

## **MITD - MR N. C. – ALLEGED SEXUAL ABUSE CASE (14/05/13)**

**The Leader of the Opposition (Mr A. Ganoo)** (*By Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the case against Mr N. C. for alleged sexual abuse on a minor student of the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development, he will, for the benefit of the

House -

(a) obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if -

(i) the matter was reported thereto in 2011 and, if so, the actions taken, if any;

(ii) he is aware that his officers refused to record statements of the spouse of Mr N. C. regarding the latter's alleged relationship with a minor student of the MITD;

(iii) Mrs P. B., and Mrs S. S. have been arrested and, if so, why;

(iv) Mr H. M. has been convened for inquiry in relation thereto and, if so, why, and

(b) state if the decision to set up the Fact Finding Committee to look thereinto was approved by Cabinet and, if so, when, indicating if copy of the report will be tabled and, if not, why not.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) (i) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 25 October 2011, Mrs P.S.C. made a declaration at Eau Coulée Police Station to the effect that since the beginning of October, her husband Mr N.C. wanted to divorce her for no reason. She also mentioned that her husband had ill-treated her and that she had the intention to seek the advice of the Police Family Protection Unit.

On 16 November 2011, Mrs P.S.C made a Precautionary Measure declaration at Eau Coulée Police Station against her husband, Mr N. C. as she came to know that her husband was having an affair with another woman.

On 24 November 2011, Mrs P.S.C. gave another Precautionary Measure declaration at the Phoenix Police station wherein she stated once again that her husband was having an extraconjugal affair with somebody and this was causing conjugal problems at her place. She further stated that she was leaving the conjugal roof to elect domicile at her father's place and that she would enter a divorce case against her husband.

These declarations, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, were reported as Precautionary Measures and Mrs P.S.C. was referred to her own private legal remedy. Her declarations were thus filed at that stage because no offence was disclosed.

In regard to part (a) (ii) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that at no point has Police refused to take any declaration from Mrs P.S.C. in regard to an alleged relationship which her husband was having with a minor.

However, on 30 November 2011 Police received a letter dated 29 November 2011 from Mrs P.S.C. wherein she mentioned that her husband was having a physical relationship with a minor student at MITD. The Police referred the letter to the Central Divisional Commander for enquiry. The Curepipe CID subsequently recorded a detailed statement from Mrs P.S.C. In the course of the enquiry, Police contacted the parents of the minor student, but they refused to give any statement.

In regard to part (a) (iii) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 10 May 2013, one Mr Y.S., Acting Divisional Manager at the MITD made a declaration to the CCID to the effect that there had been a conspiracy between Mrs P.B. and Mrs S.S. to commit forgery in a document to the MITD and the Fact Finding Committee. Police initiated an enquiry into the matter. On the same day, Mrs P.B. was arrested and provisionally charged for the offence of ‘Conspiracy and Forgery’. She appeared before the Rose Hill District Court and was bailed out after furnishing a surety of Rs10,000 for the charge of conspiracy and a surety of Rs15,000 for the charge of forgery and entering into a recognizance of debt of Rs100,000.

On 13 May 2013, Mrs S.S. was arrested and released on parole on the same day. She will appear before Rose Hill District Court today on a provisional charge of “Conspiracy and Forgery”.

In regard to part (a) (iv) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that Mr H.M. has, up to now, not been convened by the Police as his involvement in an offence is yet to be established.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I should like to inform the House that following a Private Notice Question addressed to the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources by the then hon. Leader of the Opposition on Saturday 17 November 2012 on an alleged case of abuse against a minor student by a Physical Instructor at the MITD, the hon. Leader of the Opposition laid down a copy of the report of the psychologist of the MITD on the matter.

In view of the seriousness of the matter and following consultations with me, it was agreed to set up, as a matter of urgency, a Fact Finding Committee to be chaired by a Magistrate for a comprehensive enquiry into the alleged case of abuse. Cabinet was apprised of this decision on the following Friday, that is 23 November 2012.

The Fact Finding Committee was chaired by no less a person than Mrs Veronique Kwok Yin Siong Yen, President of the Intermediate Court with the following terms of reference, and also, we had as Secretary, the Chief Registrar, Mr Madhoo.

The terms of reference was -

- (i) to carry out an in-depth enquiry into the case of the alleged abuse of a minor student V.A, of the MITD by Mr N.C, an Instructor, that is, an instructor for physical education employed by the MITD;
- (ii) to examine records pertaining to the case of alleged abuse of the minor student, including the report of the MITD Psychologist, Mrs P.B, and records of the Child Development Unit (CDU) of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare;
- (iii) to situate responsibilities and report whether there has been any failure in the discharge of their duties by, or other misconducts on the part of, the MITD staff, CDU staff and other staff of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare and any other public officer, directly or indirectly involved in the management of the case of alleged abuse of a minor;
- (iv) to enquire into and report on any matter incidental or related thereto, and
- (v) to make recommendations on the actions to be taken.

The House will appreciate, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that in view of the fact that the report of the Fact Finding Committee contains specific information of a strictly private and medical nature on a minor, it would not be proper to lay the report on the Table of the National Assembly.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer to the statement made by the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources in this House on 09 April 2013, where he stated and I quote –

“(a) None of the 28 witnesses, who deponed during the hearing came forward to say that they had seen Instructor N.C. and Minor V.A. together involved in an inappropriate behaviour;

He is quoting from the Fact Finding Committee.

(b) No independent evidence has been adduced to support the allegation of abuse.

The then owner of the *pensionat* where the acts were alleged to have taken place, had declared that the *auberge* had already ceased operation a few years ago.

(c) In view of the Medico-legal Report submitted to the Fact Finding Committee, it has been found by the Committee that the issue of sexual intercourse between Instructor N.C. and Minor V.A. cannot stand. According to this Medico-legal Report, the examination of the minor on 25 February 2013 has revealed that there could not have been any sexual intercourse upon her in view of the intact genital conditions. The Fact Finding Committee finds that this medical evidence is crucial to put an end to speculations.”

The Chairperson of the Fact Finding Committee further stated -

“Failure to manage the problem efficiently by the authorities, led some of the persons who deponed before the Fact Finding Committee and the public at large, in view of wide media coverage in the country, to believe that there was cover-up.”

I also wish to point out, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that at its meeting on 26 April 2013, Cabinet decided to set up an Inter-Ministerial Committee to look into the implementation of the report of the Fact Finding Committee which concerns different Ministries. The Committee is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Public Utilities, and comprise the Minister of Education and Human Resources, the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology, the Attorney-General and the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to assure the House that there is and there will not be any cover-up in this case. I would also like to add that the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, which has been introduced into the National Assembly will address possible weaknesses in existing procedures followed by the Police in criminal investigations and will be a major step forward in police practices.

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister has made reference to various precautionary measures, entries, made by Mrs P.S.C. concerning the situation in her family. But, the hon. Prime Minister has also made mention of the fact that the complaint against the spouse is that he was also having an affair with a minor. Now, does not the hon. Prime Minister think that this is a matter which should have been enquired into, in fact, by the CDU immediately and not by the Police Officers?

**The Prime Minister:** I think the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources did mention there were procedures laid down and that is what was followed. But, as I said, the Police categorically denied having refused to take any statement from her except that she has made three precautionary measures which were noted.

**Mr Ganoo:** I put it to the hon. Prime Minister that, in fact, on 24 November 2011 at Eau Coulée Police Station, the lady did repair to the Police Station and made a declaration concerning the involvement of her spouse with this minor student and also talked about the need for a protection order, but the Police refused to take that part of the complaint of the lady concerning the involvement of her spouse with the minor student and recorded only the part pertaining to the protection order. This is what happened.

**The Prime Minister:** Let's not be borne out by the facts, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. On 24 November 2011, as I said, Mrs P.S.C. gave another precautionary measure at the Phoenix Police Station where she stated - not with a minor - that her husband was having an extra conjugal affair with somebody and this was causing conjugal problem at her place. She further stated that she was leaving the conjugal roof to elect domicile at her father's place

and that she would enter a divorce case against her husband. It is only in the letter afterwards, that is, the letter dated 29 November, which was received by the Police on 30 November that she mentions for the first time in her declaration the alleged relationship with a minor student and that is immediately the Police referred the matter to the Central Divisional Commander for enquiry.

**Mr Ganoo:** In that case also, independently of the fact that whatever the parents said, that they refused to proceed or they had faith in their daughter, but, since that child was a minor child at that time, independently of the will, of the decision, of the parents, this matter should have been referred to the CDU precisely at that time!

**The Prime Minister:** From what I understand, the CDU was already looking into the matter, if I understand properly what the hon. Minister is saying, separately from what the Police were doing. The question is about the Police. So, I am answering about the Police.

**Mr Ganoo:** Now, let us forget about the declarations at the Police Station. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that section 11 of the Child Protection Act provides that in any case of child abuse which has been brought to the knowledge of medical, paramedical or teaching staff, the matter should be immediately reported to the Permanent Secretary for enquiry and in this case, I am referring to the report of the psychologist, Mrs P. B., who submitted her report to the Acting Divisional Manager of the MITD since 03 November 2011. Why, therefore, the provisions of the law were not respected; as soon as the report was made by the staff, by the psychologist, this matter was not referred to the PS of the Ministry for child protection?

**The Prime Minister:** That is probably one issue that could be argued upon, but although they looked into the matter, they did not refer it to the PS straightaway.

**Mr Ganoo:** I insist that the report of the psychologist was transmitted by mail to the Acting Divisional Manager of the MITD on 03 November 2011 and I would ask the hon. Prime Minister that the matter should be enquired into and disciplinary action should be taken against the officer or the officers who failed to ensure their duties properly by not reporting at that time this matter to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry concerned?

**The Prime Minister:** This is precisely what we are doing with the Inter-Ministerial Committee, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I come now to the reasons for the arrest. Before I come to the arrest of the two ladies, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware, in spite of the fact that the Fact-Finding Committee has already submitted its report, which has not yet been released, of recordings which have been made of

conversations between that minor student and the teaching staff in which she discloses her relationship with the instructor?

**The Prime Minister:** Is the hon. Leader of the Opposition talking about the report from the psychologist? I did not quite catch what he has said.

**Mr Ganoo:** The tape recording of the conversation of the minor with the teaching staff which has been recorded and which is available. I can submit it to the hon. Prime Minister for him to listen to the conversation that had taken place between the student and the teaching staff in which she confesses her involvement with the instructor?

**The Prime Minister:** This was looked into by the Fact Finding Committee, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Ganoo:** I will table CDs for the hon. Prime Minister to have a look and to listen to, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but I want to come to this question of the arrest now. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, here, the hon. Prime Minister has told us that somebody had opened an entry, had given a declaration which had triggered the enquiry leading to the arrest of two professionals, Mrs P. B. and Mrs S. S. Can we know the name of that person, please?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Servansing.

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Servansing is the very person to whom the report of the psychologist was transmitted and he did not do anything and now he is the one to go and open up the enquiry for the detention and the arrest of these two ladies!!

Now, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister that the arrest of these two professionals who were acting in the performance of their duties and whose aim was to protect a minor and to denounce a suspected sexually depraved instructor; these two ladies have been made to endure such a traumatic experience and unjust treatment and this declaration has been made against them just for the sake of covering up and shielding that political protégé, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Prime Minister:** It's quite right to say that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I cannot go and prejudice an enquiry that is ongoing, but it appears that there has been a conspiracy. It appears that there have been false documents given. All this will be shown up in the enquiry. If they have falsified signatures and all this, it has to be looked into. That is what the enquiry is all about.

**Mr Ganoo:** Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that so far no handwriting expert has been able to say that there has been a forgery in this case?

**The Prime Minister:** That's not true, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. There has been an expert who said that there has been forgery in this case.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can we know the name of that expert?

**The Prime Minister:** He is a well and highly trained Police expert, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It is not anybody; he has had specific training for this. We don't have just one expert, but it is an experienced expert who has said this. All this can be proved in the enquiry. People can challenge that also.

**Mr Ganoo:** In the case of Mrs S. S., there is no case of forgery against her. Does the hon. Prime Minister confirm that Mrs S. S. has been arrested, detained, and is going to be released on bail today? She is a professional who has just listened to that girl's complaint, and is this the treatment that is being meted out to her, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said, I cannot prejudice an enquiry.

But it appears that there was an original handwritten note, with the letterhead of the MITD, which bears the signature of Mrs Joyce Antoine, and which now appears to be a falsehood.

**Mr Ganoo:** Yes, but what I am saying is whether Mrs S. S. is being charged with forgery. There is no case of forgery against her. Anyway, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the point the Opposition wishes to make is whether the hon. Prime Minister doesn't think that Government is sending the wrong signal to all professionals of this country and instilling in them the fear that, by disclosing or exposing abuses and malpractices in their different fields and professions, they run the risk of arbitrary arrest and subject to humiliation, as these two ladies are being subjected to.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please!

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have to be very careful. If there has been wrongdoing, naturally there will be consequences. There is an enquiry going on. The procedures are like this, unfortunately. That is why I mentioned PACE earlier on, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because I also think that these procedures should be different.

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the case of Mr Madhow, the trade unionist, the hon. Prime Minister said that he has not been convened by the Police. But I know - I put it to the hon. Prime Minister; perhaps, he has got the wrong information - that the counsel of Mr Madhow has already taken appointment with Central CID for Friday because he has been summoned to come and give a statement under warning. In the case

of Mr Madhow, Mr Deputy Speaker, this is a trade unionist who has been made to appear before a Disciplinary Committee on six charges. He has been exculpated by the Disciplinary Committee, and yet he has been issued with a warning. Isn't that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *dominère* against a trade unionist?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that's right. The hon. Leader of the Opposition must accept that I cannot intervene...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Jhugroo!

**The Prime Minister:** ...and decide to tell the Police 'arrest this one, but not this one and this one.' They are following the procedures. Hopefully, the truth will come out. If there is anything that is wrong, the Police will pay the consequences. But Mr Servansingh has made a statement at the Phoenix Police Station against Mr Madhow because he says that he had made unfounded allegations against MITD on radio on the day before, when he stated that the MITD was in a state of chaos, and subject to political interference and all this. So, he has made the statement. He has the right too to go and make a statement.

**Mr Ganoo:** But all these charges have been looked into by this Committee presided by Mr Lassemillante, and he has been *blanchi*, exculpated. I put it to the hon. Prime Minister that Mr Madhow is being persecuted, victimised for having, as a trade unionist, made use of his rights of expression to comment on the abuses in the administration of the MITD. Attempts are being made to silence that trade unionist, and this is wrong for democracy in this country today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Prime Minister:** First of all, we must establish whether that is the case. That is what the enquiry is about. You can't go on the radio and say whatever you want. You have to expect to bear the consequences of what you say. If what you say is true, fine!

**Mr Ganoo:** I come back to the Fact-Finding Enquiry. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that, up to now, this minor student has never been asked to give a statement to the Police in any way? In such a serious case of sexual abuse on a minor student, doesn't the hon. Prime Minister agree that, in spite of the Fact-Finding Committee having been completed, the most appropriate course of action should have been for the Police to conduct a thorough and full-fledged enquiry into this case of abuse on a minor, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and arrest and charge that suspect if need be on a provisional information? This would have been a fairer course for the authorities to adopt, to allow this full-fledged enquiry to go on.



**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, the minor and her parents were asked to make a statement, but they refused. And then, they went to the Fact-Finding Committee and said all they had to say there. That is why the Chairperson of the Fact-Finding Committee which, as I said, is no less a person than a President of the Intermediate Court, then said what you said in the report which I just quoted.

**Mr Ganoo:** I come to the report of the Fact-Finding Committee, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Doesn't the hon. Prime Minister think that if Government has nothing to hide and has no hidden motive to shield or cover up anybody, this report should have been made public for the sake of transparency?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I explained that we have no problem with the report. But the problem is that we are concerned here with a minor. We have to also make sure...

*(Interruptions)*

Already, what is coming out is ...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order! Allow the hon. Prime Minister to answer, please!

**The Prime Minister:** You must also put yourself in the shoes of the minor. We have to protect her also. There are allegations. The medical report says that there has been no abuse; categorically. That is why the Fact-Finding Committee comes out so strongly against all these hearsays and all those things. We cannot just go and show it to everybody. But if the hon. Leader of the Opposition wants to have a look at it, I am prepared to let him have a look at it.

*(Interruptions)*

Because I know he will act responsibly, and not go and say all the details that are there to the public; hopefully. I will have to have this guarantee from him.

**Mr Ganoo:** Doesn't the hon. Prime Minister also think, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that a sitting Magistrate and a sitting Judge should be no more requested to preside over committees and to rule on issues which give rise to political fury and political controversy? As a matter of principle...

*(Interruptions)*

...the Magistrates and Judges should not be dragged in into matters of political controversy.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** The problem is...

*(Interruptions)*

I don't...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order!

**The Prime Minister:** I don't totally disagree with what the hon. Leader of the Opposition is saying.

*(Interruptions)*

But the question is: who do you find who will have this aura of impartiality! If you take somebody from outside...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Bhagwan!

**The Prime Minister:**... then people will say that this guy is close to this person or not.

That is why we have gone that way. That is the only reason.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the recent past we have seen so many cases where the Central CID - I am measuring what I am saying, Sir - the Police have been giving the impression that they are acting as a tool by Government and other people to harass people, just for the sake of political reasons. Can I ask the Prime Minister whether he will give the guarantee to the House that the Central CID will act independently, and not like a vendetta against these two or three officers involved in that case?

**The Prime Minister:** I can give the guarantee to the hon. Member. In fact, I must tell the hon. Member that - I also have said this many times; probably in this House also - unfortunately, the procedures of the Police follow as they are laid down. That is why we

have brought PACE, where we say that people should not be arrested left, right and centre. There must be, at least, reasonable grounds to believe that they have committed something, and also you can enquire when there is reasonable suspicion. That is why we are bringing PACE. But, before this becomes law, that has been the procedure all the time.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Bhagwan!

**The Prime Minister:** All the time this has been the procedure and that is why we are bringing PACE. I hope that hon. Members on the other side will welcome PACE.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Jugnauth!

**Mr Jugnauth:** Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister why the Police has not yet taken a statement from the minor and from Minister Bunwaree, in view...

*(Interruptions)*

Let me ask the question! In view of the fact that since the 03 January 2013, the Police is in presence of copy of Emtel phone records, which proves that there have been for the period, and I cite only for period 01 June 2011 to 21 November 2011, less than six months, 1,218 calls and 2,282 SMS exchanges between the minor and the suspected pedophile and numerous phone calls also between Minister Bunwaree and the suspected pedophile.

*(Interruptions)*

And I can table all the copies which I have already given in a statement which I gave to the Police.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** Can I ask the hon. Member, all these wide allegations, let us say allegations, why didn't he go and depone in front of the Fact-Finding Committee?

*(Interruptions)*

You were asked, why didn't you go and depone? You have so many information, you make allegations...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order! Allow the hon. Prime Minister to answer please.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Ganoo:** Is the...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please, go ahead hon. Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr Ganoo:** Is the hon. Prime Minister aware - I am sure he must be aware - that the US country reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012 talked about the situation in Mauritius, arbitrary arrest and detention and made very many acidic remarks concerning the right of citizens from arbitrary arrest and detention and this report mentioned the case of Mr Saminaden and Mr Pravind Jugnauth and this did not do any good to the reputation of Mauritius as a democracy?

**The Deputy Speaker:** What is your question hon. Leader of Opposition?

**Mr Ganoo:** Is the hon. Prime Minister aware of the remarks made in this report?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have to look at it from the very beginning. This is the procedure and this is the procedure that prevails. Is the hon. Leader of the Opposition aware that I, myself, have been questioned under warning by the Police when I was Leader of the Opposition?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Last question, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Now, please!

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my last question, will the hon. Prime Minister agree that the biased, the arbitrary and the *dominère* approach and behaviour of the Minister of Education in this whole affair seems to have been condoned by the hon. Prime Minister, under whose direction the Police are being utilised as a political tool to terrorise and repress professionals, trade unionists in this country and this is paving the way to make of Mauritius ...

*(Interruptions)*

... *un Etat policier, un Etat gestapo* and a land of ‘*Tontons Macoutes*’ !

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, either we believe in institutions or we don't. The impression is being created in this country, with the help of some sections of the media, that once an allegation is made about the involvement of any public figure, be it politician, public body or otherwise, that this implies that those persons...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Barbier!

**The Prime Minister:** ...that this implies that these people are guilty, that there is a cover-up and that, therefore, everything is wrong in this country, and when they are asked to depone then they don't depone. If the facts are shown...

*(Interruptions)*

Be happy, I am on record too. The facts speak for themselves, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. But, I cannot prevent an enquiry from going on. So, there should be no enquiry against anybody in this country then!

**The Deputy Speaker:** Time is up! I am addressing myself to the hon. Leader of the Opposition! In view of the fact that the recording allegedly concerns the private life of a minor, I suggest that he communicates the recording to the hon. Prime Minister, instead of tabling it.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I make an appeal to you?

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sorry! Time is up!

**Mr Obeegadoo:** May I make an appeal?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Time is up!

**Mr Obeegadoo:** May I make an appeal to you?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Time is up! We move ahead, please.

*(Interruptions)*

Please! Let us listen to the hon. Member!

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Speaker of this House has, in the recent past, when it is a matter of serious national interest and there are many Members wishing to put supplementary questions, the Speaker, in his wisdom, has exercised his discretion to allow a few additional questions.

Now, in this House, several other Members have asked for the right to put supplementary questions and, Mr Deputy Speaker, you have apparently not seen those Members even when they expressed the desire first.

*(Interruptions)*

So, may I...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Minister of Health, please remain silent. Let me listen to the hon. Member!

**Mr Obeegadoo:** I am solemnly asking the Deputy Speaker, being given the very important nature of this matter to exercise his discretion to allow the Opposition a few extra supplementary questions.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Obeegadoo, please!

*(Interruptions)*

I want silence, please. Resume your seat, please. Resume your seat, I am on my feet!  
Hon. Bhagwan!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Bhagwan! Hon. Obeegadoo, you raised an issue, I am going to respond to the issue that you raised.

*(Interruptions)*

But allow me to respond!

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you should...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please, sit down! I should like to remind hon. Minister Bunwaree...

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Patrick Assirvaden, please! Following a point that was made by hon. Obeegadoo, I would like to remind him that every chunk of business in the House is time bound and I must tell him that time has been up for this PNQ for four minutes now. We canvassed the issue amply and I am satisfied. Please, we go ahead. It is four minutes. We have gone beyond by four minutes. Next item!

**The Prime Minister:** To assist you further, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, 19 minutes of supplementary questions were asked. Anyway!