

Interview

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"If we judge Pravind Jugnauth solely on the debt levels and creation of new industries, he has failed"

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHETAN RAMCHURN



With the loss of a number of members of the *Mouvement Militant Mauricien* (MMM) in the run up to the general election, Weekly speaks to Chetan Ramchurn, former president of the youth wing of the party, for his views. His astute observations about the strategies being played out in the political arena provide food for thought.

By Touria PRAYAG

● **You were the president of the youth wing of the *Mouvement Militant Mauricien* (MMM), a party that you left in 2011. Why?**

To be honest, I never left the party officially. I went away hoping that the yes-men would get tired of losing and change would eventually come. Little did I know that some of those figures have nothing except the MMM to exist. When there was the controversy surrounding the choice of candidates for the 2017 by-election in Belle-Rose/Quatre-Bornes whereby the one that had been working in the constituency for years was sacrificed in favour of a handpicked one, I went to the regional cell and listened to the arguments put forward. The yes-men were very much there with zealous voices, professing unflinching loyalty to the leader's whims. Nothing had changed.

● **In concrete terms, what exactly bothered you?**

As president, I merely averred that if we stuck to the Ramgoolamists vs Berengists paradigm, we would end up relinquishing our values and would reduce ourselves to useless followers. And indeed, once the MMM and the Labour Party were in alliance, it created a void that was filled with power-hungry individuals. We were quickly tagged as rebels and the clashes between the youth wing and the politburo were regular. Many of those yes-men have now changed ships and state proudly that they have had enough of the rotten state of affairs that they had helped create.

● **Did you expect the party to weaken so much overnight?**

The decline of the party was predictable. The MMM has failed its own values. The absence of introspection and strategy is obvious. Added to that, the

gradual realisation that a mere handful would be elected could have led to the numerous departures. But not only that, a leader who refuses to question the government in parliament solely because he is no longer the leader of opposition is childish and illustrates the party's dire health.

● **He may not have put questions directly to ministers but he says he worked with his team. And his MPs did give the government a run for its money, didn't they?**

The leader has to show the way. I do feel that many of the questions seem to have been targeted at those that the party would like to see gone in the eventuality of an alliance. And why would you choose to ask Minister Seeruttun whether a price hike was being considered to bail out the cane industry? Such questions are puzzling to say the least.

● **Didn't Paul Bérenger and his MPs offer some meaningful speeches in the National Assembly?**

Yes, there have been some solid budget speeches by some of the members belonging to the MMM.

● **Coming back to the resignations, you don't seem to be shocked by such ratting on one's party so close to the general election...**

This is verily the period of headhunting and poaching. Clearly, this is a move that has been orchestrated by those in office. The timing is interesting. The premier ~~one~~ is not in the country, which serves as a damage limitation tactic that he has long privileged. It has spectacularly flopped though. And here we are, laughing at their expense.