standard framework. The Regulations shall be deemed to have come into operation in respect of the calendar year starting 01 January 2026.

\*\*\*

8. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Freeport (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2026. The Regulations will amend the First Schedule to the Freeport Act in order to declare Zone 34, a plot of land of 33,359 m<sup>2</sup> situated at Riche Terre, as a legally designated freeport zone.

\*\*\*

9. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Mauritius Standards Bureau (Certification Mark) Regulations 2026, based on the recommendations of the Standards Council of the Mauritius Standards Bureau (MSB).

The Regulations will provide for changes brought to the Mauritius Standards Bureau Act in 2022. Amendments were brought to the Act with a view to aligning with international norms and to, inter alia, formalise the activities already undertaken by the MSB, such as the formulation of Mauritian Standards, metrology and calibration and also empowered the Bureau to conduct other activities such as

testing, certification and inspection. The term “licence” was replaced throughout the Act with “MSB certification mark”, reflecting modern certification practices.

\*\*\*

10. Cabinet has taken note that as at the deadline of 18 March 2026, 97.2% of public officers have submitted their option forms following the publication of the Pay Research Bureau Report 2026.

\*\*\*

11. Cabinet has agreed to the National Strategy for Combatting Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism 2026-2029. The National Strategy outlines specific actions to enhance the country’s effectiveness in mitigating risks. It reflects Government’s proactive approach towards maintaining economic and financial integrity, as well as strengthening national security. The Strategy aligns national efforts with evolving international standards of the Financial Action Task Force and builds on progress achieved under previous reforms.

The National Strategy encompasses 10 core strategic themes for combatting money laundering and 10 core strategic themes for countering the financing of terrorism, which collectively enhance the ability of Mauritius to sustainably prevent, detect and deter Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing activities effectively.

The Strategy adopts a risk-based and whole-of-government approach, focusing on enhancing inter-agency coordination, strengthening supervisory and enforcement mechanisms, improving financial intelligence and data analytics capabilities, and ensuring more effective implementation across financial institutions and designated non-financial businesses and professions. It also integrates ongoing national risk assessment exercises and seeks to address identified gaps through targeted and measurable actions.

The Strategy is intended to guide relevant stakeholders in developing their own Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Combatting the Financing of Terrorism (CFT) strategies and mitigating controls. Based on the National Strategy for Combatting Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism 2026-2029, an AML/CFT National Action Plan has also been developed. The AML/CFT National Action Plan will, where relevant, be adopted at the level of competent authorities and supported by the necessary resources to ensure implementation of the risk mitigating measures.

\*\*\*

12. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research implementing the National Strategy for Higher Education, Science and Research 2025–2035 which provides a coherent and future-oriented roadmap to guide and drive reforms in the higher education, science and research sectors at the national level.

The Strategy is structured around five mutually reinforcing Strategic Pillars, namely -

- (a) Excellence in Teaching and Learning - harmonisation of standards, improved pedagogy, modernised delivery of teaching, enhanced student support and alignment with international benchmarks;
- (b) Research and Innovation - guided by national research priorities, with stronger governance, academia–industry linkages and international visibility;
- (c) Pathways for Lifelong Learning - flexible and inclusive learning pathways, micro-credentials, credit transfer, recognition of prior learning and articulation of Technical and Vocational Education Training;
- (d) Science Diplomacy - institutionalising scientific cooperation, expanding global partnerships, leveraging the scientific diaspora and assuming a regional Science Technology and Innovation convenor role; and
- (e) Digitalisation and AI Excellence - interoperable systems, AI-enabled learning analytics, digital services, digital literacy, cybersecurity and data governance.

\*\*\*

13. Cabinet has taken note of the coordinated action and measures being implemented by the Ministry of Local Government and the local authorities aimed at controlling the proliferation of rodents, across the island, in order to safeguard public health, enhance environmental sanitation, and mitigate risks associated with rodent borne diseases, namely leptospirosis, as well as combating chikungunya and dengue.

The Ministry of Local Government will implement a coordinated structured nationwide sensitisation campaign to complement operational rodent control measures and to ensure sustained behavioural change among the population. Raising public awareness on preventive measures is therefore critical in reducing exposure to such health hazards. The purpose of the structured nationwide sensitisation campaign will be to -

- (a) educate the public on the health risks associated with rodent infestation;
- (b) promote proper waste management and environmental sanitation practices;

- (c) encourage households, businesses and market operators to eliminate potential rodent breeding grounds; and
- (d) foster community vigilance and cooperation with local authorities in reporting rodent infestations.

Following the high-level multi-sectoral meetings on chikungunya, dengue and leptospirosis, chaired by the Minister of Health and Wellness, the Local Authorities have intensified the cleaning of bare land and state land to prevent the propagation of dengue and chikungunya. Rodent control is being effected in all public places by the local authorities, including at markets, road borders, drains, under bridges and bare land, on a regular basis.

\*\*\*

14. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius hosting a signing ceremony between representatives of the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) States and the European Union (EU) on 12 May 2026. The ceremony will formally mark the conclusion of negotiations on the deepened ESA–EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). Mauritius and the other four ESA States, namely Comoros, Madagascar, Seychelles and Zimbabwe have been engaged in negotiations with the EU since 2019 to deepen and expand the existing ESA–EU Interim Economic Partnership Agreement. The negotiations are in their final phase.

The deepened EPA significantly expands the scope of the existing Interim EPA by introducing new chapters with enhanced disciplines covering key areas such as Trade in Services and Investment, Digital Trade, Rules of Origin, Customs and Trade Facilitation, Agriculture, Economic and Development Cooperation, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, Technical Barriers to Trade, Intellectual Property Rights, Competition Policy, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Government Procurement Transparency, Trade and Sustainable Development, as well as Dispute Settlement and Institutional Provisions. It establishes a comprehensive framework for trade and economic cooperation between the ESA region and the EU, while providing ESA States, including Mauritius, with expanded market access opportunities, strengthened regulatory cooperation and the necessary policy flexibility to support their development objectives.

\*\*\*

15. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cultural Cooperation between the Ministry of Arts and Culture and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the period 2026 to 2029.

The MoU will provide an appropriate framework for enhanced collaboration between the Ministry of Arts and Culture and the Commission for Youth and Sports, Arts and Culture, Museums, Archives, Historical Sites and Buildings and Library Services of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. It will facilitate the implementation of joint cultural initiatives, artistic exchanges, training programmes and heritage promotion activities, while enabling artists and cultural practitioners from both

Mauritius and Rodrigues to benefit from greater exposure and opportunities for professional development. The objectives of the MoU are, inter alia, to -

- (a) enhance artistic and cultural cooperation;
- (b) encourage local, regional and international exchanges of artists, creators, performers and other players in the fields of arts and culture to and from Rodrigues;
- (c) enable eligible staff, artists, creators, performers and other players to participate in workshops, seminars and training courses with a view to enhancing cultural development;
- (d) encourage the use of existing facilities, contacts and expertise to foster artistic and cultural development;
- (e) promote the creative industries; and
- (f) preserve and promote tangible and intangible cultural heritage between Mauritius and Rodrigues.

\*\*\*

16. Cabinet has taken note that following a series of complaints received at the level of the Ministry of Youth and Sports regarding internal conflicts, governance issues and concerns raised by various stakeholders within the badminton community, and in accordance with section 9(9) of the Sports Act 2016, the Ministry of Youth and Sports dissolved the Managing Committee of the Mauritius Badminton Association on 10 March 2026.

In accordance with section 9(9)(c)(ii) of the Sports Act 2016, the Ministry of Youth and Sports has initiated consultations with the Mauritius Olympic Committee with a view to appointing a temporary committee. The committee will be responsible for overseeing the management of the affairs of the Mauritius Badminton Association on an interim basis. The role of the temporary committee will be to stabilise the administration of the association, restore confidence among stakeholders and prepare the conditions necessary for the holding of fresh elections in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions and the constitution of the association.

\*\*\*

17. Cabinet has taken note of the status regarding social housing projects being implemented by the New Social Living Development Ltd and the National Housing Development Company Ltd.

The Ministry of Housing and Lands is monitoring the implementation of the different projects closely in consultations with relevant Ministries and stakeholders.

\*\*\*

18. Cabinet has taken note that the joint re-evaluation of the Mauritius Accreditation Service (MAURITAS) will be carried out by the African Accreditation Cooperation and the Southern African Development Community Cooperation in Accreditation from 30 March to 03 April 2026.

In line with international rules and requirements, the re-evaluation exercise for MAURITAS is carried out to assess whether it is still complying with the requirements of the relevant International Standards, so that its international recognition can be maintained for a further period of four years. The exercise will be conducted by evaluators in the presence of observers representing international accreditation.

\*\*\*

19. Cabinet has taken note of the overall academic performance of students who sat for the School Certificate (SC) examinations 2025. Out of a total of 11,735 school candidates, 8,130 were successful, resulting in a percentage pass rate of 69.28% for the Republic of Mauritius, as compared to 72.65% last year.

The percentage of candidates having obtained six credits and above is 26.6% while the percentage of candidates having obtained five credits is 6.8%. The percentage of candidates having obtained three credits and below represents 59.1% of the total school candidates. Out of the 648 candidates who took part in *Kreol Morisien* examinations at the National School Certificate level, 593 have passed the examinations, representing a pass rate of 91.51%.

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource is analysing the results and will identify the root causes of the declining trend in the pass rate of the subjects, in particular, English Language, French and Mathematics.

\*\*\*

20. Cabinet has taken note of the overall academic performance of students who sat for the Higher School Certificate (HSC) examinations 2025. Out of a total of 5,794 school candidates who took part in the HSC examinations, 4,576 were successful, resulting in a percentage pass rate of 78.98% for the Republic of Mauritius, as compared to 78.88% for academic year 2024.

For academic year 2025, 79 candidates of the Republic of Mauritius were examined for the Cambridge Higher School Professional Certificate for which a percentage pass of 88.61% was recorded.

\*\*\*

21. Cabinet has agreed to the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council submitting an Expression of Interest to the SADC Secretariat to host the SADC Centre of Excellence on Science, Technology and Innovation Measurement (CoE-STIM). The CoE-STIM will strengthen national and regional capacity for Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) measurements. The CoE-STIM will function as a regional professionalisation platform for STI measurements by -

- (a) developing structured training curricula for STI statisticians, analyst, and policymakers;
- (b) delivering short courses, executive programmes, and certification modules tailored to varying levels of institutional maturity; and
- (c) supporting peer learning, technical exchange, and communities of practice among national statistical offices, STI agencies, and Ministries.

\*\*\*

22. Cabinet has taken note that the Mauritius Revenue Authority will co-host a Regional Workshop on advanced Investigative Techniques and Interviewing Skills from 30 March to 03 April 2026 in Mauritius. The workshop is being jointly organised by the Mauritius Revenue Authority, the US Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation under the Western Indian Ocean Transnational Organised Crime and Anti-Money Laundering Program.

The workshop aims at providing investigative and prosecutorial best practices and techniques and will involve practical exercises requiring participants to utilise the techniques presented. The overall goal of the workshop is to build investigator/prosecutor skills leading to more successful case adjudication and disruption of transnational criminal organisations using the Western Indian Ocean.

\*\*\*

23. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research in collaboration with the Centre for Science and Technology of the Non-Aligned and other Developing Countries will host a workshop on “Promoting Blue Economy and overcoming its implementation challenges” on 26 and 27 March 2026 in Mauritius. The objectives of the workshop are to -

- (a) focus on the critical role of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) in strengthening blue economy;
- (b) discuss case studies where STI driven approaches have supported blue economic growth, enhanced livelihoods and promoted environmental sustainability; and
- (c) address key technological gaps and environmental challenges, highlighting how strategic planning and the sustainable use of ocean resources can enhance economic resilience, particularly for Small Island Developing States.

\*\*\*

24. Cabinet has taken note of the recent participation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in the eleventh edition of the Raisina Dialogue held in New Delhi, India on the theme “*Samskāra* - Assertion, Accommodation, Advancement”.

During his intervention in the Raisina Ideas-Pod, the Minister highlighted the vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States to climate change and the urgent need for predictable, accessible and targeted climate finance. The Minister participated as a panelist in the session entitled “Heart of the Seas: The Future of the Indian Ocean”, which examined the evolving strategic, economic and environmental dynamics of the Indian Ocean region.

On the sidelines of the Raisina Dialogue, the Minister had a bilateral meeting with Dr S. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs of India, reaffirming the commitment to further strengthen the enhanced strategic partnership between Mauritius and India. They discussed regional and international developments, including the hosting of the Indian Ocean Conference by Mauritius in April 2026, the US-Iran conflict, attacks on Indian-flagged vessels near Sri Lanka, and the situation in the Maldives.

The Minister also held discussions with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Diaspora of the Republic of Seychelles, focusing on bilateral cooperation and regional issues, including maritime and air connectivity, fisheries, energy and food security.

\*\*\*

25. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade intervened virtually at the G-33 Ministerial Meeting.

The objective of the meeting was to discuss the priority agricultural issues of the G-33 and to coordinate members’ positions in preparation for the 14<sup>th</sup> World Trade Ministerial Conference (MC14). The G-33 is a group of Member States of the World Trade Organization that share common positions on a number of issues relating to the agriculture negotiations, particularly in relation to food security and rural livelihoods.

During his intervention, the Minister reaffirmed the commitment of Mauritius to remain constructively engaged in the ongoing agricultural negotiations at the WTO in order to achieve a balanced outcome. The Minister urged the G-33 members to work collectively to retain the cohesion of the coalition and to strengthen it further by reaching out to other like-minded developing groups to secure their support for a fair, balanced and development-oriented outcome on agriculture at MC14.

\*\*\*

26. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the SADC Council of Ministers held in South Africa on 12 and 13 March 2026, which was attended by the Junior Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade. The main issues raised during the Council are as follows -

- (a) Status of Contributions;

- (b) SADC Regional Logistics Depot;
- (c) Geopolitical Development in the Region;
- (d) Establishment of a SADC-India Engagement Platform;
- (e) Mid-Term Review of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan 2020-2030;
- (f) SADC-USA Dialogue Forum;
- (g) Resource Mobilisation;
- (h) Operationalisation of the SADC Regional Development Fund;
- (i) Operationalisation of the SADC Pooled Procurement Services;
- (j) HIV and AIDS Special Fund;
- (k) SADC Online Monitoring and Evaluation Platform;
- (l) Disaster management in the Region; and
- (m) International Candidatures.

\*\*\*\*\*