



SEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

MONDAY 12 JUNE 2023

CONTENTS

QUESTION(*Oral*)

MOTION

THE CABINET

(Formed by Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth)

Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity
Hon. Louis Steven Obeegadoo	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology
Dr. the Hon. Mohammad Anwar Husnoo	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management
Hon. Alan Ganoo, GCSK	Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Dr. the Hon. Renganaden Padayachy	Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development
Hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daareeawoo, GCSK	Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity
Hon. Soomilduth Bholah	Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives
Hon. Kavydass Ramano	Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change

Hon. Mahen Kumar Seeruttun	Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance
Hon. Georges Pierre Lesjongard	Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Maneesh Gobin	Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security
Hon. Jean Christophe Stephan Toussaint	Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation
Hon. Mahendranuth Sharma Hurreeram	Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development
Hon. Darsanand Balgobin	Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Soodesh Satkam Callichurn	Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training, Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection
Dr. the Hon. Kailesh Kumar Singh Jagutpal	Minister of Health and Wellness
Hon. Sudheer Maudhoo	Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping
Hon. Mrs Kalpana Devi Koonjoo-Shah	Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare
Hon. Avinash Teeluck	Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage
Hon. Teeruthraj Hurdoyal	Minister of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Mr Speaker	Hon. Sooroojdev Phokeer, GCSK, GOSK
Deputy Speaker	Hon. Mohammad Zahid Nazurally
Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Hon. Sanjit Kumar Nuckcheddy
Acting Clerk of the National Assembly	Ramchurn, Ms Urmeelah Devi
Adviser	Dowlutta, Mr Ram Ranjit
Clerk Assistant	Gopall, Mr Navin
Clerk Assistant	Seetul, Ms Darshinee
Chief Hansard Reporter and Sub-Editor	Coopoosamy, Mrs Sheela
Parliamentary Librarian and Information Officer	Jeewoonarain, Ms Prittydevi
Serjeant-at-Arms	Bundhoo, Mr Anirood

MAURITIUS

Seventh National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 15 of 2023

Sitting of Monday 12 June 2023

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis, at 11.30 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Papers have been laid on the Table.

Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training
Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection

- (a) The Consumer Protection (Control of Fairs) (Amendment) Regulations 2023. (Government Notice No. 81 of 2023)
- (b) The Consumer Protection (Control of Sale of Imported Live Animals for Home Slaughter) (Amendment) Regulations 2023. (Government Notice No. 82 of 2023)

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION**MEDIA RECORDINGS – 09 JUNE 2023 – ALLEGATIONS AGAINST
POLICE OFFICERS**

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr X. L. Duval) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity, whether he will state if he has taken cognizance of recordings published in the media on Friday 09 June 2023, purporting to contain serious allegations against a number of serving Police Officers, including senior Police officers and, if so, state if consideration will be given for assistance to be sought from friendly countries –

- (a) to enquire into these allegations, and
- (b) with a view to eventually recommending proposals for a more effective structure to replace the –
 - (i) Anti-Drug Smuggling Unit as recommended in the Report of the Commission of Enquiry on Drug Trafficking, and
 - (ii) recently created Police Headquarters Special Striking Team.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has, in his Private Notice Question, himself qualified the accusations allegedly made against certain Police Officers as “allegations”. And, Mr Speaker, Sir, allegations are always subject to verifications and investigations by the competent authorities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on Wednesday 03 May 2023 at 1220 hours along La Poudrière Street, near Sir Abdool Razack Mohamed SSS, Port Louis, following intelligence and lengthy surveillance operation, the Special Striking Team, having reasonable suspicions of drug trafficking, intercepted a private van, make Ford Raptor, colour grey, driven by one Mr V. S., aged 39, Director, residing at Avenue Victoria, La Caverne, Vacoas.

The search was carried out in his presence during the course of which the following items were secured from the vehicle –

- (i) around 10 kg of Heroin, having a street value of around Rs155 m., and
- (ii) a sum of Rs27,575.

Mr V. S. was arrested, and, on the same day, a search was carried out in his presence in his dwelling at Avenue Victoria, La Caverne, Vacoas, where jewellery and certain documents were secured.

The next day, that is, on Thursday 04 May 2023, a Provisional Complaint was lodged against Mr V. S. before the District Court of Port Louis wherein he was provisionally charged for –

- (i) Drug Dealing with Aggravating Circumstances - that is, possession of heroin for the purpose of distribution with the averment of trafficking in breach of sections 30(1)(f)(ii), 41(3)(4) and 47(2)(5)(a)(b) of the Dangerous Drugs Act, and
- (ii) Money Laundering - in breach of sections 39(1)(a)(2), 47(2)(5)(a) and 48 of the Dangerous Drugs Act.

I am further informed that Police objected before the Court to his release on bail and he was remanded to Police cell. He again appeared in Court on 11, 18 and 25 May and on 01 and 08 June 2023. He will appear in Court anew on 15 June 2023.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that in the course of enquiry, 33 persons, including Mr V. S. and Dr. N. R., have been interrogated, and, so far, only Mr V. S. has been arrested and three statements have been recorded from him. The enquiry is in progress.

Concurrently, the Office of the Commissioner of Police has, by way of a letter dated 09 May 2023, referred the case file to the Independent Commission Against Corruption for an in-depth inquiry into alleged case of money laundering.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that on Friday 30 May 2023, an application was served on the Commissioner of Police through the Attorney at Law, Mr P. T., before the Supreme Court for an order directing and ordering the Commissioner of Police to remove the team known as Special Striking Team and all its officers who were currently conducting the enquiry into the case of Mr V. S. A pen drive was attached to the application. The case was returnable for 05 June 2023.

On 01 June 2023, the assistance of the Attorney General's Office was sought to assist the Police during the proceedings, and on 05 June 2023, the Supreme Court was informed that the application was being resisted and an affidavit would be filed. The case has now been fixed for 19 June 2023 for an affidavit to be filed.

Following the receipt of the application and pen drive, an enquiry has been initiated at the level of Major Crime Investigation Team to gather information and evidence on the allegations made in the pen drive.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on Friday 09 June 2023 as from 18.00 hours, a programme co-presented by Mr N. N. and Mr J. L. E. with Mr K. T. as guest was streamed on Teleplus and Defimedia entitled Vimen Leaks – *La Bande Sonore Explosive*. During the course of the programme, the contents of a pen drive, alluding to alleged malpractices by some officers of the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit/Special Striking Team, were aired live.

On 10 June 2023, after taking cognizance of the contents of the programme, a Police Communiqué was issued by the Office of the Commissioner of Police which, *inter alia*, invites Mr N. N. to hand over the said pen drive to the Police for investigation.

Furthermore, on the same day, an enquiry has been initiated into the matter by the CCID. Related to this case, Mr N. N. has been convened at the CCID today at 10 o'clock in the morning.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that on 08 June 2023 at 08.49 hours, Mrs D. S., the wife of Mr V. S., left his clothing at the Line Barracks Detention Centre. At 19.40 hours, on the same day, following certain information, Police carried out a search at Line Barracks Detention Centre and secured a mobile phone make Nokia colour blue near cell No. 1 which is occupied by detainee Mr V. S. Same has been secured as exhibit and is being examined by the IT Unit of the Police.

During the course of enquiry, on 09 June 2023, one Police Constable, P. G. was arrested in connection with the case. He appeared before Bail and Remand Court on 10 June 2023 and has been remanded to Police cell up to 12 June 2023. Enquiry is ongoing in this case as well.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Commissioner of Police has set up the Special Striking Team in August 2022 so as to enable the Police to maintain its momentum in the fight against crimes, including drug trafficking. The Special Striking Team is not meant to replace or to substitute any other Unit within the Police Force, but, instead, its role is to complement the other adjuncts of the Force in the fight against crimes and in particular, against drug trafficking.

Hence, as it is the case for other Units, the goal of the Special Striking Team is to improve the reactive capability of Police, through prompt responses to crime situations, thereby meeting the justified expectations of the community and providing a high level of service delivery.

And since its coming into operation, the Special Striking Team, which is headed by an Assistant Superintendent of Police, has, since its setting up on 03 August 2022 to

date, arrested 58 persons in respect of 81 cases. The total street value of drugs seized is approximately Rs355 m.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as indicated in the Communiqué issued by the Commissioner of Police, an inquiry has already been initiated by the Police into the allegations made. The inquiry has been entrusted to the Major Crime Investigation Team which is a specialised Unit of the Police.

Depending on the outcome of the preliminary investigations, the Police may refer the matter to the Independent Police Complaints Commission for any action deemed necessary.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in accordance with section 71(4) of the Constitution, the responsibility for determining the use and controlling of the operations of the Police Force is vested in the Commissioner of Police. I wish to add that, except for the provisions in section 71(3) of the Constitution, the Commissioner is not, in the exercise of the powers and functions of his Office with respect to the use and operational control of the Force, subject to the direction or control of any person or authority.

Hence, the Commissioner of Police has deemed it fit not to dismantle the ADSU, as this would have created an institutional vacuum. The ADSU has, instead, been reorganised and reinforced by a new team, and other officers have joined to replace others who have been transferred. Furthermore, it is also supported in its tasks by the SST and other Units of the Police Force. There is a close collaboration between the ADSU and the Special Striking Team in so far as sharing of information and resources is concerned.

It is to be noted that the ADSU has carried out a number of successful operations leading to arrest and significant seizures.

Mr Speaker, Sir, furthermore, with a view to strengthening regional collaboration in our fight against illicit activities, my Office has renewed its bilateral collaboration with Réunion Island, through the *Groupe de Contact*, with a view to combatting, among others, drug trafficking, illegal immigration and money laundering, around our two borders and Exclusive Economic Zones. The last meeting of the *Groupe de Contact* which was led by the Secretary for Home Affairs from the Mauritian side and comprising, among others, the Commissioner of Police, was held in Réunion Island on 06 June 2023. The Réunion side was headed by the *Préfet de la Réunion* and the French Ambassador in Mauritius. The opportunity was also taken for the legal representatives of the Attorney General's Office and that of Réunion Island to explore the possibility of enhancing collaboration and

streamlining the exchange of information with regard to legal matters pertaining in particular to drug trafficking, between our two parties.

In the same regional context, the ADSU has also developed contacts in Madagascar, Seychelles, South Africa and it also collaborates with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Drug Enforcement Administration of the USA and the National Crime Agency of the UK.

I also wish to inform the House, that in March 2022, I had discussion with the Director General of the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office of UK regarding the area of cooperation between the Mauritius Police Force and British Authorities, including capacity building in information and intelligence analysis as well as crime investigation.

As the House is aware, we have also bilateral relations with countries such as France, UK, India, USA and, if need be, we may seek any form of assistance from them. It is also to be noted that a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation, on Crime Prevention and Drug Control has been signed between the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and the Republic of Mauritius on 28 April 2018.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have, on many occasions in this august Assembly, reaffirmed my unflinching commitment and that of my Government to relentlessly fight and win the war against drug barons. In our zero-tolerance approach to clean our country of drug trafficking, my Government is leaving no stone unturned to track down drug peddlers and those associated with the drug mafia. My Government is also fulfilling its duty to protect our citizens, especially our young people, from the drug scourge.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are well aware of the adverse impact on the island of illicit cultivation, trafficking, production and abuse of drugs. The response of my Government to the drug scourge in Mauritius has constantly and consistently been guided by strategic interventions with a view to reducing supply and demand.

Despite the growing drug challenge, my Government has made important strides in addressing the drug problem. My Government has embarked itself in the fight against this scourge by adopting a multi-faceted approach which covers all diverse aspects of the problem including, among others, actions in the areas of health, education and public safety.

My Government has set a series of policies and actions to address the proliferation of drugs including law enforcement to combat trafficking.

It is pertinent to remind the House that prior to 2014, several requests were made for the setting up of a Commission of Inquiry on drug trafficking but the then Government did not take any action.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it was only in 2015, under the leadership of Sir Anerood Jugnauth, the then Prime Minister, that the Commission of Inquiry on Drug Trafficking was set up, with former Judge, Paul Lam Shang Leen as Chairperson.

As a follow-up to the report of the Commission of Inquiry on Drug Trafficking published in July 2018, a Ministerial Committee was constituted under my Chair and another committee was set up under the Chair of the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service to look into the legal, institutional and administrative issues, and to expedite the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Report of the Commission of Inquiry. The National Drug Secretariat of my Office, which has, *inter alia*, the responsibility to coordinate the implementation of the National Drug Control Master Plan 2019-2023, took over this responsibility as from March 2020.

As at date, over 80% of the 390 recommendations including recommendations for Rodrigues, have been addressed.

I also wish to remind the House that, for the period January 2015 to May 2023, more than 25,345 drug cases have been detected and around 22,000 persons arrested. Regarding drug seizures, the estimated street value of drugs seized stood at almost Rs15 billion for the same period. The huge seizure of drugs by the Police demonstrates the sustained and successful crusade of my Government in the combat against drug trafficking and drug use.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we all agree that our Police Force has a vital role to play in maintaining law and order in protecting lives and property of all our citizens.

Our Police Force has a glorious history and has served the country well for more than 250 years of its existence. It certainly faces huge challenges due to changes in the policing environment and it has to change and adapt to the new realities and exigencies, and it is our duty to facilitate this transition so that the Police can continue to deliver on its mandate in an efficient and effective manner. Our Police Force comprises more than 15,000 men and women, the large majority of whom are discharging their duties with dedication and professionalism, and are thus maintaining both safety and security which are so vital for our socio-economic development.

It is, therefore, disheartening to see some people in the media and in the opposition ready to seize every opportunity to discredit the Police Force, and are bent on sapping the morale of the whole Police Force by their irresponsible comments.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not saying that we should tolerate or condone any misconduct on the part of any *brebis galeuse*. As I said earlier, the Commissioner of Police has already ordered an investigation into this matter and severe action will be taken, in accordance with the regulations in force, should the enquiry reveal any incriminating evidence against any officer for any unlawful act.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the protection of our citizens remains one of our major priorities. This Government will, therefore, devote all the necessary resources required to provide modern security logistics, equipment, infrastructural facilities on land and at sea to maintain peace and order in our territory. We, as a nation, have the capacity and capabilities to achieve that objective. Thank you.

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister has taken 22 minutes or more but he has given a lot of information. But I hope that from now on, he sticks to short answers so that we can get through what the public is expecting outside and that is absolutely true. Now, so far as the investigation is concerned, I understand therefore that the MCIT is in charge of the investigation, part itself of Police Headquarters. How can we expect Police Headquarters to investigate and not the Unit called the Police Headquarters Special Striking Team, directly under the control of the Commissioner of Police? How can we expect an impartial enquiry in this case and this is the reason why I am suggesting a foreign team to assist?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition has himself mentioned in his PNQ, these are only allegations at this stage. Now, the allegations that have been made in terms of an affidavit that has been sworn by somebody who has been arrested with so much drugs worth about - I have mentioned - I think more than Rs155 m., must be taken also with a pinch of salt. I am not saying nor am I already passing any judgment right now about those allegations. Whether they are true or false will emerge only when there is a preliminary investigation that will be carried out, and, as I have said in my reply, a time will come when the case will be passed on to the Independent Police Complaints Commission for this Commission to take over, and to inquire further.

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not pronouncing myself on the culpability or not of Mr V. S., that is for the Court to decide. But, surely, the hon. Prime Minister does

not expect informers or whistle blowers on the ADSU and the drugs to come from the local parish priest. It must obviously come from some people who are knowledgeable about the circuit.

I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister now concerning one allegation is that Mr J. A. C. alias Mr Franklin who apparently enjoys protection from certain senior officers of ADSU. And I would remind the hon. Prime Minister of my PNQ of some times ago, where it was clearly stated that the ADSU inquiry on Mr Franklin started seven years ago without any serious charge being put to him. So, I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister whether that does not merit some serious inquiry which cannot be carried out by Police Headquarters itself?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in all cases there are going to be serious enquiries. It has become a habit lately that every person who has been arrested for drug trafficking, indeed it has become a habit for such persons to say now that there has been planting. It has become a habit now to accuse the Police officers; those same people who have arrested those alleged drug traffickers to now say that the Police themselves have been planting those drugs. If we have to go according to what the hon. Leader of the Opposition is saying, we shall have to hand over, practically, all cases of drug trafficking to different foreign persons to investigate into. Where do we start and where do we stop?

You mentioned that in the case of Franklin it has been the same thing; in the case of Bruno Laurette, it has been the same thing and I do not now want to mention this every time. Every day we have somebody being arrested alleging planting. We will see how far such persons will go in terms of allegations of planting, but we cannot go on like this. Then, they will say let us ask somebody from abroad to come and investigate. We shall then have to retain another Police Force from abroad to investigate into all those cases!

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, unfortunately, the people at large believe what is being told on planting because there is very little trust in the Police as confirmed by Afrobarometer recently. Now, I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister - we are talking about Police Officers who are supposedly on this recording - to advise the CP to offer these Police Officers conditional immunity so that they may speak freely about what they know and they are not afraid for their own selves?

The Prime Minister: First of all, Mr Speaker, Sir, I cannot speak for what the people believe. I do not know what the people believe. What I believe is what I see and what I have. *Comme un juriste*, I believe in evidence and I believe in serious information that comes before me so that action can be taken. Now, the hon. Leader of the Opposition

is saying that there are those allegations, and I hope he does not mean that... Allegations are allegations!

Now, because you are saying we should dismantle this striking team and so on, if I can quote one person who has been an assessor on the Commission of Inquiry on Drug Trafficking, Mr Sam Lauthan. I think he is not a friend of ours nor is he a member of our Party. So, Mr Speaker, Sir, in an interview in *L'Express* of 09 March 2023, this is what he has to say and it is good that the question was put by Mrs Touria Prayag. The question was, and I quote –

“Coming back to the recommendations, one of the most striking ones was the dismantling of the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU). As you know not only didn't that happen but the Prime Minister went out of his way to congratulate them for the ‘fantastic work’ they are doing? Do you feel that was a slap on the Commission's face?”

That was the question. From the reply of Mr Sam Lauthan - I do not want to quote other things - the main thing was, and I quote -

“It is good that you mentioned the Special Striking Team. Many people, including journalists, think there is a conflict of interest between them and the rest of the ADSU. In fact, we need to have this sort of team. You know, the mafia uses guns, violence and so on. We need people who have the guts to counteract that. I personally would go further and say that I wish to see at least 10 such striking teams all over the island to reinforce the efficiency of the ADSU vis-à-vis the mafia.”

This is what he says.

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't ...

The Prime Minister: Let me finish! Here is somebody who is really independent and, I must say, who has also been quite critical of Government; this is what he has to say as regards the Special Striking Team.

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think the hon. Prime Minister should table when he is quoting from the Press. He knows that. He did not table.

The Prime Minister: Yes, I am tabling.

Mr X. L. Duval: Table the article, not your paper.

The Prime Minister: I can table the article, yes.

Mr X. L. Duval: That should be done. Firstly, Mr Speaker, Sir, does the Prime Minister know that Seychelles has had huge problems with drugs too, and that recently, it restructured its Police Force to better cope with the situation with the help of the US? Here, I am coming to the Lam Shang Leen Report that was quite adamant on the need for various reasons - I do not have time to go into - on the dismantling of the ADSU, which I must say is confirmed by what we hear on that cassette.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to finish on that, is the Prime Minister aware that one foreign embassy, the Ambassador thereof, has been seeking a meeting with the Commissioner of Police for the last few months to offer advice and help, and at the moment, the Commissioner of Police has not had time to receive that Ambassador? So therefore, why don't we take the example of our brothers in Seychelles and show also that we mean business in respect of the drug scourge?

The Prime Minister: I do not know which Ambassador the hon. Leader of Opposition is referring to. I think we should be more careful and not bring in Ambassadors and diplomats into our differences, if we have differences. I do not think we have differences on this issue, because we all want to fight against this drug scourge.

But, Mr Speaker, Sir, let me say one thing. Allegations against persons in authority, particularly against Police officers and especially those who are specialised in fighting against drug traffickers, are not only limited to Mauritius. Everywhere there is the same situation, and everywhere there are situations wherein there are officers in authority who are accomplices, who become, in fact - for whatever reason, of course, I leave anyone to guess - *des accomplices avec ces trafiquants de drogues*. I do not need to mention a number of cases. Because the hon. Leader of the Opposition is asking us to seek assistance from reputed countries like France, let me mention just a few cases In France, and I quote -

“Six policiers de la Brigade anti-criminalité du 18^e arrondissement sont accusés d’arrestations frauduleuses, de raquette de dealers ou encore d’avoir...”

(Interruptions)

Mr X. L. Duval: Time is short. You do not have any answer...

The Prime Minister: You put a question, let me answer! You want to control my answer?

Mr Speaker: Order!

The Prime Minister: I do not control your question!

Mr Speaker: Leader of Opposition!

Mr X. L. Duval: Good, it is a deal.

The Prime Minister: Leader of the Opposition, let me answer! I do not mind, if time is given, I shall reply. For me, I have no problem, but give me time, let me reply. So -

« ...raquette de dealers ou encore d'avoir rédigé les procès-verbaux fallacieux un monsieur K.M., agent de la Brigade anti-criminalité depuis plus de 15 ans, est accusé d'avoir été la figure centrale d'une vaste affaire de corruption et de trafic de stupéfiants. »

Another case, and I quote -

« l'ex-patron des stups mis en examen - patron des stups, s'il vous plait - pour trafic de drogue ! Monsieur F.T. a été mis en examen pour complicité de détention, transport et acquisition de stupéfiants et complicité d'exportation de stupéfiants en bande organisé. »

Another more recent case, and I quote -

« Un capitaine et un brigadier affectés à la brigade des stups de la police judiciaire ont été mis en examen jeudi à Paris pour le vol de plusieurs kilos de cocaïnes dans les scellés. »

These are French cases and there are others. I do not want to cite so many of such cases in Marseille right now. I hope you also follow.

Mr X. L. Duval: I watch Netflix, yes.

The Prime Minister: Okay, good! Because even this morning, the French news is, in fact, reporting on the terrible situation which exists in certain *arrondissements* in Paris and the connection in Marseille where there are gangs fighting and shooting.

Now, the Guardian of 14 February 2022 reports on a senior Metropolitan Police Commander who wrote his Police Force current drug strategy, faces the sack after being accused of taking cannabis, LSD and magic mushrooms. Such cases are not limited only to those countries.

I am quoting from the Economic Times of 18 October 2022 where six Metropolitan officers were high on narcotics while working recently.

Last year, two cops tested positive for cannabis while on duty while two more failed tests for injection of Class A cocaine. In accordance with reports, another MET officer had evidence of opiates in the system including morphine, and the six officers had

residues of benzodiazepines and amphetamine in their system. According to their FOI data, 16 officers in England and Wales failed drug tests while being on duty in the previous year.

In the United States, Mr Speaker, Sir, the headline of New York Times of 22 February 2023, this year in February reads as follows, and I quote -

“American has lost the war on drugs. Drug use is soaring. More Americans are dying of overdoses than at any point in modern history.”

So, I am not saying that because these are happening elsewhere, it should happen here. No! What I am saying is, first of all, we have to wage a serious and genuine war against those drug traffickers. I must also say that, whenever we can get from those countries any assistance that will improve our force, our system, and the way we carry out enquiries and so on, we shall, of course, need to tap on their expertise. But, as I have always said, it is the will of Government to combat drug trafficking. You must first of all and indeed have the will to combat drug trafficking.

Unlike the period of 2005 to 2014, during which, as I have stated, there was really not any such will. In fact, the contrary happened. The traffickers were tolerated. *Ils ont été soutirés* and they have, in fact, expanded in terms of their businesses. This is why we have inherited such a situation, but we are carrying on with this fight, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Prime Minister will not forget that I was DPM in 2015. I think he was Minister of ICT. So, we were all together also in this issue. You should not forget that. I want to ask the Prime Minister now whether he is aware that the NGOs tell me, in fact, that the price of heroin, for instance, is falling, which would mean that supply is exceeding demand. Other things are a bit more difficult, but heroin is falling, for instance. Therefore, that would mean, Mr Speaker, Sir, that despite the famous seizures that we see every day, none of them get to court, by the way, to be convicted. That has been proven in one of our last PNQ. Only 3 out of 120!

So, the situation is dramatic. Therefore, I am saying to the Prime Minister that these tapes, whether true or not, I cannot say, are a wonderful occasion for the Prime Minister to seize because for the first time, we have it, not in writing, but audio that these things are happening with names, events, etc.

This is why I am asking the Prime Minister to take it extremely seriously and not to rely on the Police Headquarters to investigate, but instead to ask for foreign help, not in

a thousand cases, but at that particular case where for the first time, as far as I know, we have such direct evidence of wrongdoing in the Police.

The Prime Minister: M. le président, encore une fois, je commence à croire que le leader de l'opposition est convaincu maintenant de ce qui est allégué, contrairement à sa question propre. These are allegations and, I repeat, I cannot pass any judgment on those allegations. I cannot right now conclude that the allegations are true or false.

Let me remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition of the need to be careful and to learn from past lessons. Let me give an example. We all remember when there were fierce allegations against myself by one Maharajah. You will remember the Maharajah came with a pen drive and said: "Look, the evidence is here and the Government would fall in the days to come. There is going to be a tsunami." And this Maharajah met the leader of the Labour Party and the Leader of the Opposition. After their respective meetings, the Maharajah said he had a very fruitful meeting with the leader of the Labour Party, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam and that there is going to be a tsunami. A tsunami!

Leader of the Opposition, I hope your memory is going to be refreshed when you, yourself, stated that this is a credible person. You said that this is a credible person.

(Interruptions)

No, I am not blaming you. What I am saying is that we must learn from lessons. You said that he was a credible person, but look what is happening today! Where is his credibility? And let me say, that what we are seeing today in terms of the investigation that are revealing certain things, this is nothing. This is nothing! People will be shocked when all the truth will come out. So, do not pass any instant judgment on allegations that are made. I fully agree with you that allegations must be investigated in an independent way so that there is no collusion, no cover-up and I have, of course, discussed the whole matter with the Commissioner of Police.

I can assure the hon. Leader of the Opposition and the House that investigation will be done thoroughly. And, if need be, we shall see how it is unfolding, and therefore, what actions will need to be taken. Let me also just add one thing because it concerns some people who were part of the ADSU team. I must say that some have already been transferred from ADSU to other Units of the Police Force. I am not saying that they are guilty, but of course, we take the necessary precaution. The Commissioner of Police has, himself, acted and has transferred some people, and investigation, I can assure you, will be carried out.

Mr Speaker: Time over!

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Speaker, I have one last question!

Mr Speaker: I have already given 12 more minutes.

Mr X. L. Duval: One last question!

Mr Speaker: These are allegations!

Mr X. L. Duval: One last question!

Mr Speaker: You understand that these are allegations. I have already given 12 more minutes!

Time over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S. O. 10(2)

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that all the business of today's order paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

The Deputy Prime Minister seconded.

Question put and agreed to.