

## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### DR. NAVINCHANDRA RAMGOOLAM - FORMER PRIME MINISTER - PROVISIONAL CHARGES

**The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger)** (*by Private Notice*) asked the Rt. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP, former Prime Minister, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to -

- (a) the provisional charges lodged against him;
- (b) if an objection to departure has been lodged against him, and
- (c) if he has been interrogated in relation to the -
  - (i) Roches Noires bungalow case of July 2011;
  - (ii) death of Mr A.K.R. in Police custody at the Rivière du Rempart Police Station, and
  - (iii) case regarding the audio recording at Rivière du Rempart in December 2014.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on Saturday 07 February 2015, the following charges were lodged against Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, former Prime Minister -

- (i) “Conspiracy”, and
- (ii) “Money Laundering”.

The enquiry is still in progress.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that Police filed a “Prohibition Order” against Dr. Ramgoolam on 07 February 2015, together with the Provisional Charges, to which the Bail and Remand Court acceded.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (c) (i) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that Police sought to interview Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam on Saturday 07 February 2015, at the Central CID, Line Barracks, in connection with the theft at Roches Noires bungalow and after being cautioned, he declined to give his statement and informed that he would do so at a later stage.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (c) (ii), as far as the case of the death of Mr A. K. R. in Police custody at Rivière du Rempart Police Station is concerned, in light of fresh information obtained on the case, a new enquiry is in progress, and so far Dr. Ramgoolam has not been interrogated.

Madam Speaker, regarding part (c) (iii) of the question, relating to the audio recording at Rivière du Rempart in December 2014, I am informed that the enquiry into the case is in progress and Dr. Ramgoolam would be interrogated in due course.

**Mr Bérenger:** The Rt. hon. Prime Minister has informed us that...

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I am sorry, I think I missed one page.

Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam appeared before the Bail and Remand Court on the same day and was granted bail subject to the condition that he furnishes a surety of Rs200,000 and enters into a recognizance of Rs1 m. under each charge. He was released on parole by the Court pending his attendance at Rivière du Rempart and Upper Plaines Wilhems District Courts respectively on 09 February 2015 to do the needful in relation to surety and recognizance.

On 09 February 2015, he appeared before the District Courts of Upper Plaines Wilhems and Rivière du Rempart and furnished the required sureties.

I wish to point out that according to information obtained from the Commissioner of Police, in the course of the enquiry, searches carried out at the residences of the former Prime Minister at Desforges Street, Port Louis and Riverwalk, Floreal, have led to the securing of a substantial sum of money.

**Mr Bérenger:** Madam Speaker, we heard the Rt. hon. Prime Minister saying that there are two provisional charges. In the case of the one relating to money laundering, if the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has gone through the provisional charge before the Court concerned, has it been brought to his attention that the provisional charge amongst other things reads thus, I quote -

“(...) was found in possession of over Rs4 m. composed of Mauritian rupees and foreign currencies and another huge amount of around Rs200 m., suspected to be proceeds of corruption and bribe found in two safes seized by the Central CID which have to be forced opened, as access therewith is not available”.

Has the Rt. hon. Prime Minister tried to find out how can, in a provisional charge, be said that the two safes have not yet been opened, and yet there is a huge amount of Rs200 m. in those two safes yet to be opened?

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, we must not forget that this is just a provisional charge. The enquiry is still on. The counting is not over and it was supposed to continue today but, unfortunately, the former Prime Minister has fallen ill. I think I am not in a position to answer to many supplementary questions because being given that he has not yet given his defence statement, being given that all the money has not yet been counted; I think any new information that may go out may cause a lot of prejudice to the enquiry.

**Mr Bérenger:** The Rt. hon. Prime Minister will have understood my point. Is it serious to put in a provisional charge that the safes have not yet been opened and yet the Police, the CID knows that there is a huge amount of more than Rs200 m., concerning safes not yet opened, according to themselves?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, I suppose the Police has acted under information received.

**Mr Bérenger:** Madam Speaker, therefore, the first mention was of Rs200 m. Then I heard - because now you can't say I didn't say that - the Sergeant - not Sergeant-in-Chief - now in charge of the Press Office saying that he had talked to Police Officer Jangi and he had been told "*li paret ki ena plis ki R 200 millions*". *En direct!* Then that figure was - by the same Police Officer, now Press Officer - said to be between Rs450 m. to Rs500 m. That was yesterday and today it has climbed up, according to the same Police Officer, to Rs800 m. when, in fact, they have already started counting the money.

**The Prime Minister:** Well, I suppose it is all estimates, but I can't answer for the Press Officer.

**Mr Bérenger:** Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister saying that? Is he satisfied with the way Police is handling this case? If that is the trial by the Press, what is? Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister satisfied with the performance of that new Sergeant, freshly appointed Press Officer? He thinks he is a pop star. I don't know if the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has watched him, making jokes! Since when does the Police whilst a prosecution is on, the enquiries are on, behave in that manner through the Press and the MBC? Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister satisfied with the way the Police is conducting the whole thing and whether in the end they are not going to mess up their own case?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, I am not concerned with comments. I am satisfied the Police is handling the enquiry properly and it is only when the formal charge will be brought that we will know what is the exact amount.

**Mr Bérenger:** The amount is one thing, but the way the Police is conducting, I am surprised that a lawyer and Prime Minister is satisfied with the way the Police is behaving concerning the Press and the MBC, but *chacun a son opinion*, Madam Speaker. I have seen that, at a point in time, apart from the Police, ICAC surfaced. Is it at the request of Government or the Police that ICAC has stepped in?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, from the information that I have, it was at the request of Police.

**Mr Bérenger:** Well, I am not suggesting that Rt. hon. Prime Minister should interfere in the details of the enquiry, but does he not agree with me that, at this stage, the Police should carry out its enquiry and ICAC should not be brought in? There is going to be a big *polémique* around ICAC; the one-man ICAC that we have, the way he was appointed; there is going to be a debate about that and it is now a one-man only, ICAC, and lawyers are lawyers. I can see on the horizon whatever happens they are going to challenge, the composition of ICAC, the legality of ICAC if ICAC steps in. Will not the Rt. hon. Prime Minister agree with me – I will deal with ICAC later on – that ICAC should be kept out of even the money laundering aspect of the case?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, if that is so, Counsels for the former Prime Minister should have objected. In fact, the hon. Attorney General was there at the invitation of the Police, there was objection and he went away.

**Mr Bérenger:** As far as the interdiction to leave the country is concerned, I think I heard the Rt. hon. Prime Minister saying that it is only on the 7<sup>th</sup> when provisional charges were put, that an interdiction to leave the country was lodged against the former Prime Minister. Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister aware that, in fact, when the Bail and Remand Court granted bail to the former Prime Minister, it bluntly put it that she did not agree with that argument that he might leave the country, because - I quote the ruling of the Magistrate –

“Had he wanted to escape justice, he had ample time to do so prior to his arrest.”

Does that explain why in a case like that, ample time was left to the suspect at this stage for him to leave the country if he so chooses and it is only on the 7<sup>th</sup> that an Interdiction to Departure was placed?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, the Police thought it right at that time and this was the normal procedure.

**Mr Bérenger:** Now that there is an interdiction - I am sure the hon. Prime Minister is aware that the Court is to step in - if the accused has been informed that there is an interdiction, then that interdiction, if he has been informed, lapses after 72 hours, unless the Police goes to the Court and obtains an order this time - not from the Police, but from the Court - to interdict him from leaving the country. Has this already been done? Is it being done?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, I have no information about that.

**Mr Bérenger:** If I can move to the last part of my question. Concerning the Roches Noires bungalow affair, I think I heard the Rt. hon. Prime Minister say that the former Prime Minister has not to date given a statement. He has said he will later on give a statement. Have all the other aspects of that inquiry into the Roches Noires bungalow affair been completed?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, the inquiry has not yet been completed, because the former Prime Minister has not given his statement so far. Once his statement is given, then the Police will consider whether other statements have to be recorded.

**Mr Bérenger:** Concerning the other case, the death of Mr A.K.R. in Police custody at Rivière du Rempart Police station in July 2011, I heard the hon. Prime Minister say that a new inquiry has started and is in progress. It has been repeatedly reported in the press that one suspect of this aggression – supposedly aggression, theft and so on - is in detention. Is that the case? Is he formally under detention or is he being kept at the Special Mobile Force for whatever purpose?

**The Prime Minister:** In which case is that?

**Mr Bérenger:** It is in the case of the death in Rivière du Rempart Police station of Mr A.K.R. It has been repeatedly reported that there is a suspect being held by Police in relation to that case. Is it so?

**The Prime Minister:** No. I have not read that. Nobody has told me that and I think this is a very wrong impression that the hon. Leader of the Opposition has got. I am not aware of anything of that sort.

**Mr Bérenger:** It is not an impression. That has appeared repeatedly in the press and there has been no Police communiqué to advise the public that no one is in detention in relation to that case. Therefore, it is not just my impression. It has been reported and not denied by the Police. They talked a lot about other things but, in that case, I suppose they could have clarified the situation. The new inquiry is still in progress, Madam Speaker. Has any link been established, at this stage, between the Roches Noires bungalow affair and the death of Mr A.K.R. in Rivière du Rempart Police station?

**The Prime Minister:** I cannot answer to this question. The inquiry is still on.

**Mr Bérenger:** The last part of my question, Madam Speaker, regards the audio recording – the *bande sonore* – at the Rivière du Rempart meeting in December 2010. Can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister what explains the fact that there have been several arrests - the most important thing apart from life, the most important thing in life is freedom - and every day there were articles in the press, statements by the Police, so and so is going to be called, so and so is going to be arrested, it went on and then suddenly it disappeared. It is off the radar screen completely. Has the Rt. hon. Prime Minister – because as I said people have been arrested? Why this inquiry is supposedly proceeding in that way?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, it is not the first time that somebody is arrested in a case. The hon. Leader of the Opposition should know that. The Office of the DPP made an application dated 19 December 2014 for a production order directing the following service providers V-mail LLC Facebook Inc. and Google ILC to disclose the user ID who posted the link on the web. The Judge's Order was obtained on the same date and forwarded to the Police. I must add also, in the meantime, the Police officers who were engaged in this case were very busy with the other cases and that is why this inquiry has been a bit delayed.

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister mentioned that one of the charges against the former Prime Minister is one of money laundering. In view of the fact that a huge amount of money is involved in foreign currency, is the hon. Prime Minister aware whether the hon. Attorney General has made any request for any foreign State for assistance under the Mutual Assistance in Criminal and Related Matters for this case?

**The Prime Minister:** No, I am not aware of any.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, hon. Mohamed.

**Mr Mohamed:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Could I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, since before the 10<sup>th</sup> of December of 2014, we have all in Mauritius heard the Rt. hon. Prime Minister before then, gave information that, at some stage, he was aware of the intricacies of the case of Roches Noires in relation to the death of the person referred to in question (c) (iii), whether since he seemed to be aware and made statements to that effect, when does he intend to give a statement to the Police to share that important information, because we need justice to be done and if he does not intend to do so, maybe he could tell us how he could communicate that information to the Police and when he would do it?

**The Prime Minister:** This information was being circulated, it reached me and it has reached also the Police. So, I don't have to inform the Police.

**Mr Ganoo:** May I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, in view of the substantial amount of money which has been found on the premises of the former Prime Minister and in view of the fact that all parties in this House are agreeable that a legal framework be set up to control the finances of political parties, doesn't the Prime Minister think that it is urgent to uphold the dignity of the political class in this country after what has just happened to come up with a legislation, either setting up a Select Committee or come up with a legislation once for all for the financial control of political parties?

**The Prime Minister:** This is irrelevant to the PNQ.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Mohamed, did you ask the floor? No! That's alright. Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr Bérenger:** Well, I'll pick up from where hon. Ganoo left. My last question will relate to now that the country is - I think we can all agree on that - *en état de choc*, being given that in the Electoral Programme of the present Government, it was stated that there would be a new Declaration of Assets Act that will be made public and it was stated also that a law – new law – would come forward to control, to make transparent, *les finances des partis et des campagnes électorales*, this has been picked up in the Government Programme, but I note that it is no longer said in the Government Programme that these declarations of assets will be made public. There has been a change between the *programme électoral* and

the *programme gouvernemental – le Discours Programme*. Will the hon. Prime Minister see to it, being given where we are, that the two things are done as soon as possible - a new Declaration of Assets Act, foolproof, as he said in his electoral program, to be made public? A new Declaration of Assets Act - this is what his programme spoke about - and also that will enlighten what took place in 2000-2005; things will be activated so that a law to regulate, to control, make transparent *les financements des partis et des campagnes électorales*, will be before the House as soon as possible.

**The Prime Minister:** Well, this Government means to implement all its promises.

**Madam Speaker:** One last question, we have got three more minutes. The last question is usually for the hon. Leader of the Opposition. Does he have any other questions?

**Mr Bérenger:** No.

**Madam Speaker:** Okay! Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question Nos. B/3 and B/4 have been withdrawn. The Table has been further advised that the following Parliamentary Questions which have been addressed to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister will now be replied as follows: B/6 in regard to the report of the Truth and Justice Commission will now be replied by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications; B/10 in regard to the Maurice Ile Durable Commission will now be replied by the hon. Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management; B/16 in relation to the Jin Fei Project at Riche Terre will now be replied by the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development.

I also wish to inform hon. Members that the Table has been advised that the following Parliamentary Questions will be replied by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister at the end of Prime Minister's Question Time, time permitting. PQ No. B/18 in regard to the Canal Anglais behind the Military Road, Cité Martial, addressed to the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport; B/34 in regard to the E-Judiciary project addressed to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development; B/37 in regard to works being carried out at Canal Dayot, GRNW, addressed to the hon. Minister of Public infrastructure and Land Transport; B/41 in regard to works being carried out at Sable Noire, GRNW, addressed to the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport.

Questions addressed to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister! Hon. Ameer Meea!



