



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

THURSDAY 12 MARCH 2015

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Members

Members

THE CABINET**(Formed by the Rt. Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC)**

Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit
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Hon. Soodesh Satkam Callichurn	Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training

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Madam Speaker	Hanoomanjee, Hon. Mrs Santi Bai, GCSK
Deputy Speaker	Duval, Hon. Adrien Charles
Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Hurreeram, Hon. Mahendranuth Sharma
Clerk of the National Assembly	Lotun, Mrs Bibi Safeena
Deputy Clerk	Ramchurn, Ms Urmeelah Devi
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Hansard Editor	Jankee, Mrs Chitra
Serjeant-at-Arms	Badal, Mr Ramesh

MAURITIUS

Sixth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 09 of 2015

Sitting of 12 March 2015

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis at 10.55 a.m.

Madam Speaker, accompanied by His Excellency, the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, Shri Narendra Modi, preceded by the Serjeant-at-Arms, bearing the mace, and Mrs Bibi Safeena Lotun, the Clerk of the National Assembly, entered the Chamber in procession.

Madam Speaker seated His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Republic of India to her right.

The National Anthem was played.

**HIS EXCELLENCY, THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF
INDIA, SHRI NARENDRA MODI – ADDRESS**

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, it is my proud privilege and honour to extend on your behalf and in my own name a very warm welcome to an illustrious son of India in the person of His Excellency Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India. This special sitting of the National Assembly on the day of the 47th anniversary of our Independence is a very significant event as it has been convened to welcome in our midst a great visionary, the leader of the largest democracy in the world.

Excellency, we are deeply thankful to you for your kind acceptance of our invitation to address our National Assembly. It is indeed a great privilege, Your Excellency to have you mark the history of this National Assembly through your dignified presence today. Through this, you reconfirm the common belief of Mauritius and India in the virtues of parliamentary democracy and the rule of law and democracy.

This House, Excellency, is a pillar among the institutions that uphold the vibrant democracy of Mauritius. It is the embodiment of the collective will and aspiration of its people and the repository of the evolving history of this country.

Excellency, your presence, amongst us today epitomizes the deep friendship, affection, and goodwill that India has always displayed towards Mauritius. It is an affection and a goodwill which we, in Mauritius, happily and warmly reciprocate.

Excellency, it is the first time in the history of our Parliament that a Prime Minister from the Republic of India would be addressing the House on the date itself that Mauritius acceded to its Independence, that is, 12 March. As you stated in your speech at the Banquet yesterday, 12 March is a date symbolically chosen as a fitting tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, as it was the date on which Gandhi Ji started his Dandi March, the Salt Satyagraha.

Today, you will be the fifth Prime Minister of India to address the National Assembly of Mauritius since we attained Independence in 1968, a testimony, to the unique relation which Mauritius and India share. Indeed Shrimati Indira Gandhi was the first foreign Head of Government to address this House following our Independence.

Hon. Members, to introduce His Excellency Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, is no small challenge. The high qualities of the Prime Minister's acclaimed statesmanship have spread beyond the frontiers of India and he is one of the most followed and revered global leaders of our time. Shri Narendra Modi joined the BJP in 1997 and became the General Secretary of the BJP Gujarat Unit in 1998. He rapidly emerged as a key strategist and successfully campaigned for his Party in 1995 and in the 1998 Gujarat Elections which brought BJP to power in the State of Gujarat. He became the Chief Minister of the State of Gujarat for the first time in October 2001 and subsequently served three other terms.

Hon. Members, in June 2013, His Excellency was chosen as Leader by the BJP for 2014 General Elections. He and his party vigorously won a landslide victory.

Excellency, your place of birth, Vadnagar, or Anartapur as it was referred to in the Mahabharat, was once a vibrant centre of Buddhist learning and spirituality and no doubt inspired you in many ways.

From Vadnagar to Panchvati or 7, Racecourse Road as it is better known; from humble beginnings to the post of premier of your country, you have travelled a long road, often a difficult journey. Yet you never swayed from the path of service to the people at all times, the concept of seva that was so dear to Mahatma Gandhi. You continue to live your life by the principle of 'Antyodaya', which means serving the last person in the queue.

You also found time, Excellency, amidst your activities, to pen some fifteen books including one on Education is Empowerment and on The Yoga of Education. Under your authority, India submitted to the United Nations General Assembly a Resolution on World Yoga Day, a Resolution that holds the record for the highest number of sponsorships.

Your success, Excellency, knows no boundaries. From Yoga to business, you turned Gujrat into a lead Industrial State, based on the principles of people-centred governance which became a model for the whole of India. Although struck by a devastating earthquake in 2001, Gujarat went on to attract huge investments and the economy grew at least 10% higher than the Indian yearly average for much of a decade, making it a growth engine for India.

Your inspired decision of hosting the Vibrant Gujrat meet bi-annually in Gandhinagar, still brings thousands of people at high level, flocking to take advantage of the business facilities offered by your Home State.

Hon. Members, we have today in our midst an extraordinary man who, through sheer intelligence, hard work, perseverance, patriotism and a principled approach to life inspired by Gandhian principles, has risen to the highest echelon of governance. Your Excellency, you have undertaken the mission to lead over 1.3 billion people to a higher destiny and to the transformation of India into an India mindful of the needs of its people, proud of its history, confident in its role in the comity of nations.

We salute the exceptional person that you are, Excellency.

Hon. Members, I now have the pleasure to invite His Excellency, Sri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, to address the House.

Your Excellency, you have the floor.

(11.30 p.m.)

His Excellency Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India:

Madam Speaker, Mrs Santi Bai Hanoomanjee,

Prime Minister Sir Anerood Jugnauth Ji,

Leader of the Opposition, Paul Bérenger,

Members of the Assembly

Greetings on the Independence Day of Mauritius!

It is always a great honour to speak to a National Assembly.

But, it is truly special to do so in the Assembly of a people with which we share the deepest bonds of history and culture; and, of a nation that we are proud to call a friend and a partner.

To be here with you in this Assembly on your National Day is a blessed moment for me.

On Independence Day we not only celebrate liberty, but also remember the struggles and sacrifices that gave birth to freedom.

Today is also a special day in the history of India's freedom struggle.

On this day, in 1930, Mahatma Gandhi began his Dandi March.

And, India took a great step forward to Independence.

Your National Day honours Mahatma Gandhi. And, it forms a deep bond of emotion between our two countries.

Today, I also pay homage to Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam for leading Mauritius to freedom and for his vision and leadership in building our partnership.

I stand here today not just in celebration of our relationship, but also in admiration of your achievements.

There are many countries that have seen the joys of freedom fade into the gloom of lost direction.

In Mauritius, though, the hopes and promises of independence have become brighter by the passing day.

Mauritius has stood as a bright beacon of democracy.

This is a nation of a little over a million people of huge diversity living in great harmony. It is a nation that has lived up to the words of its national anthem - one nation, one people, in peace, justice and liberty. It is a nation moving firmly on the path of prosperity. I have always admired how Mauritius has made smart choices and encouraged hard work and enterprise. It has gone from an agricultural economy to a middle income and diversified economy, tapping the opportunities in textile and tourism and now to offshore finance and information technology.

Generations ago people from India chartered an unknown course to an uncertain new life in an unfamiliar world. As they built their lives, they lived on the memories of Himalaya and Ganga; through the rituals of Shivaratri and Cavadee, the colours of Holi and the joy of Eid; through songs that welcomed the rains and dances that celebrated the harvest. Today, they are proud citizens of Mauritius; thriving in the dynamism of their country; contributing to its success. The island pulsates with the beauty of their preserved beliefs and culture. Yet, they blend easily into a way of life that has been formed by the winds and waves from different parts of the world.

This morning I went to Ganga Talao. I felt a personal connection that comes from the banks of Ganga in my parliamentary constituency – Banaras. And, I understood the powerful links of heart that have endured time and distance in this magnificent land.

Today, these links form the firmest foundation of our relationship. They have created goodwill and warmth rarely seen in international relations. They have built an unbreakable chain of trust between us. Today, we are equally proud to have a relationship that speaks of the needs of our times. We relate to each other from the comfort of our shared democratic values. We are partners in our economic progress. We shoulder our shared responsibility to advance security in the Indian Ocean. We speak in one voice in the cause of the developing world and the future of our planet. I see Mauritius as a leader in the Indian Ocean Community and as a bridge to Africa. Your leadership is helping promote Hindi in the world. India thanks you for hosting the World Hindi Secretariat.

Madam Speaker, this is the wealth of our inheritance. This is the richness of our partnership. Last year, we had democratic transition in both countries. There are two things that are similar to both. After a long time, a single party won absolute majority in both countries and in both Parliaments - it is very interesting - I have the honour to say, Madam Speaker! We know that democratic changes make no difference to the strength of our relationship. What we now have, though, in both nations is a stable platform to speed up economic development.

Over the last nine months, we in India have moved with a clear vision of inclusive development. We have acted with speed, resolve, innovation and boldness to increase economic growth, reform for our economy and transform the lives of our people and create opportunities for the most excluded youth, the remotest farmer and the farthest village. I am confident that under the hon. Prime Minister, Sir A. Jugnauth, development in Mauritius will become more impressive and I can assure you that, as always, we will be with you in support of your efforts and in joy for your success.

Yesterday, I told the hon. Prime Minister, Sir A. Jugnauth, that we understand the importance of the offshore banking sector for your economy. We are conscious of its dependence on India. We will work together for our shared objective to avoid the abuse of our double taxation avoidance convention. I thank you for your support. But, I also assure you that we will do nothing to harm this vibrant sector of one of our closest strategic partners.

It has been a great privilege to be a development partner for Mauritius. We will always be ready to do more, in accordance with your wishes. Yesterday, we announced a new Line of Credit of 500 million U.S. dollars for the development of civilian projects in Mauritius. The hon. Prime Minister Vajpayee had supported the construction of the first

cyber city in Mauritius in 2003. That became a symbol of our thriving economic partnership. I am pleased to announce our support for a second cyber city in Mauritius. While we are on the subject of information technology, the e-health project in Mauritius is a laudable initiative and we would be happy to support its development.

We are honoured to be Mauritius's partner for meeting its petroleum requirements. We are embarking on a new project to build the petroleum storage facility here. This will further strengthen the position of Mauritius as a regional economic hub. Mauritius has shown great vision in the development of its ocean economy from fishing to tourism. India is also highly dependent on the seas. We are seeking to develop our marine economy and discover new possibilities.

We are doing this in a sustainable manner that preserves the delicate ecosystem of our oceans. Indeed, the oceans hold vast potential to advance our prosperity and meet the challenges of the world.

That is why, I consider the blue chakra in our national flag as a symbol Blue Revolution; just as saffron represents energy revolution, white the milk revolution and, green the energy revolution. This offers a great opportunity to cooperation between our two countries. We can learn from you. Together, we can better understand our marine ecology and the new opportunities. We can improve our ability to pursue more sustainable practices. Our partnership must also cover the challenges of climate change.

For India, it is a mission that we are pursuing on an entirely new scale and with a new sense of urgency. We have set an ambitious target of 100 Gigawatts of solar energy and 60 Gigawatts of wind energy by 2022. We will seek to dramatically increase our energy efficiency, which is the cleanest form of energy. This is a choice that is driven by commitment to the future, but also by principles. And, for me it is an article of faith.

We are the inheritors of an ancient tradition and wisdom that elevated preservation of nature to a sacred duty; that worships Earth as a mother; and, that treats reckless exploitation of nature as a crime.

Mauritius has been a leading international voice on climate change, not just as an advocate for island states, but for the sake of our collective future.

We look forward to working with you for a more resolute global action against climate change.

We can pursue our dreams of a sustainable and prosperous future if we are confident about peace, security and stability in our world.

For India and Mauritius, our destinies are linked by the currents of the Indian Ocean. Our security partnership has been a strong pillar of our relationship. And, it has stood the test of time. It is founded on unmatched mutual confidence and trust. It is rooted in the responsibility to each other that comes naturally from our friendship. It stems from our shared commitment to peace and prosperity in the Indian Ocean Region. As Mauritius seeks to make islands and water safer; as you seek to secure your vast Exclusive Economic Zone, we will always be there for you. We will deepen our cooperation. And, we will also do everything we can to strengthen your own capabilities. Later, today I will have the honour to commission the Barracuda into the service of your National Coast Guard.

Today, proudly flying the flag of Mauritius, she will sail as a symbol of our partnership. India is grateful for the faith that you have placed in us. And, as Mauritius assumes greater responsibility for securing this part of the Indian Ocean, we know that our region will be a safer place. But, we share a broader vision for lasting stability and prosperity in the region.

We believe that all the nations in our region should come together to shoulder our shared responsibility. We seek a comprehensive partnership of closer security, economic, cultural, scientific and people-to-people ties in our region.

That is why we are grateful that Mauritius hosts the Indian Ocean Rim Association. Your leadership will remain important to realise our vision. Your steadfast support in global institutions gives us more strength to speak on our common interests.

Now, as the United Nations reaches its 70th year at a time of great turmoil, we seek your support to reform this institution to make it more relevant to the needs of our age.

I want to thank Mauritius for the strong support for the United Nations Resolution declaring June 21 as the International Day of Yoga. This Resolution was passed by a record co-sponsorship in a record time frame.

This is a tribute to our shared heritage. I know you will celebrate it with fervour in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, in the life of a nation, as in the life of an individual, there is nothing more precious and satisfying than a true friend and well-wisher; nothing more comforting

than his embrace; nothing more valuable than his trust; nothing more reassuring than his support; nothing more enriching than his partnership.

So, we are blessed to have your friendship. And, I always say that if there is one country that has full claims on us, it is Mauritius. It is the relationship of our hearts and sentiments. And, it will never be limited by boundaries. To we in India will do everything to nurture it.

This relationship will always be a source of great joy and strength to our two countries. And, it will also be of immense value to our region and our world. Thanks for this honour and thanks to everybody. Again I wish my best wishes on this National Day.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister!

(11.52 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I would like, on your behalf and on behalf of all the Members of this House to express our deepest gratitude to His Excellency Shri Narendra Modi for accepting our invitation to address this Assembly and for delivering such an enlightening and elevating speech.

It was indeed a privilege for all of us, to receive in this august Assembly, another illustrious son of India and to listen to his insightful words, imbued with the wisdom of India.

We wish to assure you, Excellency, that we have great admiration for the grand and noble ideals which you stand for and your mission to shape a glorious future for India.

Your life journey is a perfect illustration of the triumph of perseverance, courage and determination, and is a source of great inspiration to all of us.

Excellency, we feel greatly honoured by your distinguished presence in this Assembly today. We share the same values and principles, and are driven by the same passion and determination to secure a better and brighter future for our people.

You are the fourth Prime Minister of India to address this Assembly, and your presence here today bears testimony to the unshakable friendship and unbreakable partnership between our two countries.

Your visit to Mauritius, Excellency, is for us a great moment and an opportunity to reiterate our close affinities with Mother India. The special nature of our relations imposes a duty on us to carry forward our cooperation to new heights, and we see in you, Mr Prime Minister, a harbinger of a new era of more fruitful cooperation between our two countries.

India is pursuing its drive to expand its economic scope and influence under your able leadership. Mauritius is also embarked on an economic transformation journey with the aim of moving the economy to a much higher plane.

Your visit, Prime Minister, is an opportunity for us to re-engineer our framework of cooperation to a more meaningful level.

Mr Prime Minister, it is my privilege, on behalf of Madam Speaker, of all the Members of the Assembly on both sides of the House, and the Clerk of the Assembly, to thank you once again for the distinct honour that you have bestowed on our Parliament by your distinguished presence and your inspiring address.

It is certainly a day that we shall remember for long and that will be written in history of both Mauritius and India.

Thank you a lot.

(Applause)

At 11.56 a.m. the Assembly rose and stood adjourned, as already resolved, to Friday 13 March 2015 at 2.00 p.m.