

Political storm in Mauritius

They say “Le torchon brûle au sein de l’Alliance du Changement”

According to an article in l’express, politics in the country is witnessing a period of discordance within the coalition government prior to the ‘éclatement’ of the existing accord, especially the Labour Party/MMM entente.

In a second article in the same issue the daily talked of <l’usure> taking place within the nine months co-habitation of Paul Bérenger (MMM) and Navin Ramgoolam.

Paul Raymond Bérenger is the most senior statesman sur le terrain these days in Mauritius. Since the 1960s, he has been involved in alliances and counter-alliances, Here, in this editorial, MOG attempts to take a look at his randonnées politiques

It has been said that Paul Bérenger, the veteran public rouser of Mauritius is a born-Opposition character

Paul Bérenger started his political adventure in 1969 with the creation of the Mouvement Militant Mauricien MMM). It is not clear whether Anerood Jugnauth was a member of the MMM then. But together they fought the **1976 General Election** and made a great impact on the results with 34 seats out of 60 parliamentary seats for the 20 constituencies of Mauritius. A coalition of the Labour Party (PT), Parti Mauricien Social Démocrate (PMSD) and the Comité d’Action Musulman (CAM) saw the MMM sitting on the Opposition benches in the National Assembly.

In partnership with the PSM of Harish Boodhoo, The MMM won all the parliamentary seats at the **June 1982 General Election**. Though Paul Bérenger was the MMM leader, the party allowed Anerood Jugnauth to be PM.

This decision was considered as the first political blunder on the part of the MMM leader. Many considered then that he should have taken the office of prime minister for himself. Within a few months of the cohabitation of the two MMM figures, Jugnauth Senior left the MMM to create his own party, the Mouvement Socialiste Mauricien (MSM), himself still at the helm of government. Bérenger went to the Opposition.

Yet, the two antagonists joined forces again in **1991** to fight the forthcoming, They won a comfortable majority. Jugnauth retained the office of PM and Bérenger took the Ministry of External Affairs.

For the **1995 General Election**, Bérenger split from Jugnauth once more and went *en ménage* with Navin Ramgoolam, leader of the Labour Party. Together, they took all the 60 seats of the National Assembly, a feat that was first realised at the June 1982 General Election by the MMM of Paul Bérenger with Anerood Jugnauth on board.

Trouble

The two bedfellows, Ramgoolam and Bérenger got into trouble within 18 months of the power-sharing owing to the pressure resulting from the cohabitation. The following extract from an issue of l’express in the wake of the announcement of the break-up provided an explanation the spilt. “*Dans une interview accordée à l’express au lendemain de la cassure, Navin Ramgoolam parle d’un «allié trop ambitieux» et incapable de fonctionner en équipe. «La personnalité et l’ambition d’un seul homme, celles de M. Paul Bérenger, ont empoisonné les relations au sein du gouvernement», estime le Premier ministre.*

Bérenger dénonçait, lui, le manque de leadership au sommet de l’État et regrettait l’incapacité du gouvernement à relever les défis modernes, dont ceux de l’éducation et de la formation. Après 548 jours passés au pouvoir, le MMM rejoint l’opposition.”

Here, were are, an addition to the *va -et-vient* of Bérenger to those benches of the Opposition. But not for long, though. Bérenger got into an alliance again with Jugnauth Senior for the year **2000 General Election** on a power-sharing agreement and they won. Jugnauth Senior took the reins of Government for three years, and thereafter passed the reins to Bérenger for the remaining two years of the mandate. It worked and in 2003 Jugnauth Senior handed the reins of Government over to Paul Bérenger as PM.

President of the Republic

However, Sir Anerood did not stay in the National Assembly. He was installed as the President



The tandem Paul Bérenger and Navin Ramgoolam: Kicking and Kissing over the years

of the Republic at Le Réduit, but not before passing the leadership of the MSM to his son Pravind Jugnauth - who also inherited the second bit of the parliamentary mandate left over by the father. This automatic handing-over of power from father to son did not meet with admiration within the MSM. Some members subsequently left the party in protest.

But to come back *à nos moutons*, Paul Bérenger stayed with the MSM (under Jugnauth Junior) plus the PMSD to fight the **2005 General Election**. Together they faced Ramgoolam’s Labour plus a cohort of parties making the Alliance Sociale who won the majority of seats in the Assembly. Navin Ramgoolam took over as premier. And so Bérenger found his way once more to the Opposition benches together with Jugnauth Junior.

Navin Ramgoolam took Jugnauth Junior with him plus Xavier Duval of the PMSD within the Parti de l’Avenir to contest the **2110 General Election**. MMM Bérenger within the Parti du Coeur had to remain on the Opposition benches.

At the **2014 General Election**, Bérenger campaigned again with his former political opponent, Labour leader Navin Ramgoolam, to keep the MSM from power. Sir Anerood Jugnauth had abandoned his presidential job to return to active politics. Taking over from Junior as leader of the MSM, his coalition Alliance Lepep won the scrutin and was back as PM. Berenger remained on the Opposite benches of the House.

Well, for the **2019 General Election**, Paul Bérenger probably thought that enough was enough in terms of alliances. And so, the MMM went it alone, and no alliance. In 2017, after three years as PM, Sir Anerood handed the helm of Government to his son Pravind. This was contested by the Opposition but the arrangement stayed. Young Jugnauth’s Alliance Morisien won the election and he stayed as PM. Bérenger was still confined to the Opposition.

Bérenger’s master stroke came at the **2024 General Election** which was held on 10 November. In alliance with Labour and two other minor parties within the l’Alliance du Changement, which scooped all the 60 constitutional seats for Mauritius, apart of the two for Rodrigues. Bérenger is finally in Government once more, holding the office of Deputy Prime Minister. That was the third time that Bérenger’s MMM, alone or in alliance, obtained the 60-0 score.

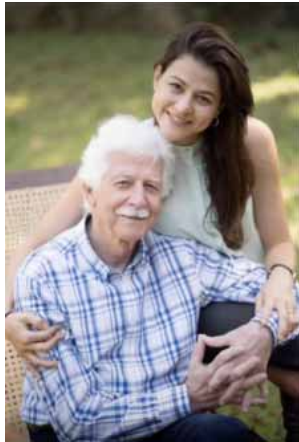
Purpose

Well the purpose of this editorial is to highlight the taste of Paul Bérenger for the Opposition. A bit like ‘Mary the Contrary’ he is already feeling restless in office with Labour and the other minor parties. Some observers believe that he is likely to give way to his natural yearning to go alone again. The various unpalatable situation he has been facing of late may lead to his final decision to Stay or to Go.



Papa Piti : Pravind (left) and Sir Anerood Jugnauth

Les Aléas de Paul Bérenger



Paul Bérenger and daughter (Papa/Tifi)

Some of the problems of Paul Bérenger may be said to originate from within his own MMM (Mouvement Militant Mauricien). There was a bit of discontent when he made his own daughter, MP Joanna, Vice President of the Party.

To all intents and purposes the girl will now succeed him as the MMM Leader when he

kicks the bucket. There are MMM members who have been with the party for many more years who could aspire to run the show. Many see it as a **Papa Ti-Fi Deal**.

The second problem he faced was the appointment of the Minister of Youth & Sports within the coalition government. The MMM spokesman on Youth & Sports over the years in the National Assembly was Franco Quirin. Following the November 2024 General Election, Paul Bérenger recommended another MMM MP for the job to the great displeasure of Franco Quirin.

To make matters worse for Quirin, he was expelled from the party on the grounds he had distanced himself from the party. The question was whether any disciplinary committee had recommended such drastic action. With no part of government Now Quirin finds himself to sit with the Opposition in the National Assembly. This is considered as an anomalous situation.

There was the conflict in the Gender Equality Ministry between MMM Minister Marie Arianne Navarre-Marie and Labour Junior Minister Anishta Babooram.

Of late, Paul Bérenger has been accused of favouritism when his son-in-law was offered the job of Chairman of Airport Holding Ltd. His opponents even accused of him of favouritism because his sister-in-law has been appointed ambassador to an African country.



Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam making sure that his elderly deputy, Paul Bérenger can cut his 80th birthday cake without hurting himself. No break-up between the two yet. They seem to be two non-angry old men. To those who complain of Retirement Age is now 65, Bérenger says that they are both still working

But, there are people who have rightly asked whether a person with the required qualifications cannot aspire to obtain an official appointment because a relative of his or her is a political figure in Government.

However, it is the way that the appointment is made that raises questions. Some MPs have argued that it was the PM who recommended the appointments. Here again, the question is why the PM should intervene. The normal procedure is that there should be a Selection



The Bérenger family as featured on social media with comments on appointments

Board following an "Appel de candidatures"

Political figures should be aware that relatives of theirs are appointed to public offices without the application of the appropriate procedures, such appointments will always smell of nepotism.

Labour Shakeel Mohamed had been shouting on rooftop prior to the general election of November last that he would never agree to form part of any government that does not have a special appointment authority like in the Seychelles for the constitutional positions in Mauritius. What of it?

The Government says that they still have five years to implement the promises made during the electoral campaign. People are saying that the PM did wait five years to increase retirement age to 65 years, and to impose VAT on the sale earnings of *marchands pistaches*.

P.C.



Peanuts sellers will have to keep record of sale to submit return to Inland Revenue, according to new legislation.

The Painting above of a woman peanut-seller was by Nathalie Piat in 1996, aged 14 then. It was done on behalf of the charity APSA International (Association pour la Promotion de la Santé), Curepipe.

Is the Jew Leader of Israel, Netanyahu, using famine as a tool of war?

Netanyahu says the pictures about starvation in Gaza are a UN propaganda



Israel-Gaza war



Famine confirmed in Gaza City for the first time, UN-backed body IPC says

More starvation pictures on other pages



1 child dies every 35 minutes in Gaza





Hiroshima

80 Years Ago: The day the World Changed Forever Hiroshima and the Atomic Bomb

By Mylene



I wonder how many people still remember the day the first atomic bomb was dropped on Japan by the United States?

Lest we forget, that significant date was August 6th, 1945 - 80 years ago.

It seems we have forgotten this pivotal moment. There was a time when the atrocities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki filled us with dread. We lived in fear of the atomic bomb and solemnly promised that such devastation would never happen again.

The annual commemoration of Hiroshima took place on August 6, 2025 followed by the Nagasaki observance on August 9, 2025. As is customary, the ceremonies included a moment of silent prayer at the exact time the bombs were dropped, the ringing of the peace bell, the peace declaration, and the release of doves, a symbolic gesture that has been part of the event since 1947.

Japanese PM Shigeru Ishiba attended the ceremony at Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park, alongside various foreign dignitaries and representatives.

However, it was noted that no world leaders or heads of state were present.

The memory of nuclear warfare, once so sharp, is gradually fading. Those who can remember the bomb must be at least 86 years old, and since the last above-ground nuclear test took place in 1980, it's fair to say that many of us rarely think of the destruction and loss of lives experienced in Hiroshima and Na-

gasaki.

Now is a critical time for reflection. We live in a world where two powerful nations, Russia and the United States, have not ruled out using these weapons.

Back in 2022, Sergei Lavrov, Russia's Foreign Minister warned about the peril of nuclear war. "The danger is serious, real, and we must not underestimate it."

Yet, looking around, it seems many are untroubled by this looming threat today.

World War Two ended following the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, leaders like General Dwight D. Eisenhower and Admiral William Leahy believed the bombs were unnecessary because Japan was already close to surrender due to a naval blockade and conventional bombing.

Currently, nine countries have nuclear weapons: the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea.

While the US and Russia have been working to reduce their stockpiles, other nations are believed to be increasing their arsenals.

In 2024, the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidan-

kyo) won the Nobel Peace Prize for their tireless efforts to abolish nuclear weapons and prevent their future use. This accolade not only called for a world free of such weapons but also recognized the suffering of the survivors, giving them a renewed platform to alert others about the dangers of nuclear arms and to inspire a new generation to continue the quest for peace.

We live in a world full of nuclear weapons, yet there are fewer people who understand their consequences

With rising global tensions, modernization of nuclear arsenals and The Collapse of Arms Control Treaties, it might seem that calls for peace and disarmament are falling on deaf ears.

Nevertheless, grassroots movements like Nihon Hidankyo and The Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), even though no nuclear-armed state has joined, are setting a critical new standard that clearly bans nuclear weapons. This exerts continuous moral and political pressure on those who have these arms.

And then there are us, the peacemakers.

Mauritius opens Embassy in Japan

After 57 years of the establishment of the Diplomatic Service, i.e. since independence in March 1968, Mauritius has decided to open an embassy in Japan



What a welcome from the Chief of Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mr Miyashita Tadayu !

The mission was inaugurated on 22 August 2022 by Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam in the presence of

Japanese Officials, namely the Chief of Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mr Miyashita Tadayu and the Ambassador of Japan to Mauritius, Mr Kan Masahiro.

The Embassy of Mauritius in Tokyo is located on the 7th Floor, Tsukiji Centre Building, 6-25-10, Tsukiji, Chuo-Ku, Tokyo.

Japan set up an embassy in Mauritius in 2017 for closer economic cooperation. Mauritius has benefited from considerable technical assistance from Japan. Mauritius was until now represented by a consulate in Japan.

It is hard to believe that so much cooperation has been carried out by Mauritius and Japan without any am-



bassadorial presence from Mauritius to carry out some of the negotiations. Japan, through its Ambassador Kan Masahiro, has been very sympathetic to the various claims from Mauritius following the shipwreck of their vessel, Wakashio, in our waters. The shipwreck is still making waves in Mauritius, five years later, in terms of compensation, especially to fisherman whose livelihood, also, has been wrecked as a result of the oil spill reaching the shores of the island.

We do not seem to have been told who is the lucky Mauritian chap or 'chapess' who is going to thrive on Suchi soon. They may have to start practising the use of chopsticks if they are going to entertain and attend parties in Japan with their family.

As for the language, AI will help.

Sayonara