



■ MAURITIUS

Ramgoolam hit by insecurity

No one in Port Louis dares to talk about it, but Prime Minister **Navin Ramgoolam** has indeed been hit by a problem of lack of security. During the week-end of 2 and 3 July, his bungalow on the seafront at Roches-Noires in the northern part of the island was burgled. The Prime Minister bought this secondary residence in November 2010 from the firm **A.D.S. Guinness** for a total of 40 million rupees (just over €1 million), of which 24.2 million rupees was for the grounds, 800,000 rupees for an outhouse and 15 million for the lease. It is embarrassing for Navin Ramgoolam to be a victim of burglary himself, as he claims that security in the island has been improved under his government. In fact, Mauritian dignitaries are by no means immune to this kind of criminal act: the home of **Etienne Sinatambou**, a former minister in the ruling **Labour Party** (LP) was also burgled recently. Such incidents can harm Mauritius's international reputation, which was already hit by the murder of a famous Irish tourist, **Michaela Hart**, in a luxury hotel in the north of the island in January 2011. But there is another reason for the Prime Minister's silence on this latest incident: he does not want to draw attention to this expensive purchase at a time when he is calling on Mauritians to tighten their belts. All the more because it was financed by a loan from **Bramer Banking Corporation** (BBC), a subsidiary of **British American Investment** (BAI) whose lead shareholder **Dawood Rawat** is Navin Ramgoolam's personal friend as well as being the brother-in-law of the government's number two, **Rashid Beebeejaun**.

MAYOTTE

Judge has it in for gendarmes

► A wind of change is blowing among the judiciary in Mayotte, as some entrepreneurs and gendarmes with questionable methods have learnt to their cost.

Three gendarmes and a policeman in the *Groupe d'intervention régionale* (GIR, body fighting trafficking and delinquency) in the new French *departement* of Mayotte were summoned to appear before Judge **Hakim Karki** on 27 July. According to our sources, the judge may request they are held in remand, in view of the serious accusations against them. This possibility has sent the headquarters of the *Gendarmerie Nationale* in Paris into a spin and attracted the attention of the government. Furthermore, the initial reaction of the gendarmerie command for overseas territories was to lay obstacles in the path of Judge Karki's, himself a former military serviceman. It immediately removed **Michel Alize**, the head of the section carrying out the investigation under Karki's orders, from the case. Finally, it is believed the gendarmerie high command ordered its men not to cooperate with this investigation.

The matter is nevertheless a serious one: three GIR gendarmes and a policeman are suspected of covering traffic in hard drugs from Anjouan that was discovered after the overdose and subsequent death of a young 18 year old woman in Mayotte in January 2011. While investigating this tragic incident, known locally as "the young **Roukia** affair", Juge Karki questioned two people close to the victim who turned out to

be involved in importing drugs, probably heroin, from Anjouan, while they were also established GIR informers. They were arrested and "grassed" on the GIR men who, according to their statements, had intercepted them arriving in Mayotte carrying drugs which they had examined by experts ... and subsequently returned. Judge Karki wants to indict these members of the law forces for the transport and possession of drugs. Following the interception of telephone conversations, he suspected some of them could have a much deeper involvement in this affair. His working hypothesis may be that these gendarmes and policeman covered drug traffic so that they could carry out false seizures and thus improve their statistics.

MADAGASCAR

TGV in Ratsirahonana's mesh

► **Norbert Ratsirahonana** has built up a veritable web of influence around President **Andry Rajoelina**.

Officially, **Norbert Lala Ratsirahonana** is the deputy speaker of the *Conseil Supérieur de la Transition* (CST, a sort of upper chamber), but *de facto* he plays the role of grey eminence for **Andry Rajoelina** known as **TGV**. An example of his influence is that he has just brought one of his loyal lieutenants, the retired clergyman **Paul Abraham Ramino** and former Member of Parliament for the **AVI** (Ratsirahonana's party) into the circle of TGV's "discreet" advisors. He also placed another member of the AVI: **Nirhy Lanto Andriamahazo**, an artist and former minister for water who accompanies TGV in all his travels during the last few months. At 72, he wields a strong influence with the chairman of the *Haute cour constitutionnelle*, **Jean Michel Rajaonarivony** who consults him for everything he does. The **Conseil électoral national indépendant** (Ceni) is also in his crosshairs. Last week, he represented TGV at a Ceni meeting at which he gave the impression of pushing his own expertise in supervising elections. Finally, Ratsirahonana is a little jealous of **Edgar Razafindravahy**, the PDS of Antananarivo, because the AVI has long wanted to win the prize of the capital city.

SOMALILAND

Silanyo wants to depose six mayors

► President **Silanyo** can no longer stand mayors in the **Udub** party, which he defeated in June 2010.

A year after his election victory, President **Ahmed Mohamed Mahamoud** known as **Silanyo** wants to remove all the mayors in the **Udub** (opposition) party, who had been elected in 2003 and with whom he is obliged to share some of his power. Silanyo sent a letter sent on 11 April 2011 to the Minister for Internal Affairs **Mohamed Gabose** and brought to the attention of *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*, in which he asked the latter relieve the mayors of their functions by January 2012. Following this injunction, the Auditor General **Mohamoud Abdi Ibrahim** charged the mayor of Gabiley, **Adam Mohumed Bade**, with corruption. The latter was then relieved of his post and is awaiting imprisonment. On 15 June, the minister for internal affairs and the Auditor General accused the mayor of Hargeisa, **Hussein Mohamoud Ji'ir**, of corruption. But Ji'ir did not let the government have its way and hired two lawyers to defend him. The mayors of four other Somaliland cities are expected to similarly suffer the government's wrath.