

# Cabinet revises public service working hours from 25 May

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prevent further economic strain. "If fuel continues to rise, everything follows: transport, goods, everything," he said.

The Vice President also addressed concerns about foreign exchange and correspondent banking, warning that mismanagement in these areas could have serious consequences.

He explained that challenges in the forex market and reporting systems could affect correspondent banking relationships, which are essential for international financial transactions.

"We are already seeing issues with correspondent banking because of reporting mechanisms in place," he said.

He cautioned that the government must avoid actions that could lead to informal or parallel currency markets, noting that this has occurred in the past.

"We don't want a situation where a back market develops again," he said, stressing that stability in the forex system is critical for tourism and trade.

VP Pillay said an emergency Cab-



Government offices will now be open on Fridays, but close early everyday

inet mechanism has been activated to better coordinate government responses across sectors.

He said ministries are working

together to ensure essential supplies remain stable, particularly in health, fuel, and commodities.

"On health, we are ensuring con-

sumables and medicines are available. We are working with private pharmacies, so there is no shortage," he said.

He also highlighted coordination with the Seychelles Trading Company (STC) to monitor commodity supply and pricing.

"We are looking at STC commodities and ensuring availability. At the same time, we are checking price increases against freight costs," he said.

He added that government officials are being instructed to verify pricing and supply conditions directly on the ground.

"You don't just sit in an office and look at data. You go physically to supermarkets, to shops, and see for yourself," he said.

On public service operations, VP Pillay explained that the earlier energy-saving arrangements had been effective in reducing consumption, but had also created inefficiencies in some departments.

He said open-plan offices and reduced working days had led to challenges in responsiveness and coordination.

"There are offices where, because of the Friday arrangement, service delivery is affected," he said.

While acknowledging the impor-

tance of energy conservation, he stressed that the government had to prioritise effective service delivery.

He said the revised system, ending at 2:30 pm, was chosen to create a clearer, more consistent schedule across government and to reduce disruption.

"This is better for coordination, better for transport management, and better for everyone to know exactly how the system works," he said.

VP Pillay said the government's approach is based on balancing competing pressures, economic stability, service delivery, and energy savings.

He stressed that decisions are not being made in isolation but through coordinated planning across ministries.

"We are not making decisions in isolation. We are managing transport, fuel, food supply, and medicines together," he said.

He added that the government will continue to monitor the situation and adjust policies as needed in response to global developments.

## Seychelles launches new Wetlands App to modernise conservation efforts

by G. Harriba

Seychelles steps toward digital transformation in environmental governance with the official launch of the WetsApp, a citizen science platform designed to modernise wetland monitoring and strengthen public participation in conservation.

The application was unveiled during a launch ceremony held under the EU-funded Wetlands of Hope project, implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Climate, Energy and Natural Resources and supported by the Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT).

The new platform allows users to report wetland biodiversity observations, environmental threats, pollution incidents, and habitat conditions directly from mobile devices. One of its key features is its ability to function offline, automatically storing data until connectivity is restored.

Speaking to the media following the launch, Jean-Claude Labrosse from the Department of Energy & Climate Affairs said the WetsApp represents an important shift in how environmental data is managed within government systems.

He explained that many processes within the Ministry still rely heavily on manual systems.

"A lot of our processes are still done



Dr. Nirmal Shah delivering his address at the WetsApp launch

manually, with paper-based records and fragmented systems across different departments," Labrosse said.

He noted that this traditional approach often leads to delays in reporting, duplication of work, and challenges in accessing up-to-date information.

According to him, the WetsApp addresses these inefficiencies by introducing a centralised digital system for the collection and sharing of environmental data.

"What this system does is bring everything into one digital space where information can be captured, stored, and shared more efficiently," he said.

Labrosse added that real-time access to data will significantly improve coordination between depart-

ments and partner agencies.

"Instead of waiting for reports to be compiled manually, officers can now input and retrieve data instantly," he said.

He also highlighted the importance of improving accuracy in environmental reporting.

"When you reduce manual handling, you also reduce the risk of missing or duplicated information," he added.

Labrosse further emphasised that the platform will support national environmental monitoring efforts, including biodiversity assessments, wetland surveys, and environmental inventories.

"This will strengthen how we monitor and manage our natural resources, especially in areas like biodiversity and wetlands," he said.

He described the system as part of a wider digital transformation process within government environmental management.

"This is not just a tool, it is a step towards a more integrated and data-driven way of managing environmental information," Labrosse noted.

In a separate interview, Dr. Nirmal Jivan Shah, Chief Executive Officer of Nature Seychelles, said the WetsApp marks a major shift away from traditional conservation methods.

He explained that conservation work has long relied on what he described as outdated "20th-century methods," including paper forms,

notebooks, and manual data entry.

"We are still using paper-based systems, notebooks and forms, and when you are out in the field, things get lost, damaged or delayed," Dr. Shah said.

He added that the new system replaces static documentation with real-time digital data capture from the field.

"What we are doing now is moving from paper to a fully digital, interactive system where data can be captured and shared instantly," he said.

A key feature of the WetsApp is its citizen science model, which allows users at different levels to participate in environmental monitoring.

At Level One, members of the public can submit basic observations such as sightings of mangroves, crabs, pollution, or other environmental conditions.

"At Level One, anyone can go into the field and record what they see; it becomes a form of citizen science," Dr. Shah said.

At Level Two, NGOs, hotels, and private sector partners can contribute more structured environmental data and generate reports.

At Level Three, government institutions can access and manage national datasets for policy planning and conservation management.

Dr. Shah said that while much environmental data already exists, it is often not systematically reported or shared.

"The challenge has always been



The WetsApp

that a lot of data is collected, but it is not properly reported or shared," he said.

The system also integrates artificial intelligence and machine learning tools that convert raw data into graphs, summaries, and automated reports.

"The beauty of the system is that once data is entered, it can almost instantly generate analysis, graphs and reports," he explained.

He added that the app supports both English and Creole, ensuring accessibility for local users.

"You can use it in Creole or English, and the system still works; it is designed to be inclusive," he said.

Dr. Shah also noted that the app will improve monitoring of ecosystems such as mangroves and wetlands by allowing users to document biodiversity and environmental change over time.

"You can go into a mangrove, record what you see, take a photo, identify species, and it all becomes part of a scientific record," he said.

He concluded that the WetsApp represents a broader shift toward inclusive, data-driven conservation in Seychelles, where citizens, partners, and government institutions all contribute to a shared environmental knowledge system.

The platform also builds on earlier digital innovations by Nature Seychelles, including the App for Reserve Management (ARM), used for reserve management at Cousin Island Special Reserve, and expanded wildlife-tracking systems for giant tortoises.

Officials say the launch marks an important milestone in modernising environmental governance and improving collaboration between government, civil society, and private-sector partners.



Dr. Nasica presenting a demonstration of the WetsApp



Group Photo