



MAURITIUS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

ANNOUNCEMENT 2

SITTING OF 24 OCTOBER 2023

Announcement 2 by Mr Speaker – Handling of questions in Parliament by the Chair – Decisions of the Chair based on Standing orders and rules, Parliamentary practice and with such authority with which the Speaker is endowed with.

Announcement No. 2

Sitting of Tuesday 24 October 2023

Hon. Members

I have another announcement to make following

criticisms/comments made by some Honourable Members in the media with regard to the handling of questions in Parliament by the Chair.

Honourable Members,

These comments, if not responded to, create the impression that Hon. Members are deprived of the opportunity to exercise their rights in a parliamentary democracy of putting questions and of doing their work.

Honourable Members are fully conversant with the provisions of Standing Order 22(2) which sets the time allocated for question time and same is time bound.

Moreover, Honourable Members have a legitimate expectation that their questions appearing on the notice of Parliamentary Questions are reached orally.

Hence, the Chair has the duty to ensure that a maximum number of Parliamentary Questions are replied orally within the time prescribed therefor, which automatically entails a judicious exercise of the number of supplementary questions to be allowed in line with the provisions of Standing Order 26.

Now coming to the incident which arose at the sitting of Tuesday last, where the Honourable Assirvaden engaged himself into a vehement argument with the Chair regarding supplementary questions, Hon Members will recall that, at that material time, I had already announced the list of PQs which had been withdrawn and also stated that time was over.

Therefore, the Chair could by no means entertain the request of the Honourable Member and any other Honourable Member for that matter.

Honourable Members will also recall that in the midst of that incident, the House had become unruly as MP Paul Bérenger and MP Bhagwan who did not have any question standing in their names on that subject matter, deliberately chose to embark on an insulting spree towards the Chair which was a departure from parliamentary convention and etiquette.

As custodian of the privileges of the House,

I would have failed in my duty, had I not drawn the attention of the House to such derogatory conduct of some Hon Members. And the House took the decision to sanction the said Honourable Members as it deemed appropriate.

The Honourable Members take full responsibility of their overly exaggerated act which was no doubt tantamount to grossly disorderly conduct, being aggressive, insulting and contemptuous to the decorum of the House and also challenged the authority of the Chair.

Hon Members,

As Speaker, it is my duty to maintain a level of civility and decorum within the parliamentary setting. Such unbecoming behaviour from Hon. Members is most regrettable and brings Parliament into disrepute.

I, once again, reassure the House that my decisions are always based on the same Standing Orders and Rules, Parliamentary Practice and with such authority with which I am endowed.

I thank you for your attention.

